

Guidelines for Library Support of Distance and Distributed Learning in Canada

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Introduction

There has been tremendous growth in the size and importance of the distance education/distributed learning market, both at academic institutions and in the private sector. Many Canadian universities and colleges offer courses and programs for students located away from their institutional campuses. Advancements in communications technologies and distance education delivery methods have facilitated the growth of these academic programs. Indeed, cooperative ventures in offering distance education programs are being created between institutions due to these advancements. Distance learning continues to be an attractive option for individuals who wish to continue or upgrade their education on a part-time basis without coming on campus.

Yet, these same advances in technologies have been accompanied by sky-rocketing costs of library resources, especially journal subscriptions and electronic databases. This is also a time when libraries have had to cut back collections budgets and staff. There is a danger that inconsistencies in library support for Canadian distance learning programs will be increased as smaller institutions struggle even to maintain on-campus service. It is now more crucial than ever that the planning process for distance learning library services in Canada be developed in order to ensure equitable access to library resources between students and institutions.

The following guidelines were developed by a committee of the Services for Distance Learning Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association. The guidelines were modelled on the ACRL Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services (Association of College and Research Libraries, 1998) but are narrower in scope, reflecting issues and recommendations that are more appropriate to the Canadian context. The purpose of the guidelines is to emphasize the importance of planning and delivering effective library services to support Canadian distance and distributed learning programs.

Some sections of the guidelines will be more applicable to certain institutions than to others. Each institution is encouraged to review the guidelines in relation to its unique

circumstances and to use this document to ensure that the issue of library support for distance and distributed learning programs is an integral part of the institutional planning process.

Definitions

Originating Institution: The corporate entity or body, usually a university or college, responsible for offering and funding post-secondary level courses and programs delivered in a distance or distributed learning mode. This credit -granting body may be singular or collective, and may or may not have a physical campus.

The Library: The library or library system of the originating institution.

Main Campus: The primary campus or location of the originating institution where the majority of its library resources are concentrated, or which serves as the base for library operations.

Branch Campus: A secondary campus of the originating institution that usually has its own library.

Unaffiliated Library: A library not organizationally associated with or funded by the originating institution.

Distance Learning Program: An organized program of post-secondary course work or independent study which can be undertaken away from the main and branch campuses or headquarters of the originating institution. Note: In the context of this document, "distance learning program" refers to the offerings of the originating institution as a whole, including all programs and courses designated as off-campus or distance education.

Distributed Learning: An instructional model that utilizes computer technology and allows instructor, students, and content to be located in different, non-centralized locations so that instruction and learning occur independent of time and place. The distributed learning model can be used in combination with traditional classroom-based courses, with traditional distance learning courses, or it can be used to create wholly virtual classrooms.

Distant Learners: Students enrolled in a distance or distributed learning program or completing formal course work off-campus.

Guideline Parameters

1. These guidelines are concerned with library support for distance and distributed learning courses and programs and for distant learners who are unable or choose not to use the libraries of the originating institution in person on a regular basis.
2. The guidelines do not pertain to services and support for libraries of branch campuses. The guidelines do not, however, preclude services and support for small collections or informal libraries at off-campus teaching sites.
3. The guidelines are concerned with support for credit, certificate, and diploma programs. While non-credit programs are excluded from the scope of this document, the library administration of the originating institution may choose to extend the guidelines to these types of programs.
4. The guidelines include library services for distant learners registered at the originating institution who are:
 - attending university and college classes at locations distant from the main and branch campuses;
 - taking courses through distance education delivery methods, including traditional correspondence programs and televised, online or computer-mediated and independent study courses utilizing a range or combination of print, audio, visual, or computer/Internet based materials;
 - on field practicums or work-study terms;
 - completing academic programs on an independent basis at locations away from the main and branch campuses.
5. The guidelines include library services for faculty, part-time instructors, course designers, and tutors who are involved with distance or distributed learning and off-campus credit, certificate, and diploma programs.

