

**Developing guidelines for performance appraisal of subject librarians
in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.**

by

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Declaration

This thesis is the original work of the researcher and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use was made of the works of others, this has been duly acknowledged in the text and included in the list of works cited.

Shirlene Neerputh

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the most precious people in my life:

My husband Soodesh Kumar, daughters Kritika and Prelene and son Vidhir Neerputh as well as my parents: Mr and Mrs S. Ramdhin and my mum-in-law Mrs L. Neerputh.

Abstract

A common theme emerging in the library world today is that quality service in the library and information center is dependent on the quality performance of personnel. Prior to conducting performance appraisals, managers need to ascertain the core performance criteria for quality service provision. This study is important because academic libraries are undergoing radical changes with an emphasis on accountability. In particular, South African tertiary education is faced with dwindling resources and an increased emphasis on accountability.

There appears to be no formal or informal guidelines for appraising the value of subject librarians performing information services in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. It is this problem which this study addressed. The problem investigated in this study is located in the following KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries: Durban Institute of Technology (DIT), Mangosuthu Technikon (Mantech), University of Durban-Westville (UDW) , University of Natal, Durban (UND) and University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (UNP) and the University of Zululand (UniZul). The purpose of the study was to emphasize the importance of performance appraisals for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries and develop initial guidelines for performance appraisals for subject librarians.

The scope of this study is placed within the library human resource management perspective and deals with developing and training librarians for enhanced service delivery within the above tertiary institutions.

Thirty nine subject librarians (from a total of forty three) were surveyed by means of a self administered questionnaire which was distributed via e-mail. The study was able to establish the important aspects of performance appraisal for subject librarians from the literature review, and to make recommendations in respect of developing guidelines for appraising subject librarians in academic libraries. An initial guideline for conducting performance appraisal for subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal will consist of appraising job tasks, key performance areas (KPA's), determining the relevant competencies, skills and behaviour traits.

The major findings of the study were that there appears to be generally a lack of commitment to performance appraisal in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. A large majority of the respondents indicated that their libraries did not have guidelines for performance appraisals of subject librarians. The important aspects of performance appraisal for subject librarians were identified in the study. Key performance areas (KPAs) for subject librarians comprised of reference services, instruction and teaching, management and organisation. The competencies included knowledge of the total information environment as well as customer services. The majority of the respondents indicated that patron surveys were the most important indicator of performance of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ALA | American Library Association |
| CMC | Computer-Mediated Communication |
| CPD | Continuing Professional Development |
| DIT | Durban Institute of Technology |
| DUC | Durban-Umlazi Campus of the University of Zululand |
| E-Mail | Electronic Mail |
| esATI | Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions |
| esAL | Eastern Seaboard Association of Academic Libraries |
| GAELIC | Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IFLA | International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions |
| IT | Information Technology |
| KPAs | Key Performance Areas |
| LIS | Library and Information Services |
| Mantech | Mangosuthu Technikon |
| NWG | National Working Group |
| RUSA | Reference and User Services Association |
| SDI | Selective Dissemination of Information |
| SKA | Skills, Knowledge and Abilities |
| TSA | Technikon Southern Africa |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| TQM | Total Quality Management |
| UDW | University of Durban-Westville |
| UND | University of Natal, Durban |
| UNP | University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg |
| UNISA | University of South Africa |
| UNIZUL | University of Zululand |
| UKZN | University of KwaZulu-Natal |

Chapter One

1. Introduction

How well are you doing your job? This is a question often posed by managers and peers. Quality service in the library and information center is dependent on quality performance of personnel. Prior to conducting performance appraisals managers need to ascertain the core performance criteria for quality service provision.

Is it then possible to determine the core criteria for appraising staff performance? Brophy (1989: 99) states that:

these are exciting times, full of opportunities as well as threats, but we must beware of being carried away by our excitement! The necessary counter to become fossilized and irrelevant - must lie in the development of clear and reliable methods of evaluating our services, of ensuring that they are entirely relevant to our users and of the highest possible quality. We must, in short, be ready to measure our performance.

Assessing performance of library personnel has been a central tenet of human resource management thinking for a number of years. While much of the literature is about the need for performance appraisal, the challenge really begins when we attempt to do something about it. Performance assessment or appraisal is a way of helping us to determine how good or bad service provision is; in that it relates performance to the mission or objectives of the library. Performance appraisal provides a vital mechanism for subject librarians to evaluate their performance outcomes, as well as for realigning service provision.

There is broad agreement among writers in human resource management, librarianship and education on the need for an effective performance appraisal system that is tailored to the requirements of a specific job. Such an appraisal system would increase employee productivity and satisfaction (Bender 1994; Swanepoel 2000; Stueart and Moran 2001; Avery, Dahlinard and Carver 2001).

The value of performance appraisal guidelines are stated succinctly by McElroy (1989: 98) that

if libraries are to flourish and serve their organizations well, we need to secure a better understanding of function, and how we should be judged. Sensitive guidelines can help libraries in the short term by improving resources; that is their traditional role. More important, they can better the long-term management of libraries, both internally by librarians, and from top management, by putting questions of role, service, resources and judgement of performance on the agenda in an informed environment.

1.1 Background to the problem

One way of assessing an academic library's ability to provide quality information services directly to users, is to appraise subject librarians. Performance appraisal is central to Total Quality Management (TQM) of staff.

In the present higher education climate of accountability and the need to manage resources more effectively, performance appraisal is an integral part of TQM structures. Goodson (1997: 21) stated:

especially in service organizations like libraries, objective performance standards are the 'people measures' (sometimes statistical, but usually behavioural) that provide managers with the data that show whether customer service and quality effort are really being achieved.

To effect high performance, staff need to be trained and skilled in their work. Library managers need to provide an environment conducive to staff development and high performance, which will enhance quality information services. This process can be facilitated by well designed performance appraisal guidelines for subject librarians.

The initial guidelines developed in this study, could be used to determine training needs for subject librarians. Managers and subject librarians can ascertain the expected or 'exceeds minimum' skills or competencies identified in this study which are needed for quality information

service provision and apply it to their respective institutional libraries. This study aims to dispel some of the confusion that surrounds the topic.

1.2 The Problem

There appear to be no formal or informal guidelines to appraise subject librarians performing information services in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries and it is this problem which this study addressed. This problem is investigated in the following KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries: Durban Institute of Technology (DIT) Library, Mangosuthu Technikon (Mantech) Library, University of Durban-Westville (UDW) Library, University of Natal, Durban (UND) Library and University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (UNP) Library¹ and the University of Zululand (UniZul) Library.

1.3 Purpose of the study

Since the research problem is what the research is about, the purpose of the study is therefore the reason why the research is conducted (Powell 1994: 22). The purpose of the study is to emphasize the importance of performance appraisals for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. This study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries will provide much needed preliminary guidelines for appraising a subject librarian's job, whether formally or informally.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives that this study attempted to address were to:

- Determine the status of performance appraisal guidelines for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

¹As from 2004 University of Durban-Westville, University of Natal (Durban) and University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) merged to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

- ▶ Determine the important aspects and job tasks of subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries, for purposes of performance appraisals.
- ▶ Establish a set of key performance areas (KPAs) for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- ▶ Identify the critical competencies, behaviour traits or standards, arising from best practice for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- ▶ To determine performance indicators or methods in the guidelines, in relation to best practice, for subject librarians working in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

- ▶ What is the status of performance appraisal guidelines for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries?
- ▶ What are the core job tasks or responsibilities identified for performance appraisals of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries?
- ▶ What are the KPAs of subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries?
- ▶ What are the specific performance competencies, behaviour traits or standards arising from best practice, for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries?
- ▶ What performance indicators or methods can be ideally used to appraise subject librarian performance?

1.6 Justification for the study

Performance appraisal for subject librarians is important in order to enhance personal performance thereby improving service provision in the library. The study will identify the core job tasks, KPAs, competencies and performance indicators needed for subject librarians to offer quality information services in an academic library. To facilitate performance appraisal in academic libraries, guidelines need to be established in terms of distinguishing the job criteria, KPAs, competencies, standards and indicators of performance for subject librarians. There is an apparent absence of such guidelines. The University of Natal UND and UNP libraries, however, had formally implemented performance appraisals in 1998. This was supported by executive management but not sustained both in the institution nor in the library. Guidelines or performance appraisals were generically drawn up by the institution. There was an absence of guidelines specific to the library (Dubbeld 2003).

This study suggests subject librarian guidelines comprising of job tasks, skills competencies and indicators needed to conduct performance appraisal of staff as well as realign information service provision to the mission and goals of academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal.

The study is also important because academic libraries are undergoing radical changes with an increased emphasis on accountability. "Higher education at the turn of the century is faced with dwindling resources and an increased emphasis on accountability" (Christensen, Du Mont and Green 2001: 1). Christensen, Du Mont and Green (2001: 1) claimed that:

librarians must justify the importance of programs, collections, facilities and staff with more than vague statements or an emotional defense... We must be able to answer the question 'how well are you doing your job?' with measurable information.

1.7 Assumptions of the study

Assumptions of this study were that:

- library managers require guidelines to appraise individual work performance;
- performance appraisal is conducted in the light of staff development and training to enhance skills and knowledge as well as service provision in academic libraries; and
- subject librarians possess the necessary educational qualifications and knowledge to provide information services.

