The following standards were developed by the Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee of ACRL (Association of College & Research Libraries), based on the 2001 National Association of Social Workers Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice. The standards are intended to emphasize the need and obligation to serve and advocate for racial and ethnically diverse constituencies. As such, they are intended to apply to all libraries supporting academic programs at institutions of higher education.

**Standard 1. Cultural awareness of self and others**
Librarians and library staff shall develop an understanding of their own personal and cultural values and beliefs as a first step in appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of the people they work with and serve.

Culturally competent librarians and library staff shall:
- Examine their social identities and cultural heritage to increase awareness of their own assumptions, values, biases, and prejudices and how these influence interactions with constituents, colleagues, and co-workers.
- Identify and acknowledge how fears, ignorance, and the “-isms” have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
- Develop and employ strategies to identify and change detrimental attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
- Recognize when personal and professional limitations warrant the referral of a constituent to another resource and skillfully execute such referrals.
- Recognize that normative behavior in one context may not be understood or valued in another context.
- Acknowledge the ways in which membership in various social groups influences worldview, what privileges one is afforded, and the potential to be a target of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.

**Standard 2. Cross-cultural knowledge and skills**
Librarians and library staff shall have and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, and artistic expressions of colleagues, co-workers, and major constituencies served.

Culturally competent librarians and library staff shall:
- Work with a wide range of people who are culturally different and similar to themselves and establish avenues for learning about the cultures of these colleagues, co-workers, and constituents.
- Assess the meaning of culture for individual colleagues, co-workers, and constituents; encourage open discussion of differences; and respond to culturally biased cues.
- Integrate the information gained from a culturally competent assessment into appropriate and effective services.
- Select and develop appropriate methods, skills, and approaches that are attuned to colleagues’, co-workers’, and constituents’ cultural, bicultural, or marginal experiences in their environments.
• Demonstrate advocacy and empowerment skills in work with constituents, librarians, and library staff and administrators, recognizing and combating the “-isms”, stereotypes, and myths held by individuals and organizations.
• Identify service delivery systems or models that are appropriate to the targeted constituent groups.
• Consult with supervisors and colleagues for feedback and monitoring of performance and to identify features of their own professional style that impede or enhance their culturally competent practice.
• Evaluate the validity and applicability of new techniques, research, and knowledge for work with diverse colleagues, co-workers, and constituent groups.

Standard 3. Organizational and professional values
Librarians and library staff shall develop and support organizational and professional values dedicated to culturally competent service.

Culturally competent librarians and library staff shall:
• Defining and prioritizing a set of core values and principles demonstrating a multifaceted commitment to diversity-minded service for employees to follow.
• Creating and maintaining services that are guided by an awareness of current and emerging demographic and sociocultural trends in the constituencies served by the library.
• Creating and maintaining a workplace climate that demonstrates commitment to cultural pluralism.
• Including cultural competency requirements in employee performance review and assessment procedures.
• Implementing recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts that ensure diversity within the profession.
• Creating or providing access to employee educational and training programs that advance cultural competency within the organization.
• Creating and providing services responsive to people of varying ethnic, racial, religious, or social backgrounds.

Standard 4. Development of collections, programs, and services
Librarians and library staff shall develop collections and provide programs and services that are inclusive of the needs of all persons in the community the library serves.

Culturally competent librarians and library staff shall:
• Providing an equitable basis for purchasing materials and providing programs and services.
• Ensuring that consideration of the needs of historically oppressed, underrepresented, and underserved groups is integral to collection development and management and the provision of programs and services. Regularly assessing the adequacy of existing collections, programs, and services to ensure they are reflective of the diversity of the library’s constituent populations.
• Regularly reviewing the current and emergent demographic trends for the library’s constituent populations to inform collection development and management and the provision of programs and services.
• Providing increased accessibility through cataloging by allowing natural language words and advocating for changes in the LOC headings.
• Creating and advocating for the creation of programs and services that are reflective of the cultural heritage, cultural backgrounds, and social identities of the library’s constituent populations.
• Including constituents as major stakeholders in decision-making and advisory entities and the planning, development, and evaluation of collections, programs, and services.

**Standard 5. Service delivery**
Librarians and library staff shall be knowledgeable about and skillful in the use and provision of information services available in the community and broader society, and shall be able to make appropriate referrals for their diverse constituencies.

Culturally competent librarians and library staff shall:

• Promote free and open access to information for all constituents through support and advocacy of the Library Bill of Rights.
• Create, implement, and evaluate service delivery systems or models that are relevant and appropriate to the targeted constituent populations or advocate for the creation of such services.
• Develop instructional methods, practices, and resources that are widely accessible and reflective of the broad diversity of learning styles, language abilities, developmental skills, and cultural perspectives represented in the learning community.
• Review current and emerging demographic trends for the library’s constituent populations to determine service needs.
• Actively recruit multiethnic/multicultural staff and include cultural competence requirements in job descriptions and performance and promotion measures.
• Develop staffing plans that reflect the organization and the targeted constituent population (for example, hiring, position descriptions, performance evaluations, training).
• Employ effective strategies for confronting librarian and library staff remarks, attitudes, and behaviors that insult, devalue, or demean constituents or their culture.

**Standard 6. Language diversity**
Librarians and library staff shall support the preservation and promotion of linguistic diversity, and work to foster a climate of inclusion aimed at eliminating discrimination and oppression based on linguistic or other diversities.