Philosophy

The following assumptions underpin this document:

1. Access to library resources is essential for quality in post-secondary education regardless of where the learners and programs are located.
2. Registered students and course instructors who are located away from the campuses of the originating institution are entitled to library and computer-based

services as open and equitable as those provided for students and instructors on campus.

3. Because distant learners are often disadvantaged in terms of library access, equitable library services in this context may involve more personalized services than would be expected on campus. It cannot be assumed that traditional library services, designed to support on-campus users, will meet the information needs of individuals involved in distance learning.
4. The originating institution is responsible for ensuring that its distant learners have access to appropriate library resources, including resources associated with the Internet and World Wide Web.
5. Distant learners may choose to use local libraries for their academic needs, but if those libraries are unable or unwilling to provide the necessary support, the originating institution must be prepared to offer or arrange that support so the distant learner can acquire relevant resources or information.
6. Distant learners lacking local access to relevant library resources or trained library staff require a means to obtain library materials and support services directly from the originating institution.
7. Effective library support for a distance or distributed learning program requires advance planning by the Library in consultation with faculty, program administrators and other appropriate campus personnel, and with librarians at unaffiliated libraries.

Finances

The originating institution should provide appropriate, separately designated funding to ensure that its distant learners receive library support which is as equivalent as possible to that provided for on-campus library users.

1. The Library should demonstrate leadership in developing a budget to address the library needs of the institution's distance or distributed learning program. The development of this budget should take the following factors into consideration:
 - the size of the distance or distributed learning program;
 - the degree to which distant learners are disadvantaged in terms of access to relevant resources at local libraries;
 - the willingness of unaffiliated libraries to serve students in the distance or distributed learning program;

- the need to acknowledge the support provided by unaffiliated libraries and to provide appropriate compensation to those libraries as required;
 - the type and number of library services that must be provided from the originating institution to adequately support courses in the distance or distributed learning program;
 - the need for enhanced library, technical, financial or instructional support demonstrated by students, faculty and instructors involved in distance or distributed learning.
2. The originating institution must recognize that library services for distance and distributed learning programs have distinct costs that cannot easily be subsumed under the Library's regular operating budget. The institution should provide a means for adding appropriate funding to the Library's budget in order to subsidize these services. This means may involve cost sharing with the campus agencies responsible for administering the various distance or distributed learning courses and programs.
 3. Management of the budget for library services for the distance or distributed learning program should be assumed by the Library in cases where costs are shared with or heavily subsidized by other campus agencies.
The budget for library services should reflect real costs based on the formally defined needs and the changing demands of the distance or distributed learning program.
 4. Financial support for distance learning library services must be identified as a recurring item in the budgeting process of the originating institution.
 5. Funds should be allocated on a schedule that matches the budgeting cycle of the Library or at a time when they can be expended by library staff in a manner that best meets the needs of the distance learning program.

Administration

1. Leadership in developing relationships and methodologies to address the library needs of the institution's distance or distributed learning program should come from all levels of the institutional administration, but particularly from the Library.
 - This leadership should involve initiating dialogue, collaboration, and developing cooperative partnerships with agencies on or off campus which administer the various distance or distributed learning courses and programs.
 - This leadership may involve fostering informal or formal agreements with unaffiliated libraries to support the library needs of distant learners.