1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

The study targeted only subject librarians, namely, those staff:

who interact with students and staff, either in the form of one or a combination of answering reference queries, bibliographic instruction, faculty or (academic) department liaison such as collection development or cooperative cataloguing, etc. (Kaniki 1996).

The scope of this study is placed within the library human resource management perspective and subscribes to developing and training librarians for enhanced service delivery. The study is limited to core job tasks, KPA's, competencies and performance indicators for subject librarians.

Time and resource constraints as well as the nature of this research (minor thesis) prevented the writer from going beyond the borders of KwaZulu-Natal province and/or looking at other categories of library staff.

1.9 Definitions of terms used in the study

Definitions of terms are important in introducing the reader to the meaning attached to the terms by the writer of this study. The definitions of terms are listed alphabetically and provide a working definition in terms of the context of the study. The following terms are defined:

1.9.1 Core competencies

According to Giesecke and McNeil (1999: 158) “core competencies are the skills, knowledge and personal attributes that contribute to an individual’s success in a particular position”.

1.9.2 Key performance areas

Mould and Young (1994) stated that KPAs indicate key areas of a job for which the incumbent is responsible. KPA’s should include all the major functions of a job. Lofgren (1992: 15) stated that related terms that are used interchangeably, include “ strategic success factors, strategic factors, key success factors and key result areas”. These key areas of a job must be done exceedingly well for a person to be highly productive in an organisation.

1.9.3 Knowledge

Hawes and Hawes (1982: 126) define knowledge as the aggregate of facts, information, and principles that an individual has acquired through learning and experience. Formal education seeks to raise levels of knowledge systematically. Therefore, knowledge may be described as the know-how to perform certain tasks and functions.

1.9.4 Performance

According to *Webster’s Dictionary* (1995: 1332):

performance is the execution of an action; something accomplished; the fulfillment of a plan, ...the ability to perform; the manner of reacting to stimuli. Also refers to the employee’s accomplishment of assigned tasks.

1.9.5 Performance appraisal

For the purpose of this study, the definition of **performance appraisal** is used as it appears in the *American Library Association's glossary of library and information science* (Jenkins 1990: 1):

The process of evaluating the performance and behavior of employees individually in their positions for the purposes of assessing training needs and determining eligibility for retention, salary adjustments, or promotion. Synonymous with performance measurement and employee evaluation.

The term performance appraisal will be used in this study. However, where authors use synonymous terms such as performance measurement or performance evaluation, these terms will also be used.

1.9.6 Performance indicators

Brophy (2000: 279) and Byrne (1997: 258) concurred that:

a performance indicator is a quantified statement used to evaluate and compare the performance of a library in achieving its objectives. Indicators are indispensable. It is extremely difficult if not outright impossible to measure the effect of the library's services on the user or the effect on quality and quantity of research and teaching, the so called "outcome". Instead one tries to find significant combinations of data with an high indicative value that represent the impact of library services on the user.

1.9.7 Performance standards

Goodson (1997: 11) defines performance standards as "statements that specify or describe desirable work related behaviors or job outcomes, and that can be evaluated in some objective manner." Goodson (1997: 11) states that ideally all performance standards should be expressed in terms of job outcomes or products, following the standard management by objective format

(which means actioning a task, or producing results) by date or some other measurable outcomes that can be reasonably evaluated by a supervisor.

1.9.8 Skill

According to Hawes and Hawes (1982: 207) skills are a well-developed capability of any kind, including intellectual, physical, or artistic capabilities. Therefore, skill may be described as the ability to perform certain tasks and functions effectively. In this study, skills comprise both professional and personal skill for performance appraisal.

1.9.9 Subject librarian

For the purpose of this study, subject librarians' job tasks are synonymous with faculty librarians, reference librarians, user services librarians or information librarians. These librarians are employed in academic libraries and perform similar or related job tasks. The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) (1996: 1) defines reference and user services librarians as librarians that assist, advise, and instruct patrons accessing all forms of recorded knowledge. This assistance, advice, and instruction is both direct and indirect service to patrons. Hoskins (2002: 7) stated that:

allowing for considerable variation between institutions and between subjects, a subject librarian is a librarian whose role centers on four main areas: academic liaison, collection development, information skills teaching and enquiry or reference work.

1.10 Structure of the study

Chapter 1 outlined the introduction to the research problem and the purpose as well as set the parameters of the study. Chapter 2 will provide the background to the study. The literature pertinent to the study will be reviewed in Chapter 3. The research methodology used for the study

is explained in Chapter 4 and the results are described in Chapter 5. Interpretation of the results follows in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 comprises the recommendations and conclusions. Appendices are situated after the list of works cited.

1.11 Summary

In this introductory chapter, the problem area with which the study concerns itself has been articulated. The purpose, including the justification, the assumptions and the limitations of the study, have been described. Definitions of terms used in the text of this study have been provided and the structure of the study briefly delineated.

Chapter Two

Background to the study

2. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to highlight aspects of the environment in which this study is situated. The aspects that are discussed are: tertiary academic institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (esATI), Eastern Seaboard of Academic Libraries (esAL), and the academic libraries of KwaZulu-Natal namely Durban Institute of Technology (DIT); Mangosuthu Technikon (Mantech); University of Durban-Westville (UDW); University of Natal (UN); and the University of Zululand (UniZulu). The restructuring and transformation of the higher education system in South Africa by the Department of Education will also be briefly discussed.

2.1 Tertiary institutions in KwaZulu-Natal

In 1998 the tertiary academic institutions in KwaZulu-Natal had a total registration of sixty thousand students. A further thirty-five thousand students in the region were registered with distance learning organizations and many used the library facilities of the six regionally-based institutions. The net effect is that the libraries of the local institutions have a potential student base of over ninety thousand students (esAL 1998: 3).

2.2 Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (esATI)

esATI is an inter-institutional co-operative venture aimed at creating a coherent system of higher education in the eastern seaboard region of South Africa. It is committed to the delivery of excellence in education and the redress of historical inequalities. Its members are:

- Durban Institute of Technology (DIT)
- Mangosuthu Technikon (Mantech)
- Technikon Southern Africa (TSA)

- University of Durban-Westville (UDW)
- University of Natal (UN)
- University of South Africa (UNISA)
- University of Zululand (UniZulu)

ML Sultan Technikon and Natal Technikon merged to form the Durban Institute of Technology with effect from the 1st April 2002 in accordance with the Ministry of Education's proposals regarding the restructuring and transformation of the higher education system in South Africa (Department of Education 2002). The Ministry of Education had also decreed a merger between the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal, to become the University of KwaZulu-Natal with effect from the 1st January 2004. The merger between these two institutions is discussed in more detail in section 2.5.

2.3 Eastern Seaboard Association of Libraries (esAL)

UNISA and TSA have their main libraries in Gauteng, and their libraries are therefore members of Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium (GAELIC). For these reasons their local libraries are not members of esAL. Prior to the merger, esAL was a co-operative of six academic libraries (belonging to five institutions) in the province of KwaZulu-Natal on the eastern seaboard of South Africa. The objective of esAL is to promote the optimal use of resources at all partner institutions and to create a strong research resource in the region. esAL operates under the auspices of esATI. A formal agreement exists among the esAL libraries relating to the mutual rendering of support and services for the broadening of access to information through the sharing of resources, technology, information management and expertise in the field of library and information services (esAL 1998: 5).

2.4 The academic libraries of KwaZulu-Natal

A brief description of the academic libraries of KwaZulu-Natal and their branch libraries together with each library's mission statement is provided in this section. Dalton (1988: 41)

stated that “a good mission statement captures what is unique about the organization and helps the staff to link their services to the overall mission of the service and its wider structure”. A brief outline of the KwaZulu-Natal academic institutions is provided together with the library’s mission statements for each institution.

2.4.1 The Durban Institute of Technology

The mission statement of the Durban Institute of Technology (2004) states that:

The Durban Institute of Technology, formed by the merger of Technikon Natal and M L Sultan Technikon, is a vibrant multi-campus tertiary level institution at the cutting edge of higher education, technological training and research. It is committed to producing highly skilled graduates who are equipped to meet the demands of the workplace and the special needs of a changing society.

2.4.1.1 The DIT Library’s mission statement

The mission statement of the DIT library is:

The Durban Institute of Technology’s Library is client-driven, providing an environment that supports learning, teaching and research, and is responsive to institutional needs as well as to the imperatives of the National Plan for Higher Education. It provides equitable access to information resources and facilities, using world-class technology and communication systems, taking into account the diverse needs of its community (Durban Institute of Technology: 2004).

2.4.1.2 Libraries of the DIT

The Durban Institute of Technology has six campus libraries. These are the:

- BM Patel Memorial Library on the M L Sultan Campus, Durban;
- Alan Pittendrigh Library on the Steve Biko Campus, Durban;
- Brickfield Road Campus Library, Durban;
- City Campus Library, Durban;
- Riverside Campus Library, Pietermaritzburg;
- Indumiso Campus Library, Pietermaritzburg.

The above campus libraries vary in size and subject offerings. Each campus library's collection reflects the historical influences and course offerings of that campus, which includes materials

such as books, theses, periodicals, audiovisual and multimedia materials and electronic media.

The two main libraries of DIT are the B M Patel Memorial Library and the Alan Pittendrigh Library.

The B M Patel Memorial library was created in 1958 in one room. The library was named after Mr B M Patel, whose sons offered the M L Sultan Technical College funding for the establishment of a general and a reference library. In 1969 the library was funded by the State for advanced technical education for the Indian community. However the book stock was inadequate to meet the needs of tertiary education. Today the library is housed in the Tongaat Hulett building comprising four floors. The M L Sultan Library provides resources and services for the Faculty of Commerce in DIT.