Culturally competent librarians and library staff shall:

• Provide and advocate for the provision of information, reference, referrals, instruction, collection management, and other services in the language appropriate to their constituencies, including the use of interpreters.
• Master reference interviewing techniques that reflect an understanding of the role of language in the client’s culture.
• Acknowledge the efforts of English-language learners or the constituent with speech impediments. Patient listening is necessary. Consider alternative ways (technology or writing) to communicate with the constituent.
• Review the current and emergent demographic trends for the library’s constituent populations to determine the need for the provision of interpretation and translation services.
• Collection managers should be attentive to represent the linguistic needs of library constituents, and assure that library resources in print or electronic formats are available, especially to support the academic curricula reflecting all diversity issues, including those of visually disabled constituents.
• Clear signage, perhaps in more than one language appropriate to the library’s constituencies, should be used prominently. Translation of guides to the library and other important documents should also be considered.
• A guide and/or directory containing the language (including sign language) proficiency of the library’s staff who would be willing to be called as interpreters should be created.

**Standard 7. Workforce diversity**

Librarians and library staff shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions, hiring, and retention efforts in libraries, library associations, and LIS programs to increase diversity and ensure continued diversity in the profession.

The culturally competent organization shall:

• Develop an action plan to actively recruit and retain staff and librarians. Librarians should go beyond the traditional avenues to advertise positions to create and develop formal and informal ways to reach individuals that represent the constituents served.
• Obtain statistics about underrepresented personnel (students, staff, librarians) in the organization review information, and work to understand the lacking numbers and personnel in the organization.
• Develop and implement human resource and other organizational policies, procedures, and practices that support staff diversity.
• Develop and implement organizational policies, procedures, and practices that effectively address the dynamics of a diverse workforce
• Review recruitment, hiring, and promotion policies, procedures, and practices to remedy inadvertent exclusion of or discrimination toward underrepresented, underserved, and historically oppressed groups.
• Implement safeguards against exclusion of or discrimination toward underrepresented, underserved, and historically oppressed groups in the workplace, and take corrective action when inequities are discovered.

**Standard 8. Organizational dynamics**

Librarians and library staff shall participate in and facilitate the development of organizational dynamics that enable individuals, groups, and organizations to continually develop and exercise cultural competence.

The culturally competent organization shall:

• Identify and use applicable theories, methods, frameworks, and models for developing and sustaining multicultural organizations.
• Regularly review and adapt its structures, strategies, policies, practices, and processes to foster an inclusive environment, including identifying and taking steps to address inequity and exclusion (intentional or inadvertent).
• Strive to create structures, strategies, policies, practices, and processes that equitably integrate the values, norms, and behavioral standards of diverse groups, including dominant and nondominant groups.
• Seek outside assistance when needed from campus and community professionals trained in addressing social justice and diversity issues.
• Through its structures, strategies, policies, practices, and change processes:
  • Support the expansion of cross-cultural knowledge and skills at the individual, group, and organizational level.
  • Strive to increase individual, group, and organizational capacity to work with and serve a variety of people and groups.
  • Create opportunities and venues for sharing information and learning regarding cultural competence.
  • Empower all employees to fully participate in the life of the organization; have their voices heard and their perspectives and experiences valued.
• Establish organizational norms that foster openness to and respect for discussing issues of cultural competence, including situations where exclusionary and/or insensitive attitudes and behaviors were experienced.

• Recognize the dynamics inherent to intercultural interactions, including the effect that dominant and nondominant status has on group dynamics and interpersonal interaction.

• Acknowledge cultural competence as an ongoing learning process integral and central to supervision, evaluation, training, hiring, promotion, and human resource management.

• Infuse cultural competence into the enactment of the mission, values, and goals of the organization.

• Foster a workplace climate and organizational culture, through formal and informal means, that actively addresses challenges associated with diversity.

• Foster a workplace climate and organizational culture, through formal and informal means, that leverages, maximizes, and celebrates the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Standard 9. Cross-cultural leadership
Library leaders shall influence, support, and encourage the creation of proactive processes that increase diversity skills; empower colleagues, co-workers, and constituents from diverse backgrounds; share information about diverse populations; and advocate for their concerns.

Culturally competent organizations shall:

• Provide leadership opportunities to library faculty and staff from a variety of cultural backgrounds and support them in developing leadership skills.

• Foster a workplace climate and organizational culture that is open to a variety of leadership styles.

Standard 10. Professional education and continuous learning
Librarians and library staff shall advocate for and participate in educational and training programs that help advance cultural competence within the profession.

• Cultural competence is a vital link between the theoretical and practical knowledge base that defines librarianship. The practicing librarian should stay abreast of current educational trends and training methods needed to stay ahead of changes in professional practice, which includes the evolving needs of diverse populations. Diversity needs to be addressed in library education curricula and needs to be viewed as central to faculty and staff appointments and research agendas.

Standard 11. Research
Research shall be inclusive and respectful of non-Western thought and traditional knowledge reflecting the value of cultural ways of knowing.

Culturally competent researchers shall:

• Reflect on and acknowledge their ethnocentrisms and biases.

• Recognize others’ ethnocentric tendencies and biases.

• Foster sensitivity, openness, and a spirit of inquiry to others’ world views and cultural orientations.

Culturally competent organizations shall:

• Support and encourage research opportunities to explore the gaps in critical knowledge in the profession.

• Assist librarians and library staff in identifying and applying for funding, including providing time, resources, and supportive recommendations.

• Provide funding when possible.
• Assist in establishing and maintaining networks of professionals that will encourage idea development.
• Ensure that research on cultural competency, diversity issues, and related topics is valued in retention, promotion, and tenure processes.