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2. The Library should designate a librarian to coordinate the development and delivery of library services for the distance or distributed learning program.
3. In collaboration with the library administration and other appropriate campus agencies, the librarian designated to coordinate distance learning library services should be responsible for performing the following administrative functions:
 - assessing the library needs of students, instructors, and other personnel involved in the distance or distributed learning program;
 - assessing existing library support for the distance or distributed learning program, including the availability of relevant resources at local libraries;
 - preparing a written profile of the library needs of the distance or distributed learning program;
 - developing a written statement of immediate and long-term goals and objectives that address the needs and outline methods by which progress can be measured;
 - involving students and instructors and other relevant personnel in the distance or distributed learning program in the development of objectives and in the regular evaluation of their achievement;
 - participating, or identifying library subject specialists to participate, with administrators, faculty, and instructors in the curriculum development process and in course planning to ensure appropriate library resources and services are available in the distance or distributed learning program;
 - preparing or modifying collections development and acquisitions policies to support the resource needs of the distance or distributed learning program;
 - developing methodologies, as appropriate, for providing library services to distant learners from the main campus, branch campuses, remote teaching centres, and unaffiliated libraries;
 - investigating and promoting the use of automated and innovative technologies or communications systems appropriate for meeting the library resource and service needs of distant learners;
 - developing partnerships with computing services departments to provide the necessary technical support to distant learners who access electronic resources from off-campus locations;
 - promoting library services to students and instructors in the distance or distributed learning program;

- planning and developing library instruction programs for distant learners to assist in improving their research skills in using print and electronic resources at off-campus locations;
 - determining, in consultation with computing services staff, a means to provide distant learners with training in basic computer operating skills equivalent to what might be available for on-campus users;
 - collaborating with other library staff to coordinate programs and services for the mutual benefit of on-campus students and distant learners;
 - developing a methodology for evaluating the library and information services provided to distant learners.
4. Where it appears that cooperation with selected unaffiliated libraries could enhance service to distant learners, the designated librarian should enter into discussions with the librarians at those institutions. These discussions should examine the ability and willingness of these libraries to work cooperatively to support the originating institution's distant learners. Wherever appropriate, such collaboration should result in formal or informal agreements for the provision of library services to distant learners. In order to minimize disparity between institutions with differing levels of technology and resources, such agreements may include but are not limited to:
- the loan of library materials on a temporary basis from the originating institution to the unaffiliated library;
 - assistance from the originating institution towards the purchase or sharing of library resource materials and/or equipment so that the unaffiliated library can support the distance or distributed learning program;
 - a fee for service;
 - reciprocal library services;
 - access to networked databases and electronic resources available through the Library.
5. The goals and objectives developed for the distance or distributed learning program should be incorporated, together with statements of mission, mandate, and policy, into the Library's strategic planning process and reflected in the broader institutional mission.

Personnel

1. In addition to the librarian designated to coordinate services for the distance or distributed learning program, the Library should ensure that adequate professional and support staff are available to respond effectively to the library needs of distant learners.
2. Where direct library support is to be provided to distant learners from the originating institution, at least one support staff member should be assigned to assist the designated librarian with the processing of library requests.
3. The Library should ensure that distant learners and their instructors have access, as required, to the collective specialized reference staff of the originating institution.
4. In institutions offering bilingual programming, it is essential that distant learners have access to bilingual staff at all times.

Facilities

Where direct library support is to be provided to distant learners from the originating institution, the Library should provide adequate space and equipment to enable the designated staff to operate effectively as a service unit. Examples of suitable arrangements may include but are not limited to:

- a separate office area for staff;
- shelving space to hold library materials intended for use in the distance learning program;
- a separate telephone line dedicated to the distance learning program;
- a telephone answering machine or similar technology to record messages from distant learners;
- filing and storage facilities to organize and maintain transaction records, office files, correspondence, etc.
access to a photocopier and telefacsimile machine;
- access to mail room services such as parcel wrapping and postage;
- access to appropriate computer and telecommunications facilities and networks along with the appropriate training in the use of such hardware and software;
- a separate e-mail account and web site for the service.