The Alan Pittendrigh Library is situated on the Steve Biko Campus of DIT. The library is named after Dr Alan Pittendrigh who was the former rector of Technikon Natal. The Alan Pittendrigh Library currently serves the Faculties of Science and Engineering.

Ten subject librarians in DIT offer information services in the following faculties:

- Faculty of Commerce
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Arts

2.4.2 Mangosuthu Technikon

The Mangosuthu Technikon is a modern higher educational institution which according to the latest annual report (Mangosuthu Technikon 2003):

provides superior quality, technologically advanced programmes and services in Engineering, Natural Sciences and Management Sciences. The institution currently has an enrolment of 6500 students. Established in 1979 with private funding, Mangosuthu Technikon was the first institution in South Africa to offer training opportunities for black technicians. Mangosuthu Technikon is situated in Umlazi, south of Durban and close to the Durban International Airport.

2.4.2.1 The Mangosuthu Technikon Library mission statement

The Mangosuthu Technikon Library is called the Mc O'Dowd Resource Centre which strives to become:

A virtual library that will empower users to reach their full potential in their learning, teaching and research needs. In fulfilling this vision it is vital that we have an infrastructure that will:

- Be accessible and user friendly to all users
- Stimulate innovation and keep the library on the cutting edge of technology
- Foster professionalism, teamwork, productivity, flexibility and the ongoing development of staff and students
- Enhance communication with the community
- Be reliable and financially sustainable (Mangosuthu Technikon 2003).

Three subject librarians in the Mangosuthu Technikon offer information services in the following disciplines (Mangosuthu Technikon 2003):

- Management Science
- Engineering Science
- Natural Sciences

2.4.3 The University of Durban-Westville

The University of Durban-Westville was located within an environmental conservancy about eight kilometers from the central business districts of Durban and Pinetown. The University was regarded as a major player in the transformation of the higher education sector. In South

African history, UDW was established at the height of political repression forty years ago as the University College for Indians on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay. In 1971, the College was granted academic independence and became a fully fledged university. In 1984, UDW became an autonomous institution operating under the same financial formula as the other universities in South Africa under the auspices of the Education Act (University of Durban-Westville 2004).

2.4.3.1 University of Durban-Westville Library mission statement

The mission statement of the University of Durban-Westville Library stated:

The mission of the library was to collect and disseminate information to students, research and academic staff through printed and electronic means in support of the teaching, research and community outreach functions of the university. It further subscribed to the university's mission for academic excellence and contribution to the development of a just South African society (University of Durban-Westville 2004).

2.4.3.2 Libraries of the University of Durban-Westville

The Library of the University of Durban-Westville, was established in 1961. When the University moved to its new campus in Westville in 1972, the library was temporarily housed on the ground floor of the cafeteria. The library moved into its existing building in 1974. The library served the needs of the staff and students of the University of Durban-Westville.

The Joe Ryan Library was established in 1981 as a branch library of the main University Library. The Joe Ryan Library serves the Faculty of Dentistry and the Oral and Dental Training Hospital. This library is situated at the King George V Hospital complex in Sydenham, which is eight kilometers from the main campus of the University of Durban-Westville (Sentoo 1994: 6-7).

Six subject librarians in UDW offer information services for the following faculties:

- Faculty of Commerce

- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Arts (University of Durban-Westville 2004).

2.4.4. The University of Natal

The University of Natal, which was established in 1910, arose from a technical education commission which recommended that “ a University College should be established in Pietermaritzburg, with the provision for an extension of its work to meet the needs of Durban and also of other centres when the need arises” (University of Natal 2004). Because of its rapid growth in numbers, its range of courses, and its achievements in, and opportunities for research, the Natal University campus was granted independent status in 1949. Located in the KwaZulu-Natal province, the University of Natal has two main centres - the Durban campus which is situated near the South African port and the Pietermaritzburg campus which is located in the centre of the scenic Natal Midlands close to the Drakensberg mountain range (University of Natal 2004).

The main libraries of the University of Natal are made up of the E.G Malherbe Library and the Cecil Renaud Library.

2.4.4.1 The mission statement of the University of Natal Libraries

In terms of the mission, the libraries of the University of Natal provide resources and information services to support the learning, teaching, research and development endeavours of the University community:

In support of the University’s strategy of quality with equity, the Libraries will have balanced collections and access to current information services to encourage excellence in learning, teaching and research, facilitated by innovative and resourceful library staff who are also dedicated to empowering learners to equip themselves for life-long learning (University of Natal 2004).

2.4.4.2 Libraries of the University of Natal - Durban Campus

The Library was established in 1936 and important structural changes were made to the main Library in 1959 and to the Medical Library in 1967 (State Library 1990: 314). The E.G. Malherbe Library was opened in May 1988. It is located in the centre of the Durban campus and serves the needs of staff and students of the Faculties of Community and Development, Engineering, Human Sciences, Management Studies and Science (University of Natal 2004).

The Barrie Biermann Architecture Branch Library was established in 1969. The library is located in the Shepstone Building and serves the needs of the staff and students of the School of Architecture, Planning and Housing and the School of Civil Engineering, Surveying and Construction.

The E. S. Edminson Branch Library was established in 1980; it was named in honour of Mr E. S. Edminson, Rector of Edgewood College from 1969 to 1974. It is located on the Edgewood Campus of the University in Pinetown, and serves the needs of the staff and students of the School of Education, Edgewood.

The G. M. J. Sweeney Law Branch Library was established in 1972. It is located on the ground floor of Howard College and serves the needs of the staff and students of the Faculty of Law.

The Medical Library, which was established in 1952 is located in the Nelson Mandela School of Health Sciences and serves the needs of the staff and students of the School of Health Sciences. The Medical Library is located at 719 Umbilo Road, Durban, South Africa.

The Eleanor Bonnar Music Branch Library was established in 1972. It is situated on the first floor of the Department of Music, 244 King George V Avenue and serves the needs of the staff and students of the Department of Music (University of Natal 2004 and Hoskins 2002).

Nine subject librarians at the University of Natal's Durban campus offer information services for the following academic departments:

- Architecture
- Community and Development Disciplines
- Education
- Engineering
- Language and Literature
- Law
- Management Studies
- Medical Sciences
- Sciences
- Social Sciences (University of Natal: 2004).

2.4.4.3 Libraries of the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg Campus

As noted the Natal University College was established in Pietermaritzburg in 1910 and the library established in 1912. A Library Committee was instituted in 1921 and the first separate library building was occupied in 1937. In 1965 the Library moved into its present building. The University took over responsibility for the Agriculture Library in April 1973. In 1983 the Agriculture branch library merged with the Biological Sciences Library to form the Life Sciences Library (State Library 1990: 324). The Main Library caters primarily for subjects in the Faculty of Human and Management Sciences and is situated on the main campus on King Edward Avenue.

The Alan Paton Centre was opened in April 1989 and is located in Milner Road, focuses on collections of organizations associated with conflict and conciliation with particular reference to KwaZulu-Natal.

The Law Library is situated on the ground floor of the School of Law in Golf Road and serves the needs of the staff and students of the School of Law.

The Life Sciences Library caters for subjects in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture. The Library is on the 3rd floor, John Bews Building, Carbis Road, situated next to the Agricultural Faculty (University of Natal 2004).

Ten subject librarians at the University of Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus offer information services for the following faculties:

- Life Sciences
- Human Sciences
- Languages and Religion
- Social Sciences (University of Natal 2004).

2.4.5. The University of Zululand

The University of Zululand was established in terms of the extension of the University Education Act of 1959, which purported to extend tertiary education to the previously underserved ethnic homeland regions of South Africa. The University was officially opened in March 1961, and named Zululand University College which was affiliated to the University of South Africa. It attained academic autonomy in January 1970, when it became the University of Zululand. It is located in KwaZulu-Natal, 20kms south of Empangeni (and 160 kms north of Durban). It presently has 6600 students. It is set to incorporate technikon type courses that will eventually constitute 70% of its academic output (University of Zululand 2004).

2.4.5.1 The University of Zululand Library's mission statement

The mission of the University of Zululand Library is:

to serve the teaching, learning and research functions of the University of Zululand, as well as the needs of the community in its immediate vicinity who can benefit from it without prejudicing the privileges of its primary clientele (University of Zululand 2004)

The main campus is situated at KwaDlangezwa, on the coastal plain about 150 kilometres north of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal's major city and chief port, where it also has a satellite facility, the Durban-Umlazi Campus (DUC).

The objectives of the University of Zululand library are:

- To augment the collection of the University Library by acquiring, preserving and making available relevant resources of information;
- To offer instruction to clients in the use of the library resources in order to equip them with information literacy skills for life-long learning;
- To maintain and provide quality services which promote the instructional, research and extension functions of the University (University of Zululand 2004).

2.4.5.2 Libraries of the University of Zululand

The University was established in 1960. While the planning of the University Library was in its initial stages, the collection was housed in several localities. The first library was opened in 1968 and was housed in a new building in 1987. Since 1987, subject librarians have been available to assist users. A branch library at the Umlazi campus was established in 1979 (State Library 1990: 351).

