



# Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines

**Staffing Standard**  
May 2008

## 2. Public Library Staffing Standard

Revised May 2008

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### 2.1 Objective

The library staffing standard is the minimum requirement for overall staffing and qualified staff levels to ensure consistency of service delivery across local government. To accommodate local circumstances the Guidelines provide additional information to assist library managers in planning their services.

### 2.2 Staffing Standard

#### 2.2.1 Standard for per capita staff levels and qualifications

The following per capita staffing levels and qualification statements apply to Queensland public libraries and should be viewed as a minimum requirement for the provision of an adequate library service.

<i>Overall Staff Levels</i>	
Populations over 3,000	One full-time equivalent staff member per 3,000 population should be employed.
Populations less than 3,000	One full-time equivalent staff member per 3,000 population or part thereof should be employed.
<i>Qualified Staff</i>	
Populations over 35,000	For every 10,000 people or part thereof, one of the overall full-time equivalent staff should be a qualified librarian. One of the qualified librarians should be in a specialist position to suit the demographics and needs of the community.
Populations over 10,000	For every 10,000 people or part thereof, one of the overall full-time equivalent staff should be a qualified librarian.
Populations between 2,000 and 10,000	The Library Administrator should preferably be a qualified librarian or person with a similar degree level qualification. At a minimum, they should hold Library Technician qualifications, or Certificate III in Library and Information Services, or a Diploma of Local Government.
Populations less than 2,000	The preferred minimum qualification for a Library Administrator should be Certificate II in Library and Information Services.

### **2.2.2 Standard for employment**

Staff in Queensland public libraries should be employed under the appropriate industrial awards and enterprise bargaining agreements in place between Federal, State and Local Governments. Employers should adhere to conformity to equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and workplace health and safety legislation.

Appointment should be at the level within the relevant industrial award which most accurately reflects the duties and responsibilities of the position and should be comparative to similar positions in the library and/or local government sector. A mix of staff levels ensuring an adequate range of skills and knowledge are essential for the delivery of library services.

A written role description outlining the key duties of each position within a library service should be in place and should include any educational and experience requirements, specific accountabilities, workplace health and safety aspects (e.g. lifting boxes), and salary range. Accurate, up-to-date role descriptions are essential for staff recruitment, training and performance appraisal.

During library opening hours, library staff should be available at all times to assist library clients. Library staff should have additional allocated paid time for tasks that would impact on service quality if undertaken during opening hours. This is particularly relevant for small libraries. Where non-library duties are involved in the position, additional paid time should be allocated for the performance of these duties.

Relief staff should be employed for periods of leave and attendance at training. These staff need to be scheduled to work regularly in the library to maintain skills and familiarity with procedures. Preferably, relief staff should hold similar qualifications to permanent staff.

### **2.2.3 Standard for volunteers**

A written policy is to be in place defining the tasks which may be undertaken by volunteers working in the library. The policy should clarify the volunteer's relationship to the library operation and staff. Volunteers should never be used as a substitute for appropriately trained and paid library staff. Their role should be separate from the day to day operation of the library service and the tasks they undertake should not comprise core library duties. For further information refer <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/volunteer.workers.html>

## **2.3 Guidelines**

### **2.3.1 Guidelines for qualifications and skill mix**

All public library services in Queensland over 10,000 should be managed by a qualified librarian. Managers with formal library qualifications and appropriate experience are best equipped to lead and plan contemporary library services and undertake required professional duties. In larger library services over 35,000 where non-library qualified staff are employed to manage the library service, qualified librarians should be employed at senior and branch levels.

For populations of below 10,000, candidates studying towards the recommended qualifications should be considered for employment if their level of experience meets the selection criteria. In addition, the broader contribution to council functions which can be expected from staff with tertiary qualifications should also be considered in selection.

Larger library services may also employ specialist staff to support library programs or functions such as information technology, marketing and administration. These staff may hold non-library related qualifications and may be employed in order that their skills and knowledge enrich the overall library service.