Resources

1. Through either an unaffiliated library or a direct service from the originating institution, print and electronic resources should be made available to the distance or distributed learning program in appropriate number, scope, and format in order to:
 - support the curriculum;
 - assist distant learners in completing course assignments, projects, and theses;
 - supply copies of recommended or supplementary readings or audio-visual materials to distant learners;
 - support the library needs of faculty and instructors for course preparation or teaching;
 - satisfy the need for reference and bibliographic information.
2. When two or more institutions enter into a partnership to offer a specific program, they must cooperate to provide library resources to support the program. Distant learners should have access to the library resources for a specific course from the institution offering that course, regardless of whether the student is registered at that institution. Institutions participating in the program should work together to standardize library services to distant learners so that the students will encounter the same costs and services for library materials for every course associated with the program. The standard of library service for these cooperative programs may differ from the general service policy of an individual institution.
3. The Library should be prepared to lend monographs from its circulating collections to distant learners. Such loans may involve special loan periods to accommodate the time for delivery to and from off-campus locations. In cases where distant learners reside in other countries where it is impractical to send monographs, appropriate substitute material should be provided in photocopy or electronic format in compliance with Canadian copyright law.
4. In cases where there is high demand from distant learners for specific library items, the Library should arrange for the purchase of additional copies of the required material.
5. Where there is a demonstrated need for reference and bibliographic resources at an off-campus location, the Library should be prepared to deposit relevant materials at an unaffiliated library or local centre through either a loan or purchase arrangement.
6. With the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web as well as the rapid proliferation of personal computers, resources are more widely available in an

electronic format. Such electronic or digitized resources may include but not be limited to:

- CD-ROM or online full-text, image, audio, video or audio-visual files;
- descriptive or numeric datasets or databases accessible online or through electronic networks including the Internet/World Wide Web;
- other online or networked resources such as FTP (file transfer protocol), listservs, NewsNets, the World Wide Web, and electronic chat rooms. As these electronic resources are more commonly accepted as legitimate resource materials, the Library should work to promote equitable access to these resources for the distant learner by means such as:
 - providing access to the appropriate computer technology and software at off-campus sites;
 - training users how to effectively locate electronic information on remote servers and how to download this information for local use;
 - instructing users in managing electronic information, including the appropriate style for citing electronic resources;
 - developing policies on adherence to copyright and appropriate computer usage;
 - supplying electronic documents in print format, in compliance with copyright law, to distant learners who are unable to access the appropriate technology.

Services

In order to meet the information needs of the distance or distributed learning program, a wide range of services may be necessary. All students and instructors in the distance or distributed learning program, regardless of location or country, should have a means to:

- consult with a librarian from the originating institution either in person, or by telephone, fax, e-mail, or some other means of electronic-mediated communication;
- conduct subject and literature searches on course topics, either in person or through the services of a librarian acting as an intermediary at the originating institution;
- request general reference assistance;
- borrow or obtain access to recommended or supplementary readings or audio-visual materials;

- borrow specific monographs for course purposes or receive equivalent material in photocopy format in compliance with Canadian copyright law;
- obtain copies of specific articles for course purposes in compliance with Canadian copyright law;
- access, from remote locations, the online catalogue of the originating institution and any bibliographic or full-text databases which may be mounted on the system or otherwise available through the originating institution;
- access interlibrary loan services as required, in accordance with the regular library policies of the originating institution;
- request the prompt delivery of library materials from the originating institution in cases where that material cannot be obtained easily and quickly through an unaffiliated library or by electronic means;
- receive instruction or orientation in the use of libraries, library resources, or in automated library systems which are used for course-related research;
- acquire basic information literacy skills to fulfil course requirements;
- access other library facilities, resources, specialized reference staff, and services as required for the distance or distributed learning program;
- provide feedback and comments to the originating institution regarding library services and resources.

Certain services to distant learners may exceed the limits of the subsidy from the originating institution and require some cost recovery from the users. Individual institutions may choose to charge distant learners for specific services such as mailing or faxing material to foreign countries.

Publicity

Access to library facilities, resources, and services should be clearly advertised and promoted in the distance or distributed learning program to ensure that all students, faculty, and instructors are well informed about how to obtain required information and materials. Examples of publicity in this context may include but are not restricted to:

- separate handouts or brochures;
- inserts in handbooks, guides, calendars, and other material describing the distance or distributed learning program;
- announcements in general publicity about the distance or distributed learning program;

- a site on the World Wide Web;
- personal visits by the designated librarian to off-campus sites;
- library instruction sessions for distant learners conducted either in person, through print or audio-visual materials, on the World Wide Web, or by computer-, audio- or teleconferencing methods.