Six subject librarians at the University of Zululand's main campus offer information services in the following designated areas :

- Languages & Literature
- Applied Sciences
- Social Sciences

- Education
- Pure Sciences
- Law

2.5 The restructuring and transformation of the higher education system in South Africa

The Department of Education (2002) outlined its proposals to restructure and transform the higher education system in South Africa by merging various tertiary institutions in *Transformation and restructuring: the new institutional landscape for Higher Education* document (gazetted on the 21 June 2002). The mergers are part of the broader process for restructuring and transformation of the higher education system to ensure the responsiveness of the higher education system to national human resource and research needs as outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education (gazetted on the 9 March 2001).

The reasons for the mergers are as follows:

- Overcoming the apartheid-induced divide between historically white and historically black institutions;
- Promoting staff equity;
- Ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources through reducing overlap and duplication in academic programmes;
- Consolidating existing academic programmes to enable a wider range of academic programmes to be offered in response to regional and national needs; and
- Mitigating the impact of unnecessary competition (Department of Education 2002).

In March 2001 a National Working Group (NWG) was appointed to advise on the restructuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system. *The restructuring*

of the higher education system in South Africa: report of the National Working Group

(December 2001) proposed the consolidation of the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 (Department of Education 2001: 10). The Ministry, based on the explanation and rationale advanced by the NWG report, accepted the NWG proposals for KwaZulu-Natal.

The Ministry of Education's proposals were thus as follows:

- ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal were to merge to form the Durban Institute of Technology, with effect from 1 April 2002.
- Mangosuthu Technikon should merge with the Durban Institute of Technology in 2005.
- The infrastructure and facilities of Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand, but not the staff and students, should be transferred to the Technikon proposed to be established through the merger of Mangosuthu Technikon and the Durban Institute of Technology.
- The University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal (including the Pietermaritzburg campus) should merge in 2004.
- The University of Zululand should refocus its mission and become a comprehensive institution offering technikon-type programmes, with its future growth linked to the Richards Bay region (Department of Education 2002: 13).

2.5.1 The challenges facing higher education in South Africa

The key challenges facing the South African higher education system are: human resource development, high-level skills training and the production, acquisition and application of new knowledge (Department of Education 2001). These challenges have to be understood in the context of the impact on higher education systems worldwide and the changes associated

with the phenomenon of globalization:

The onset of the 21st century has brought changes in social, cultural and economic relations spawned by the revolution in ICT. The impact of these changes on the way in which societies are organized is likely to be far-reaching and fundamental. At the centre of these changes is the notion that in the 21st century, knowledge and processing of information will be the key driving forces for wealth creation and thus social and economic development (Department of Education 2001).

Furthermore, according to the National Plan for Higher Education (Department of Education 2001), higher education has a critical and central role to play in contributing to the development of an information society in South Africa in terms of skills development and research.

2.5.2 The education, staff training and development of academic librarians

The education and staff training and development of academic librarians is important since the LIS field is constantly changing due to technological developments. It is important to distinguish between the use of the terms education, training and staff development.

These terms can be defined as follows:

- *Education* is the development of a broad range of abilities, knowledge and skills of general application.
- *Training* implies the development of specific skills to prepare individuals to carry out specific tasks effectively.
- *Staff development* involves a combination of training, education, experience and a variety of other means of increasing personal and indeed, group effectiveness (Effah 1998: 39)

In addition to staff training and development, there is continuing professional development

(CPD). According to Parry (1996: 22) CPD is a broad concept that includes staff development, training and personal development. CPD is characterised by a systematic approach to assessing needs, undertaking training or development activities and monitoring outcomes. In this context, subject librarian performance appraisal is seen as a staff development tool for enhancing the performance of librarians.

Parry (1996) argues that academic libraries trying to maintain services in the face of growing pressure from students, academic staff and management might be expected to be forgiven for putting the development of people lower down the agenda than the development of services, systems and structures. However, one thing that these three elements have in common is people. Even the most automated libraries need people to manage systems, to carry out data entry and to help users, all of which require different skills that must be regularly updated. Even though finding time for staff development and acquiring funds for training or choosing appropriate trainers may be difficult, if staff are not given the opportunity to develop their own abilities, then the service, systems and structures are likely to stagnate and will soon fail to meet the demands placed upon them. The high rate of technological change within the library and information services (LIS) field, the constantly changing demands of users, and the ever-increasing amount of information available, means that subject librarians need to continually update and develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Therefore, due to the fact that ICT's have a profound effect on the way subject librarians perform their tasks, the need for ICT training is imperative in order for staff to perform their tasks effectively and efficiently (Hoskins 2002).

2.5.3 The Skills Development Act, 1998

According to Barry and Norton (2000) the South African parliament passed the Skills Development Act, 1998 (the Act) in the context of high unemployment, grossly unequal

distribution of income, inequality of opportunity based on the legacy of apartheid, poverty and low levels of investment in the South African labour market. The purpose of the Act aims to address these features by way of a new set of financial schemes.

The purpose of the Act is to:

- Develop skills in the workplace;
- Improve workers' quality of life, prospects of work and labour mobility;
- Improve productivity in the workplace;
- Promote self employment;
- Improve the delivery of social services;
- Increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and improve the return on that investment;
- Encourage employers to use the workplace as a learning environment;
- Encourage workers to participate in learnerships and other training programmes to improve their employment prospects; and
- Help work seekers find work (Barry and Norton 2000: 6).

The Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 is an allied piece of legislation concerned with the financing of the Skills Development Act. From the 1 April 2000, employers, like the tertiary institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, were obliged to pay a levy of 0.5% of their payroll to the South African Revenue Services (SARS). This was increased to 1% from the 1 April 2001. The purpose of this levy is to fund the skills development of employees and unemployed persons. The SARS will distribute 80% of the levies to the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the remaining 20% will go to the National Skills Fund.

Employers may reclaim part of the levy if they provided skills training for their workforce. The aim of the levy is to encourage employers who do not offer training opportunities for their employees (or very little training), to raise the skills level of their employees. The employer's incentive to provide training is to recover a proportion of their levy. In turn the levy rewards employers who currently provide significant skills training to their employees because they may now recover a proportion of their training expenditure. Furthermore, each SETA will make grants available to employers who are able to implement training for specific skills shortages identified by the SETA. Employers may recover:

- 15% of their levy if they employ or appoint a Skills Development Facilitator;
- 10% if they prepare a workplace skills plan; and
- 20% if they implement that plan (Barry and Norton 2000: 6).

A Skills Development Facilitator is responsible for developing and planning an organisational skills development strategy. The facilitator assists employers and employees to draft and implement their workplace skills plan. These plans must identify and prioritise the training needs in a particular workplace and indicate which employees will receive training.

To effectively implement the Skills Development Act, performance appraisal has to occur in the workplace. Performance appraisal plays an important role in the success of the individual in the workplace as well as for the tertiary institution. Conducting appraisals for subject librarians can help identify the skills gap required for quality assurance, as well as ensure the continuous improvement of employees.

Performance appraisal identifies the critical skills and knowledge required of an employee to perform effectively in the job. The Skills Development Facilitator will thus determine

the competencies or skills gap profile for an organisation.

The Skills Development Facilitator gathers data and gives an overview of skills, qualifications, experience and performance levels including identifying outstanding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Performance indicators for tertiary institutions are determined by the public services SETA. Employees work in line with Key Performance Indicators pertaining to a specific job. The KPIs need to be measured to ensure that the person and the organisation grow in obtaining skills and knowledge. Measuring performance levels and KPIs is conducted via an effective performance appraisal system.

Chapter three will highlight the important aspects pertaining to performance appraisal for the subject librarian.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, background information that relates to the academic libraries of KwaZulu-Natal was given. The restructuring and transformation of higher education in South Africa and the education and staff training of academic librarians was outlined to provide the context for the study.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3. Introduction

The review of related literature involves the systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem (Gay 1976: 29). The significance of a literature search as a component of the research process is discussed at the beginning of Chapter 4 in 4.1.1. This chapter reviews the literature relating to performance appraisal in academic libraries.

Much of the literature according to Poole and Warner (1998: 527) indicates that, the issue was not if performance would be measured; the only question was how? This chapter will address the 'how'. Decisions regarding how to appraise performance should be made very early in the development of performance appraisal guidelines.

3.1. Structure of this chapter

This literature review is discussed in terms of performance appraisal in academic libraries, reasons for performance appraisal, problems with performance appraisal in academic libraries, and the application of performance appraisal. Mission and goal statements of the academic library, the role of the subject librarian in the academic library, job descriptions and KPAs of the subject librarian, performance competencies of the subject librarian, performance standards, information service standards and performance indicators for subject librarians are also discussed.

3.2. Performance appraisal in academic libraries

Performance appraisal for academic librarians is not new. Dalton (1988: 29) emphasised that we live in an 'age of accountability' where academic libraries, especially the public service divisions, are no exception. Dalton (1988: 29) stated that:

the professional literature of the 1970s and 1980s indicates that the topic has become a hotbed for discussion. Today public sector accountability gives added impetus. The desire to reduce government expenditure has led to an increasing pressure on higher education and its libraries to justify their performance in terms of efficiency and by comparison with other libraries.

Performance appraisal in academic libraries is a personnel management tool. September (1988: 106) stated that:

The usefulness of performance appraisal in South African academic libraries is self-evident if academic library personnel are given the opportunity of providing input in the development stage. Structured discussion and consultation are necessary for successful implementation of performance appraisal systems.

