

Academic Libraries

“Academic librarianship is the profession practiced by those working in libraries associated with institutions of higher education (also referred to as postsecondary or tertiary educational institutions) of various types and levels including community, technical and liberal arts colleges, universities, and professional schools.

The primary responsibility of academic librarians is to support the teaching, learning, and research efforts of the parent institution’s faculty and students. They fulfill this mission by working with faculty, staff, and students in finding the information they need and by selecting, acquiring, organizing, providing access to, and preserving the library’s collection.

In addition, some academic libraries, especially in publicly supported institutions, include service to the community as a part of their mission, and they provide at least limited services to individuals not formally affiliated with the institution.”¹

Academic Librarians: Position Titles and Descriptions

These are but a few of the many positions academic librarians hold. For more position titles and job requirements, consult the [ALA JobList](#).

- **Public/User Services Librarians** assist users with information needs, instruct users (frequently large groups) in the effective use of information resources, act as liaison to one or more academic departments, centers, or other campus groups; and manage one or more areas of the collection.
- **Technical Services Librarians** might catalog new additions to the collection, or oversee ordering and processing of new materials. Because technical services departments typically employ more staff members than degreed librarians, this type of position frequently includes supervisory responsibilities.
- **Electronic Resources Librarians** may work in Technical Services or Systems. ER Librarians are responsible myriad tasks associated with licensed electronic resources.
- **Systems/Access Services Librarians** may be responsible for maintaining the library’s web site, managing the Integrated Library System (ILS), or implementing digital initiatives.
- **Assessment Librarians** are tasked with overseeing the library’s efforts related to demonstrating value and impact. They create research tools, implement studies, collect data, write reports, and distribute information about the performance and plans of the library and its employees.
- **Special Collections Librarians/Archivists** work with specialized materials in a college or university’s collection. They may identify and solicit materials donations, process collections, design tools to

¹ Moran, Barbara B. and Elisabeth Leonard. (2010) “Academic Librarianship”, *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, Third Edition.

provide intellectual access to special collections, and/or promote the special collections to the public. They may also assist the public with special collections use.

- **Digital Initiatives Librarians** are involved with academic libraries' digital collections and projects. They may identify materials for digitization, design and implement metadata for digital collections, or develop workflows and procedures for digital assets management.
- **Data Services/Curation Librarians** assist faculty with developing research data plans, manage data repositories, and interact with other university and funding agencies.

Preparing to Enter the Profession of Academic Librarianship:

Professional Development:	<i>Associations:</i>	The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL): Division of the American Library Association Other ALA divisions depending on interest
	<i>Conferences:</i>	ACRL's biennial Conference EDUCAUSE Others, depending on interest area
	<i>Publications of Note:</i>	<i>The Journal of Academic Librarianship</i> <i>College & Research Libraries</i> and <i>College & Research Libraries News</i> (published by ACRL) <i>portal: Libraries and the Academy</i>
Required Courses:	<i>For all students:</i>	510 The Information Environment 520 Information Representation and Organization 530 Information Access and Retrieval
Recommended Courses (in SIS):	<i>Everyone:</i>	552 Academic Libraries 599 Practicum
	<i>Strongly recommended, regardless of interest area:</i>	504 Research Methods for Information Professionals 505 ePortfolio 550 Management of Information Organizations 559 - Grant Development for Information Professionals 560 Development and Management of Collections 581 Information Network Applications

<i>Technical Services/ Electronic Resources:</i>	521 Cataloging and Classification 522 Cataloging of Non-print Materials 523 Abstracting and Indexing 565 Digital Libraries 592 Big Data Analytics* 597 Information Architecture 598 Web Design
<i>Public/ User Services:</i>	531 Sources and Services for the Social Sciences 532 Sources and Services for Science and Engineering 533 Sources and Services for the Humanities 534 Government Information Sources 535 Advanced Information Retrieval 557 User Instruction 587 Mining the Web
<i>Specialized Settings:</i>	547 Health Sciences Information Centers 564 Archives and Records Management
Recommended Courses (Outside SIS):	<i>Specialized research/ bibliography courses in area of interest, e.g.,</i> MUSC 510 - Music Bibliography FREN 519 - Bibliography and Methods of Research GERM 519 - Bibliography and Methods of Research
<i>Higher Education Administration courses offer unique insight into academic life:</i>	HEAM 505 - Leadership and Organizational Theory in Higher Education HEAM 536 - Policy Issues in Higher Education Quality Assurance HEAM 543 - American Higher Education in Transition HEAM 615 - Research Design HEAM 617 - Case Study Methods in Educational Research HEAM 619 - Administration and Governance of Higher Education HEAM 632 - Academic Life HEAM 645 - Curriculum and Instruction in Higher Education UNRA 504 - Fundamentals of Sponsored Research

**Real-World
Experience:**

*Recent
Practicum
Settings:*

UTK Hodges Library Integrated User Services Department
UTK Hodges Library Digital Library Initiatives
UTK Hodges Special Collections
Preston Medical Library
Maryville College

*Recent
Placements of
UTK-SIS Alumni:*

University of Alabama
Vanderbilt University
Millersville University (PA)
University of Tennessee
Savannah State University
University of Maryland
Mississippi State University