Professional Development

To enable its librarians to provide effective services for distance and distributed learning programs and to support lifelong learning in general, the Library should provide a means for its professional staff to update their knowledge and skills in areas related to instruction and technology through participation in continuing education programs, workshops, and training sessions.

History of the Guidelines

This is a modified version of the Preface that appeared at the beginning of the first set of Guidelines.

Development of the Guidelines

The 1980s and early 1990s were a period of growth and development in post-secondary off-campus and distance education. Statistics available at the time indicated that at least fifty per cent of the country's universities offered opportunities for students to study away from the main campus on a part-time basis (Canadian Association for University Continuing Education, 1992; Statistics Canada, 1992). This percentage was likely higher, since some institutions offer classroom courses at remote centres but may not count these courses as a form of distance education. Many community colleges and technological institutes are also providers of off-campus and distance education programs, but exact numbers are not readily available.

The term "distance learning" used in this document encompasses all forms of post-secondary education undertaken away from the main and branch campuses of the originating institution. Included are both off-campus classroom courses and distance education courses which involve independent study and utilize a wide range of media

and methods, such as print materials, audio and video cassettes, television broadcasts, audio-conferencing, teleconferencing, and communication through computer networks.

Since the early 1980s, considerable attention has been devoted in the international library community to the topic of library support for distance learning (Latham, 1991). This is especially true in Canada, the United States, and Australia, which all have similar types of distance learning programs. Library support for Canadian distance learning programs has been inconsistent. A national survey conducted in 1988 indicated that while many academic libraries were willing to provide library services for off-campus programs, very few had established mechanisms to deliver these services. One of the conclusions of the survey report was that "the planning process for off-campus library services in Canada is relatively underdeveloped" (Slade, 1988).

Part of the attention devoted to this area has been the result of a sense of frustration amongst librarians about the lack of institutional funding, administrative support, and human and material resources available for distance learning library services. A common complaint of librarians attending conferences and workshops in this area has been that administrators of distance learning programs often do not plan or lobby for library services to support their programs. As a result, institutional librarians have had to respond in a reactive manner to requests for library services from distance learners. "The issue of level of services is resolved differently by each institution providing off-campus programs and is primarily decided by the financial resources committed, the attitude of administrators, and the creativity of librarians" (Aguilar & Kascus, 1991, p.369).

In order to emphasize the importance of library support for distance learning and the need for proactive planning in this area, the library associations of the United States and Australia have endorsed national guidelines for distance learning library services (Association of College and Research Libraries, 1998; Crocker, 1982). Several of the issues included in these guidelines are equally applicable to Canadian academic institutions. In addition, Canadian librarians share many of the same concerns about library services for distance learning as those expressed by their American and Australian colleagues. However, Canada did not keep pace with these other two countries in establishing national guidelines.

In order to address this omission, in 1992 the Services for Distance Learning Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association initiated the development of guidelines which would be unique to Canada. To this end, a committee of the Interest Group was formed with a mandate to produce a draft document. Members of the Committee were

Alexander (Sandy) Slade (Chair), University of Victoria; Carol Budnick, University of Manitoba; Del Affleck, University of Regina; and Glen Kelly, Laurentian University.

The Committee's first draft of the guidelines was completed in the spring of 1992. The document was modelled on the 1990 ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services (Association of College and Research Libraries, 1990) but provided a somewhat different emphasis on administration, personnel, resources, and services. The model described by Slade (1991) was influential in the development of the guidelines.

The first draft of the guidelines was published in the Spring 1992 issue of *The D.Ed. Letter* (the Interest Group newsletter). Written comments were invited from the Interest Group membership, and the document was discussed at the annual meeting of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) in Winnipeg in June. On the basis of the written and verbal comments received, the Committee revised the document and published the revision in the Fall 1992 issue of the newsletter. Further comments were invited with a deadline of September 30th.