3.2.1 Reasons for performance appraisal in academic libraries

Performance appraisal may be designed to serve any one or a combination of the following functions (Sluss 1986: 85; September 1988: 106-7; Verrill 1993: 98):

- to change or modify inappropriate or inferior work behaviour
- to initiate and routinise dialogues between employer and employee concerning perceptions of quality and quantity of performance
- to stimulate and further develop both the appraiser and the appraised in terms of their efficient and effective job performance
- to assess potential of the employee with regard to training and development opportunities

- to determine appropriate compensation levels for the employee
- to provide documentation of work behaviour in cases where disciplinary action may be warranted.

3.2.2 Problems with performance appraisal in academic libraries

A major problem of performance appraisal in libraries is the dichotomy between quantity and quality of work. September (1988: 107) stated that the danger of a quantity oriented appraisal system is that, in academic library practice, it does not always evaluate the abilities of librarians:

It is improbable that conclusions about quality can be based only on quantitative measurement. It is relatively easy to record the quantity of work performed in the library but not so easy to estimate the quality of work performed.

Problems can be created when a non-profit organization like an academic library, adopts a businesslike approach to performance appraisal. Most libraries operate on a democratic approach to management. The philosophy behind this approach is that it may create a greater sense of commitment and involvement for employees and serve to clarify jobs and soften role stresses. Performance appraisal can result in centralization of authority, diminished flexibility, stifling of innovation, and the alienation of employees from their service and their own ideals. Due to these problems, librarians have little or no confidence in the ultimate value of the process. This attitude can only be changed if the appraisal system is designed in such a way that the staff has input in the development and in the actual appraisal process (September 1988: 107).

The problem of traditional performance appraisal systems is stated by Demming as quoted by Russell (1998: 162) :

Demming blasted traditional performance appraisal system because of its emphasis on “pleasing the boss rather than pleasing the customer” and its tendency to instill fear in

employees rather than create nurturing environment where employees can develop and grow.

In commenting on the problems experienced with performance appraisal in academic libraries, Kroll in September (1988: 107) suggested some solutions which are important to this study:

Clear and precise job descriptions which spell out expectations of the supervisor, the library and the institution, and which provide an opportunity for discussion of appraisal results can negate many of the problems. Other solutions include the requirement that the employee be able to control the quality and quantity of his or her work, which helps to validate the appraisal system. The employee's performance must not be affected by environmental or organizational conditions such as lack of resources.

Performance appraisal provides the means by which academic librarians can be stimulated to develop their skills to effectively fulfil the library goals.

3.2.3 Application of performance appraisal in academic libraries

Performance appraisal in academic libraries is often seen as a formal means of documenting the value of an employee to the institution. The recording of the employee's performance by the library manager is usually in terms of a scale which ranges from 'poor' to 'outstanding', covering such categories as knowledge of the job, quality of work, ability to learn, initiative, co-operation and judgement. The rating form is supplemented by written comments about the rating to explain decisions and to make recommendations about the librarian's performance (September 1988: 108). An example of a rating form is included in Appendix A. This form provides a structured way of applying performance appraisal in the library.

3.3 Mission and goal statements of the academic library

Performance appraisal begins with examining the mission, goals and objectives of the library. Mission and goal statements are essential for providing direction and guidance to library staff, in

their execution of job duties and service provision to patrons. Bunge (1994: 197) stated that the only valid measure of performance is the extent to which the library achieves its aims and objectives.

Authors such as Wallace (2001: 81), Bunge (1994: 194), Van House, Weiland and McClure (1990) and the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA: 1996: 2) agree that evaluation of reference services should be guided by the reference service's overall philosophy, mission, goals and objectives. Jordan (1992: 178) advocates that the technikon or university library mission and aim is to support the needs of both actual and potential users by being accessible and responsive in its effective and efficient provision of materials and services. Prozesky and Cunningham (1986: 96) stated that the subject librarians aim to support the teaching and research goals of the institution in which they are employed in. The authors advocate that the subject librarian is uniquely placed to fulfil this aim. The mission statements of KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries were outlined in detail in Chapter 2. In essence, academic libraries provide effective support to its patrons for the study, teaching and research goals of the parent institution.

3.4 The role of the subject librarian in the academic library

Libraries need skilled and competent staff to offer or to instruct users in how to use the library resources. Specifically, according to Sluss (1986); Prozesky and Cunningham (1986) and the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA:1996), the goals of the subject librarian unit are threefold:

- to educate students and staff in the use of the library services,
- to assist students and staff in finding information, and
- to teach students and staff to think critically about the use of information sources.

The wide array of duties of subject librarian services stated by authors such as Low (1996: 5), Schwartz and Eakin (1986: 5), Tyckoson (2001: 186) and Braun (2002: 46) include:

- information services
- information literacy or library instruction
- reader's advisory services
- collection development
- marketing or promoting the library services and resources.

The above array of duties are universal to subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Prozesky and Cunningham (1986: 97) stated that subject librarian duties at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) include the following:

- acquisition of materials - book selection and ordering, blurb distributions to academic departments, evaluation of donations, procuring of pamphlets
- rendering material accessible - cataloguing and classification; subject guides to books and journals
- information retrieval - user education includes formal and informal user education, reference and bibliographic services, selective dissemination of information (SDI) services, referring users to outside sources.

3.5 Performance appraisal of subject librarians

The various aspects of performance appraisal relating to subject librarians are discussed below.

3.5.1 Job descriptions

Performance appraisals provide a mechanism to review standard job descriptions and make them more meaningful to the institution's goals and mission. Whitlach (1994: 18) stated that:

performance criteria could replace standard job descriptions since they go so much further, spelling out precisely what a job entails and the tasks to be accomplished.

According to authors such as Stueart and Moran (1998: 180) and Stueart and Sullivan (1991: 9) all job descriptions, including subject librarian job descriptions, contain five general areas:

- Tasks or duties and behaviours that are important to the job;
- Standards or performance measures which are expected for each duty;
- Skills, knowledge and abilities (SKA) required to successfully perform in the job;
- Conditions which make relationships and the performance of responsibilities easy or difficult; and
- Qualifications: education and experience necessary to ensure successful performance of responsibilities.

This study specifically addressed the first three areas as stated in the research objectives. Job analysis helps to identify the critical duties and tasks of a subject librarian's job. The job criteria are elements of a job to be evaluated during performance appraisal. Each job criterion should be compared with a performance standard which is the expected level of performance. The multiple job criteria for subject librarians should also be weighted to reflect the relative importance of criteria to service objectives and quality information services (Stueart and Moran 1998: 180).

Performance appraisal is conducted by understanding the core job tasks or KPAs and appraising subject librarians on these core tasks. Tycokson (2001) and the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA: 1996) listed the following core job tasks for subject librarians:

- **Bibliographic instruction or user education**

Teaching patrons to utilize the library is an extension of the overall education process. This process is commonly known as bibliographic instruction or information literacy. Tyckoson (2001: 187) stated that "the act of instruction carries with it three distinctive facets: the subject content being taught; the process of using that information in the research process; the ability to critically evaluate information". He also stated that "to be successful the librarian must teach or transfer

knowledge to the patron. Implicit in teaching patrons how to use the library are factual knowledge, understanding the research process and critical thinking (Tyckoson 2001: 188). The new name and focus for bibliographic instruction is information literacy, whether that means instruction in finding citations in print indexes or using an online database, searching the web, or sending an e-mail to get information. In terms of the latter tasks Braun (2002: 46) stated that “computer skills may be the new area of training for librarians”.

The information skills program is a core component of KwaZulu-Natal subject librarian job descriptions. d’Avigador (1997: 273) places information skills in context which is pertinent for this study:

The information skills programme is undertaken in a variety of formats, including subject-targeted classes (usually at the request of individual academics); classes teaching general information resource tools (eg. Internet, e-mail); postgraduate research advisory, a postgraduate service individualized to the postgraduate’s research needs (involving research into appropriate resources and an extensive appointment with the client by the librarian); lectures and demonstrations; workbooks, where appropriate resources for a given target group of students are outlined in a self paced learning context; and other documentation, such as leaflets, database and CD-ROM guides, floor plan, ‘how to’ leaflets and so on.

- **Reference Services**

A reference service is defined as (Whitlach 1994: 9):

the personal assistance given by library staff to users at reference desks. This includes answering questions, performing quick literature searches, instructing in use of the library and bibliographic indexes, and providing advisory services.

Factual knowledge of a different kind is also valued in answering patron queries. The subject librarian task is to offer reference services and provide factual information to the user. Tyckoson states that (2001: 188):

In answering questions the librarian seeks knowledge from the broader world for the patron. The most common values associated with answering questions is accuracy of the answers. Accuracy of subject librarian answers for reference questions, has been frequently studied as a measure of reference success. Hernon and McClure's 55% rule (1985) and other unobtrusive studies are based solely upon measuring the value of accuracy. These studies have been heavily criticized by librarians precisely because they claim that accuracy is not the only value associated with answers to patron queries.

Thoroughness is another such factor for subject librarians doing reference or enquiry work. An answer may be accurate but incomplete. When working on a question, a subject librarian should keep searching for a better answer even after finding one or more possible solutions. Timeliness is another factor of value. Often patrons need an answer within a definite time limit. Accuracy and timeliness are both valued by these patrons, but in different ways (Tyckoson 2001: 189).

Reference librarians value authority when answering questions. Subject librarians generally use sources and publishers which produce authoritative material for answering factual queries. The value that sets these librarians apart from other services that answer questions is their dedication to finding authoritative information (Tyckoson 2001: 189).