The skill mix of staff as outlined in Australian Library and Information Association's statement on *The library and information sector: core knowledge, skills and attributes* 2005 should be considered when employing library staff.  
(<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/core.knowledge.html>)

### **2.3.2 Guidelines for staffing level variables**

Staffing levels, qualifications and skill mix influence the adequacy, quality and variety of a library service. Variables which impact on the optimum number and type of staff required in any one library service given the diverse nature of communities and their demographics include:

- Number and type of service points
- Library usage (loans, visits etc)
- Hours of opening
- Range of services provided, including community services
- Type of building (number of levels and help desks, layout etc)
- Population distribution
- Demographic analysis of population (e.g. young people, seniors etc)
- Extent of need and demand for specialist services
- Extent to which any services are contracted out
- Co-location with other services (do the library staff perform other functions such as council customer service?)
- Extent to which technology is used (e.g. self-service facilities).

### **2.3.3 Staff Composition**

The composition of a library service's staff should ideally reflect the broad demographic profile of the community it serves. For example, where a community has a high youth population, this group should be appropriately represented within library staff. This demonstrates commitment and responsiveness to the community.

### **2.3.4 Guidelines for staff training**

All public library staff should receive ongoing training and development to ensure effective service provision and to keep in touch with the changing library and information technology environment. Training and development should include opportunities for, but are not limited to, training courses and seminars, on-the-job training, job rotation and/or staff exchanges.

Professional development opportunities for networking and conference attendance should also be provided together with opportunities for undertaking study for formal library qualifications or extension of qualifications (e.g. post graduate studies) for long term staff. These opportunities are critical to staff development and continuous improvement in service delivery outcomes. Consideration for financial support and approval of leave for course requirements should be offered and staff attainment be acknowledged and rewarded.

Casual and relief staff should have equal access to sufficient training to undertake the requirements of their position with a minimum of supervision.

### 2.3.5 Guidelines for specialist staffing

Library services should provide services to special needs groups in their communities, including people with disabilities, CALD (Culturally and linguistically diverse) communities, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, people with special literacy needs, and targeted age groups such as young people and seniors.

Library services to these groups should be managed by staff with appropriate skills and training. Wherever possible, specialist staff should be assigned responsibility for these services, though it is important that all library staff receive cultural awareness training and be sensitive to the needs of these groups. In library services where staff multi-skilling is required, policy responsibility allocations should be co-ordinated to suit local requirements.

For more detail on staffing for specialist services, please refer to Section 10.

### 2.4 Performance indicators

A wide range of key performance indicators (KPIs) should be used to determine the appropriateness of a library service's staffing with respect to both levels and quality. Indicators will vary in their usefulness when required for different purposes.

The following general indicators are suggested as examples only:

- Ratio of full-time equivalent staff to population
- Ratio of qualified staff to population
- Ratio of FTE staff to loans
- Training undertaken by each staff member
- Position Descriptions for each position
- Appropriateness of staff composition (qualification and skill mix, community profile representation etc).

### 2.5 Definitions

**Library Administrators** are responsible for the day to day administration and operation of a library service for populations under 10,000. Though professional skills are preferred, Administrators may possess qualifications at the Certificate, Technician, or Diploma level. Library Administrators may work alone in the library with minimum relief staff available in busy periods.

**Library Managers** are professional staff responsible for the planning, policy and service development of public library services, as well as overall leadership and management. Preferably, they will be qualified librarians. They may also have additional tertiary qualifications in relevant fields and undertake roles in broader corporate planning and management.

**Librarians** are professional staff who have undertaken a tertiary course of study in librarianship and information studies which qualifies them for admission to Associate membership of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Librarians develop and implement policies and deliver services to meet the needs of library clients. In public libraries, this includes collection development, the organisation of resources, the provision of assistance to users in the retrieval of information and library resources, and promotion of services.

**Library Technicians** are paraprofessional staff who have undertaken a course of study which qualifies them for admission to library technician membership of the ALIA. Library Technicians assist in providing library and information services with a

major focus on the operation, maintenance and/or control of systems which support the acquisition, accessioning, organisation and care of library materials. Experienced library technicians or those paid at higher levels may undertake a wider range of duties, such as the monitoring of more junior staff or the supervision of operational activities.

**Library Assistants** do not require formal library qualifications. Duties typically include customer service, lending functions, program support and operational tasks such as shelving, end processing and data entry. Experienced library assistants or those paid at higher levels may undertake a broader range of tasks and duties.