A few recommendations were received in response to that invitation and appropriate changes were made in the Guidelines. The document was then submitted to the Executive of the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries (CACUL) with a recommendation and request for endorsement by the association. That endorsement was received at the fall meeting of CACUL. Some editorial changes were suggested by CACUL at that time and the document was revised accordingly.

The guidelines were then published in the November/December 1992 issue of *Feliciter*. Comments were invited from the Canadian library community as a whole on the appropriateness of the document. Following this, the guidelines were submitted to CLA Council in February 1993 for endorsement at the national level. The guidelines were endorsed as submitted with no recommendations for change.

The resulting document was intended to serve a number of purposes:

- to assist in the development of library services for new distance learning programs;
- to assist in the improvement of library services for existing distance learning programs;
- to stress the need for the originating institution to assume full responsibility for ensuring that distant learners have access to library services that are equivalent to services provided to on-campus patrons;

- to emphasize that traditional library services are not sufficient to meet the library needs of most distant learners and that special funding arrangements and proactive planning are necessary to deliver equitable library services and to maintain quality in distance learning programs.

The concluding paragraph from the Preface summarizes the intention of the first set of guidelines: "Different institutions will utilize these guidelines in different ways depending on local circumstances, but the primary purpose of this document is to increase awareness within the academic and library communities of the commitment required to provide adequate library support for Canadian distance learning programs."

The Revision Process

In 1997 the CLA Services for Distance Learning Interest Group identified a need to review the guidelines. An announcement to this effect appeared in the December 1997 issue of Distlib Digest, the Interest Group's newsletter. It stated that "as the structure of distance education changes we must ensure that the guidelines apply to the multitude of 'off-campus' options."

Following a call for volunteers to review the guidelines, a small committee was formed. The members were Leila Wallenius, Laurentian University; Chris Adams, University of Saskatchewan; and Alexander (Sandy) Slade, University of Victoria. Leila Wallenius subsequently stepped down from the committee and was replaced by Susan Massarella, Laurentian University.

The review process began with a meeting of the Canadian librarians attending the Eighth Off-Campus Library Services Conference in Providence, R.I., in April 1998. Harvey Gover, chair of the ACRL Distance Learning Section Guidelines Committee, also attended the meeting and provided feedback based on the recent revision of the ACRL *Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services*. Following the meeting, written comments were submitted to Sandy Slade, who had volunteered to integrate proposed changes into the text of the existing guidelines.

A first draft of the revised guidelines was completed in June 1998 and mounted on the World Wide Web. Members of the Interest Group were invited via the DISTLIB-L listserver to comment on the draft. In response to responses received, a second draft was made available on the Web in November 1998. Reaction to the second draft was encouraged through Feliciter and DISTLIB-L. More responses were received, including some insightful comments from Harvey Gover. Interest Group members were given one

final opportunity via DISTLIB-L to react to the latest draft in December 1999. When no further comments were received, the draft was forwarded in January 2000 to the Interest Group Convenor for submission to CACUL and then CLA Executive Council. The guidelines were approved by CACUL in June 2000 and by CLA Executive Council in November 2000.

The format and organization of the original guidelines were retained in the revision process. Some of the more significant changes include:

- introduction of the concept of distributed learning to expand the scope of the document;
- a change of wording from "parent institution" to "originating institution";
- acknowledgement of the influence of information and communications technologies on distance learning;
- integration of electronic resources and services into appropriate sections of the document;
- emphasis on the need to provide separately designated funding for distance learning library services;
- identification of the need to develop formal or informal agreements with unaffiliated libraries for the provision of library services to distant learners; addition of a section on professional development.

The Services for Distance Learning Interest Group will continue to monitor the guidelines in relation to developments in distance learning and the information and communications technologies to ensure that the document reflects the current needs of distance learners and the libraries that serve them.

Alexander L. Slade
University of Victoria

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