- **Reader's advisory services**

The third task listed by Tyckoson (2001) is the reader's advisory service which takes the form of referring students to sources or databases relevant to their research. As academic libraries operate within the electronic environment, the number of reader's advisory requests has increased dramatically. The key value involved in reader's advisory service is knowledge: knowledge of the reader, of the literature, and of the collection (Tyckoson 2001: 189). The librarian must understand the general interests of the academic institution and meet the specific needs of each patron. Reading levels, language skills, and educational backgrounds of users, as well as awareness of sources, all provide the foundation for good information service delivery.

- **Collection development**

Collection development is part of the subject librarian's responsibility. The subject librarian has to ensure that information resources purchased by the library should satisfy through content, currency, format, organisation, and quantify a diversity of patron needs. Cataloguing and classification of information resources are not conducted by subject librarians in most academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal.

- **Promotion of the library services**

The final function of the subject librarian is to promote the library within the community. Subject librarians perform various tasks such as: selective dissemination of information (SDI), and theme based exhibitions to support study, teaching and research needs.

3.5.2 KPA's of subject librarians

From the above job tasks, the KPA's for subject librarians are:

- library instruction and teaching
- reference and bibliographic information services
- collection access and development

When appraising the subject librarian job, the library manager will want to know about successful library instruction and teaching, answering of reference questions, or the reference interview and its accompanying search strategy, bibliographic information services, collection development, costs and personnel performance among others. These will be further deliberated in the sections below.

3.6 Performance competencies of subject librarians

The competency approach is a relatively new method of performance appraisal and is advocated in this study. Weightman (1994: 2) stated that “essentially competencies underly the behaviours thought necessary to achieve a desired outcome”. A list of competencies appropriate for a subject librarian job, can be drawn up by analyzing and describing the behaviours and associated activities necessary to do specific aspects of the job. In this regard an appropriate assessment procedure needs to be devised which is stated in the methodology of this study.

Weightman (1994: 27) advocated that “the general methodology underlying the competency approach offers organizations access to a more formal, structured and reliable framework for assessing and developing staff”.

Competencies measures capability of individuals in a job task. Poole and Warner (1998: 527) stated that “What is different about the competency approach is that in addition to assessing achievement (the what) the behavior of the employee in meeting targets is taken into account (the how)”.

One of the many criticisms of the competency approach is the belief that a competency approach cannot take into account individual differences. Jacobs (1989) in Weightman (1994: 5) claimed that “users of competency based assessment should be aware that it provides one relatively partial view of performance. Another criticism is that individual organizations follow fashion by going along with competencies in the hope of improving performance, without really applying the effort required to effect change.

The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA 1996: 2) has focused on the underlying behaviours that lead to successful and excellent performance for reference and user services patrons. It is the analysis of what behaviours, skills, knowledge, understanding and personal qualities which determines a competent performance, that is at the heart of using a competency

approach. This approach contributes much needed insight into this study. What then, are the competencies for subject librarians?

The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) guidelines (1996: 1) describe competencies as behaviours that excellent performers exhibit more consistently ... than average performers.

Information professionals of academic libraries ought to develop strategies or specific plans of action that excellent performers typically do to achieve competency goals. RUSA (1996) provided a guideline regarding:

- access
- responsiveness
- organisation and design of services
- critical thinking and analysis
- application of knowledge
- marketing/awareness/informing

The above RUSA (1996) guideline is included in appendix B. The guideline provides goal directed strategies which can be adapted for use in individual KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

Marshall et al (1996: 1-2); Buttlar and Du Mont (1996: 47); Braun (2002: 46) and Bender (1994: 109) distinguished two main types of competencies namely professional and personal competencies.

3.6.1 Professional Competencies

“Professional competencies relate to the knowledge in the areas of information resources, information access, technology, management and research, and the ability to use these areas of knowledge as a basis for providing library and information services” (Buttlar and Du Mont 1996: 42).

Buttlar and Du Mont (1996: 45) identified the five most highly rated professional competencies of academic librarians as:

- knowledge of information sources in all formats
- collection management skills
- conducting a reference interview
- communicating effectively in writing
- ability to apply critical thinking to library problems.

The ability to conduct literature searches is a core job task. Conducting literature searches involves knowledge and skill. Jenkins (1990: 83) and Schwartz and Eakin (1986: 5) outlined the following which pertains to subject librarian appraisals for determining an effective literature search strategy. The subject librarian:

- determines the real question, by interviewing the patron and suggesting alternate approaches the patron might use to satisfy his/her information need.
- provides needed instruction in use of sources to both the patron in need of information, and to the student assistant he/she may be supervising.
- plans and executes effective search strategies for complex or extended reference questions.

Buttler and Du Mont (1996: 44) stated that:

librarians will not only need the basic core of traditional skills and professional knowledge, but a new list of requirements identified as: flexibility; lifetime learning; people skills; technological skills; business skills including marketing, negotiation, and strategic planning; and valuing diversity.

3.6.2 Personal competencies

Personal competencies represent a set of skills, attitudes and values that “enable librarians to work efficiently; be good communicators; focus on continuing learning throughout their careers; demonstrate the value-added nature of their contributions; and survive in the new world of work”

(Marshall 1996: 1-2). Prozesky and Cunningham (1986: 109) identified some of the qualities necessary for a subject librarian as adaptability, initiative, a challenging spirit, genuine interest in people and their research needs and a capacity to act as a facilitator.

The other important performance criteria indicated in the literature are interpersonal skills or behaviours. Interpersonal skills are part of personal skills. Jenkins (1990: 34-35) stated that initiative, resourcefulness, judgment, communication skills and supervisory ability should be assessed for subject librarians. The performance criteria outlined by Jenkins (1990) is attached in Appendix C.

Interpersonal skills are highly valued in the literature. Studies conducted by Odini and Rockman in Buttler and Du Mont (1996: 47) and Braun (2002: 46) considered the following interpersonal skills as the most important for the training of subject librarians:

- two-way communication skills (oral, written, listening, questioning), includes the ability to give presentations to groups, as well as the ability to write guides, articles and funding proposals;
- a positive and confident professional behaviour style;
- leadership and team work; and
- understanding human behaviour and interpersonal relationships.

According to authors such as Lancaster (1997: 5), Goodson (1997), Schwartz and Eakin (1986: 5), Wallace (2001: 106) and the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) (1996) the most important behavioural characteristics are: approachability, interest, listening/inquiring, positive attitudes and follow-up with patrons. These behaviours enhance performance standards which increase both patron satisfaction and patron success in library services.

3.6.3 Core competencies

A combination of professional and personal competencies, are also referred to as core competencies (Bender 1994: 109). Giesecke and McNeil (1999: 159) defined core competencies as the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes which contributes to an individual's success in a particular position. Cullen and Calvert (1995: 438) also stated that reference librarians should possess some of the skills listed below. This can also be broken down into entry level, mid-level and senior levels. The core competencies pertinent to subject librarians are:

- user interfacing skills - service orientation
- knowledge of traditional and automated reference sources, knowledge of core reference materials in subject discipline, knowledge of bibliographic tools
- data retrieval skills - ability to demonstrate and explain the use of major subject specific indexing and abstracting services
- human relations skills / interpersonal skills - manage operations and supervise staff
- information technology skills
- instructional skills
- organizational skills
- business management skills

The following professional and personal competencies identified by Jenkins (1990) are applicable to the present study:

- job knowledge: the demonstration of technical, administrative, managerial, supervisory or other specialized knowledge required to perform the job;
- planning and organizational effectiveness: appraisal takes into consideration the extent to which the employee effectively plans, organizes, and implements tasks or programs.

Assessment is made on the individual's productivity compared to the standards of the position;

- **interpersonal relations:** assessment is made on how well the employee gets along with other individuals in the performance of job duties. Consideration is given to the employee's cooperativeness, tact and courtesy, and
- **attitude:** enthusiasm, dedication and interest displayed regarding position responsibilities and duties. Consideration is given to whether the employee expresses willingness to undertake projects, supports organizational goals and endeavours and demonstrates flexibility in response to changing circumstances.

3.7 Performance standards for subject librarians

Determining the effectiveness of subject librarian services, requires assessing performance against a standard. Different groups of people will use different standards for assessing service effectiveness:

Managers tend to prefer structural measures focusing on capacity to deliver service (e.g. how many reference librarians are available to deliver service?), while librarians tend to prefer process measures focusing on effort involved in delivering service (e.g. how much intellectual effort did the librarian expend answering the question). Users on the other hand, prefer outcome measures (e.g. did the user get what he/she wanted?) unless outcomes are difficult to judge. Because users often have difficulty judging the quality of outcomes, they may rely on measures of process such as general satisfaction with the courtesy of the staff (e.g. did the librarian appear interested in helping me with my question) (Whitlach 1994: 10).

Each subject librarian job criteria should be compared to a performance standard, which is an expected level of performance. Goodson (1997: 30) stated that:

job analysis is important to create standards of performance. Standards define such things as how well, how often, how much (quantity) and how accurately tasks are performed, the

rate of percentage, or the time frames expected of subject librarians. Performance standards are useful as a quality check for both managers and subject librarians.

Performance standards are established to accomplish quality, quantity of output, timeliness, manner of performance and effectiveness in the use of resources. According to Goodson (1997:

6) performance standards fall into three categories. Some of the key questions asked in these categories include:

- **Quality-quantity standards:** How well does the employee perform the various tasks set forth in the job description? and how much of each task is actually accomplished? Have the standards been based upon job related criteria developed through job analysis? Do they reflect job results and can that behaviour be observed?
- **Desired effect standards:** Is the work complete, accurate and performed on time, benefitting the goals and objectives of the institution and users is the primary question? Are sound data gathered?
- **Manner of performance standards:** Is the work accomplished in cooperation with others, without friction and can the employee adapt to new programmes or processes?

Subject librarians offer information services in academic libraries. Information services standards need to be established in accordance with the above performance standards. Well designed performance appraisal guidelines for subject librarians will take cognisance of the above categories of performance standards.

3.7.1 Information services standards for subject librarians

Authors such as Goodson (1997: 103-105), Jenkins (1990: 83) and Schwartz and Eakin (1986: 5) present performance standards which could be applicable to subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Schwartz and Eakin (1986: 5) outlined the following reference service standards which could be applicable in the South African context:

- reference librarians convey an attitude and manner that encourages users to seek assistance
- assistance is provided at the appropriate level of need
- reference librarians have a thorough knowledge of resources and collections
- reference librarians are able to plan and execute effective search strategies for complex or extended reference questions
- library services and policies are understood and described to users whenever appropriate.

Other information service standards applicable to subject librarians are listed in Appendix D, and these include:

- responsibilities to library users
- organisation and planning
- bibliographic instruction
- collection development
- evaluation (Goodson 1997:103-105).

3.8 Performance indicators for subject librarians

A performance measure is usually expressed in terms of indicators for, example, a Consumer Price Index is an indicator of the cost of living. Brophy (1989: 279) and Byrne (1997: 258) concurred that:

a performance indicator ... is a quantified statement used to evaluate and compare the performance of a library in achieving its objectives. Indicators are indispensable. It is extremely difficult if not outright impossible to measure the effect of the library's services on the user or the effect on quality and quantity of research and teaching, the so called "outcome". Instead one tries to find significant combinations of data with an high indicative value that represent the impact of library services on the user.

An indicator is a measuring device that allows a library manager to clarify and measure a concept. Indicators help to describe organizational performance and the capacity, environment, and motivation driving organizational performance. Indicators can be both qualitative or quantitative.

Winkworth (1993a: 25) aptly stated that:

performance indicators used are absolutely linked to the specific objectives of the activity. If indicators do not adequately reflect the objectives then no amount of quality assurance will deliver the goods the customer requires. One problem with such systems is that they become a compliance activity removed from the real needs of the customer. Indicators ought to reflect integration with individual institutional mission and goals.

Poll and Boekhorst (1996: 40) contend that:

the library should not be content to know that it is producing services in a cost effective way but also that those services are chosen and designed and delivered in the way that offers the greatest benefit to the users. For example: "cost per enquiry answered" should be set in relation to the performance indicator "Correct Answer Fill Rate" and perhaps also to "User Satisfaction with Reference Staff". In this way the library will be able to escape the danger of being one-sided, stressing service quality while neglecting needful economy, or of ignoring users needs in the bliss of being thrifty. Knowledge of both the quality and the cost of library services is needed for management decisions in setting priorities and allocating resources.

3.8.1 Reference services indicator

Van House, Weiland and McClure (1990: 96) stated the following important points to note for reference transactions performance appraisal:

the outcomes of the reference transaction has three components: relevance of the information provided, satisfaction with the amount of information provided, and the completeness of the answer received. There are two ways of evaluating reference transactions, librarians' evaluation of reference outcome and user's subjective evaluation of reference outcomes. Reference transactions measure provide quantitative data which indicates "how many reference questions were handled". Quality of reference service may be measured by "correct answer fill rate".

The number of reference transactions is an indicator of the level of use of a library. Van House, Weiland and McClure (1990: 96) stated that:

high numbers of reference transactions, combined with high overall user satisfaction, may be indicative of good reference service. Low number of reference questions, combined with low user overall satisfaction, may indicate the need for a more active reference service.

Furthermore, Van House, Weiland and McClure (1990: 96) gave some possibilities for increasing reference transactions, such as relocating the desk to a more prominent place in the library, advertising reference services offered, encouraging the staff to be more active in offering assistance, examining bibliographic instruction programs, and increasing services offered. Changing staffing levels, the times that service is offered, or policies and procedures may also help. The suggestions offered by Van House, Weiland and McClure (1990) could be helpful for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal libraries.

3.8.2 Bibliographic instruction or information skills measurement

A bibliographic instruction indicator can provide a guide that the service is operating within the appropriate guidelines. Bibliographic instruction or information skills classes are measured by the

number of clients attending together with client level (for example postgraduates); format of class (example lecture); documentation produced for the class; librarian hours used to prepare the class; number of client evaluation forms returned (d'Avigador 1997: 273).

Designing workbooks and other documentation for information skills programs forms part of the information services librarians' job tasks. d'Avigador (1997: 274) stated that:

Workbooks reach greater clients who could benefit the information skills training. The number of workbooks produced for each subject is recorded, as is preparation time, whether the book is new updated or a reprint, costs of printing workbook; time-frame for printing. An indicator is used that relates the unit preparation time to the number of students reached by workbook.

Conducting tests is a more objective way to check if the information skills training programme is producing the desired results. The difficulty is that only one institution (University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg) in KwaZulu-Natal, offer information literacy as part of a formal or curriculated course for students. Another difficulty is that students are reluctant to take such tests in information skills (d'Avigador 1997: 277).

The time factor is crucial in appraisals for subject librarians and needs to be factored in, in some way. d'Avigador (1997: 275) stated that:

The time/effort/resources involved in measurement and evaluation activities for library services to the overall library time/effort/resources needed to produce those services. The time/effort/resources spent in measurement and evaluation of library services to the number of decisions and actions taken by the library executive.

3.8.3 User satisfaction

User satisfaction is another indicator crucial for determining customer value in academic libraries, including KwaZulu-Natal libraries.

User satisfaction is the single best measure of quality of service for the library overall despite the caveats of it. A high rating at least suggests that the library has lined up its

service objectives with those of the users and is delivering accordingly (Winkworth 1993b: 251).

Most performance indicators include information obtained from the user. Conducting surveys with the user are vital indicators of the level of performance of librarians. The disadvantage is that this information may be subjective. Poll and Boekhorst (1996: 30) stated that surveys provide the following which is vital for effective evaluations:

- provides detailed information about the user's opinion of the service
- helps to clarify the librarian's concept of the service as well as his/her assumptions about the user's needs
- indicates problems and suggests solutions.

Further, Poll and Boekhorst (1996 : 30) suggested that:

Questionnaires should be simple and well structured to elicit the proper user opinion. Library jargon should be avoided. Users should also be asked to give an account of "critical incidents", which he/she remembers.

Winkworth (1993b: 251) asked the following question which is important for this study:

how can service performance indicators be framed within set activities? The author stated that one approach is to mix user views (known or found by special survey) with the reflections of the staff. One is that they have a thorough knowledge of the practicalities. A second is that performance targets which are imposed will be less readily owned by the staff who have to meet them. So one approach is to begin by asking the staff to draw up some draft objectives and indicators for particular activities, together with suggested standards of performance.

The data collected can reflect measures of productivity and is best conceptualized within the academic institution's overall resource framework. d'Avigador (1997: 272) stated that:

configuring a service appropriately on the basis of enquiries per hour is only justified if clients are receiving a satisfactory quality of service, and there may be a point where this is difficult to achieve if an inadequate length of time is allowed to answer each enquiry, given the prevailing librarian resources. On the other hand, the fact that the clients need to ask

questions at all may be a sign that the library system as a whole is not sufficiently navigable in a reasonably transparent fashion without the need for intervention. He declares that unfortunately he has not yet managed to find a reasonably satisfactory and painless way to institute a comprehensive service quality evaluation process given the time and resources available, in a way that is non-threatening to service staff. Feedback and client satisfaction is an indicator to determine personnel productivity and quality.

To sum up, Wallace (2001: 105) provided a guide relevant for subject librarian performance indicators, namely:

- assessing reference behaviours with unobtrusive testing,
- developing performance assessment forms for librarians and patrons,
- observation of reference behaviours form,
- patron and librarian reports of problems,
- patron learning - factors associated with obtaining exactly what was needed,
- evaluation form for unobtrusive observation of reference behaviours, and
- patron satisfaction with answers received.

Winkworth (1993b: 251) makes an apt statement:

using appropriate performance indicators is likely to have sufficient beneficial effect to justify the modest resources required, once the idea is embedded in the workplace culture.

The methodology used for assessing subject librarian reference behaviours are the obtrusive or the unobtrusive testing.

3.8.4 Obtrusive or unobtrusive testing

The methodology employed to assess performance of a subject librarian in the delivery of a reference or information service is to use either obtrusive or unobtrusive approaches to determine user satisfaction. Schwartz and Eakin (1986: 5) stated that “the direct measurement of individual performance used in libraries is one of two approaches (or sometimes both)”.

The more common methodology for evaluating reference and information services is the obtrusive method. The library staff know some type of evaluation is being performed. Often this technique is used to examine a component of the reference transaction when appraising a subject librarian’s performance.

Poll and Boekhorst (1996: 30) stated the following which is crucial to note in this study, about the unobtrusive approach:

the unobtrusive observation is used for the performance indicator “subject search”. This form of observation leaves the user unaware of the staff member who keeps track of the user’s progress at the catalogue. The librarian has to exercise sensitivity, as the whole procedure can be spoiled since the awareness of being observed changes the usual search behavior. A special form of unobtrusive observation is online monitoring or transaction log analysis, recording a user’s complete session at an online public access catalogue. The advantages of this method are genuineness of results, preciseness of information, completeness of coverage, scope of analysis and efficiency in obtaining the data.

Douglas (1988: 94) stated that unobtrusive testing is not a suitable method of identifying weak areas of reference service. Douglas argued that close monitoring of the known failures followed by corrective action is more likely to result in improved reference service than episodic testing.

The known failures of reference service according to Douglas (1988: 97) can be categorized under the following:

- wrong information given
- incomplete answer given
- referral to a source within the library (example another service point) or to a printed source but not actually locating the answer for the patron.

This assists the process of delivering quality information services to users in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. The “question answer success rate” is a relevant indicator to determine subject librarian performance. It combines staff knowledge and ability as well as availability of reference sources. Ford (1989: 83) refers to the above “ as a measure of quality of service”.

3.9 Summary

Various aspects relevant to the study were identified in the literature review. These included the role of the subject librarian in the academic library, their job tasks or key performance areas, performance competencies, performance standards and performance indicators for subject librarians. Where relevant, significant points identified in the literature review will be incorporated in the interpretation of the results of this study.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4. Introduction

In this chapter, the research methods chosen by the researcher in order to develop guidelines to appraise subject librarians in academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal are described. The choice of methodology, the advantages and disadvantages of the use of e-mail to distribute survey questionnaires and collect data, are examined. The distribution and response rate of the survey instrument is presented with an evaluation.

4.1 Choice of method

A two-pronged method of data collection was adopted. The two methods used were the review of the relevant literature, and the survey by self-administered questionnaire of the population of subject librarians.

4.1.1 The literature search and review

A literature survey is a necessary component of any research conducted in the social sciences for several reasons:

The search for relevant literature enables the researcher to find out what else has been done in relation to the problem to be investigated and makes duplication of existing studies less likely (Aitchison 1998: 58).

In addition, important understandings and insights necessary for the development of a logical framework into which the problem fits can be gained (Gay 1976: 24). Research methods used and evaluated in similar studies can be examined and their suitability for the study in hand can

be assessed (Gay 1976: 24). A familiarity with related research also makes the interpretation of the results of the study more meaningful (Gay 1976: 25).

The literature search for this study was conducted to collect information about performance appraisal for subject librarians. This information could then be applied to subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. The literature review is also important because the recommendations made in the final chapter of this thesis are to some extent based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 3.

4.1.2 Survey

This study was exploratory in nature. It was intended to investigate performance appraisal criteria for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Given the nature of the research problem and the purpose of the study in Chapter 1, the most appropriate methodological approach for the study of the problem was to conduct a survey. Busha and Harter (1980: 62) stated that survey research is capable of collecting background information and hard-to-find data, and the researcher does not have the opportunity to motivate or influence the respondents' responses. Survey research shares similar characteristics common to most other research methods, but it also has certain important differences. For instance, survey research is used to collect contemporary data while historical research is concerned primarily with past data (Powell 1997: 58). Survey research is also differentiated from experimental research in that it provides less control of the research environment and, thus, it is not capable of establishing causal relationships.

According to Powell (1997: 58) survey research is better suited to studying, exploring and analysing relationships among a large number of the population, and geographically dispersed cases. This was appropriate for this study with the five libraries involved located in different areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

For the purpose of the present study, the researcher demonstrates the use of the self-completed E-mailed questionnaire as the survey instrument for data collection rather than the traditional postal questionnaire. The benefits or otherwise of the traditional printed postal questionnaire has been exhaustively documented in the literature by authors such as Leedy (1993) and Powell (1997).

4.1.3 Using electronic mail (e-mail) for survey research and data collection

Electronic mail (e-mail) transcends global geographic boundaries for those with access to the Internet. E-mail, as a form of computer-mediated communication (CMC), has proliferated in business and the academic community. Selwyn and Robson (1998) examine research on the use of e-mail in applications such as undergraduate teaching, mentoring and discussion groups. e-mail is increasingly being used to distribute surveys on the Internet.

There is a distinction between web-page based surveys and e-mail surveys. The former collect data from a wider, uncontrolled sample, whereas the latter focus on a smaller, homogenous on-line group. In e-mail surveys, the respondent is sent a questionnaire to his or her account. In the present study, all subject librarians in the province, had e-mail addresses.

The advantages and disadvantages of e-mail questionnaire surveys according to Munoo (2000: 31-36) are as follows:

4.1.3.1 Advantages of e-mail

- **Proliferation of e-mail**

With almost “free” e-mail services such as Yahoo! and Hotmail on the Internet, anyone with access to a personal computer and the Internet can acquire an e-mail address. Thus, one does

not have to be at one physical address to administer the questionnaire. Accessibility creates a larger population and sample size, which can be polled faster than with the traditional postal method.

- **Access to names**

The Internet allows one to find and locate a person's e-mail address easily. Service providers are publishing on-line directories of subscribers. The present researcher was able to locate a list of subject librarian names and e-mail addresses from the Internet on a library's "homepage". In this way a population was selected. E-mail surveys are more unlikely than mail surveys to be 'intercepted' by someone else as they go to an individual's personal e-mail address.

- **Response rates**

Various studies have been conducted to test the response rate of e-mail questionnaire surveys. The researcher experienced problems with the response rates from subject librarians despite reminders being sent via e-mails and the post.

The advantage of e-mailed questionnaires is that people tend to check their e-mail regularly and the respondents may act on it immediately or complete the survey at their own convenience. The loss of an e-mailed questionnaire is reduced in that it is only lost once the respondent deletes it. E-mailed questionnaires offer ease and flexibility of response as the replies to the questionnaire may be printed-out, faxed or posted.

- **Ease of use**

E-mailed questionnaires can be composed as an attachment using word processing software as was the case in this present study.

- **Costs**

E-mail is faster to transmit and reduces paper or stationery costs as well as postal costs. In the present study the researcher was able to save these costs.

4.1.3.2 Disadvantages of e-mail

- **Familiarity with Information Technology (IT)**

Respondents may not be comfortable with responding to an e-mail questionnaire survey. If respondents are not very IT literate, they may have problems extracting attachments and managing electronic information. Technical difficulties such as software compatibilities can influence response rates.

- **Bias**

Younger persons are more comfortable using e-mail than older persons. This could yield selective responses depending on the topic and focus of the survey. Furthermore, the sample could be biased along class, race, age, income and gender lines.

- **Information overload**

E-mail surveys could be regarded as junk mail with the growth in computer-mediated communication and information overload. A well intended survey might be considered as “junk mail”. The respondent might choose not to act upon it immediately, resulting in delayed responses.

- **Anonymity**

It is very difficult to guarantee respondent anonymity as names are attached automatically to their

replies. In this study, respondents were assured of confidentiality.

- **Currency of E-mail addresses**

The researcher found that some e-mailed addresses were out of date which resulted in delivery failure. The web pages of KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries in the present study were sometimes not updated with the correct personnel names and e-mail addresses. The researcher personally checked this information with contact persons in each institution.

- **Technical design**

Depending upon the software used, most e-mailed surveys are limited to plain text. Creating grids and scale responses cannot be done in a visually attractive way. The researcher encountered these problems in the design of the questionnaire when it was e-mailed.

4.2 Population

According to Busha and Harter (1980: 55-57) the word 'population' refers to any group of persons, objects or institutions that have at least one characteristic in common. Several known features of the population to be surveyed are discussed below, including the size of the population, the employment and professional status of the librarians.

4.2.1 Size of the population

The population consisted of 43 subject librarians at the five academic libraries:

- 9 at the Durban Institute of Technology;
- 3 at the Mangosuthu Technikon;
- 5 at the University of Durban-Westville;
- 20 at the University of Natal; and
- 6 at the University of Zululand.

The small size of the population made sampling unnecessary.

4.2.2 Possible problems with the size of the population

The small size of the population could be a problem if data was gathered by means of mailed questionnaire only, because of the well-known phenomenon of a low response rate to that form of research instrument as well as, it would not be possible to generalize about results if responses were very low (Newell 1993: 96). This is applicable to the present study even with the use of E-mailed questionnaires.

4.2.3 Known characteristics of the population

Known characteristics of the population included their employment status as well as their professional status.

4.2.4 Employment status

The populations surveyed were the subject librarians of the five academic libraries in tertiary institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Both main and branch libraries were surveyed. However, since the subject librarians of each of the libraries under study performed different tasks, a broad definition of what tasks subject librarians perform was adopted. Subject librarians are :

staff who interact with students and staff, either in the form of one or a combination of answering reference queries, bibliographic instruction, faculty or (academic) department liaison such as collection development or cooperative cataloguing, etc. (Kaniki 1996).

4.2.5 Professional status

In order to perform these tasks, each of these librarians had professional training in librarianship. Since all of these librarians work in academic libraries they can be referred to as academic librarians.

4.3 Instrumentation

The self-administered questionnaire was used for collecting the data needed for the study. The questionnaire was considered an appropriate method for collecting data because of the advantages it provides when compared with other types of instruments. Apart from facilitating accessibility, since it permits wider geographical contacts, it can also facilitate the collection of large amounts of data and information in a relatively short period of time and is relatively inexpensive to administer (Powell 1997: 91). The fixed format of the questionnaire also helps to eliminate variations in the questioning process. As Dillman (2000: 32) stated:

...the goal of writing a survey question for self-administration is to develop a query that every potential respondent will interpret in the same way, be able to respond accurately, and be willing to answer.

Questionnaires normally give respondents a greater feeling of anonymity, which in turn encourages openness to questions and minimizes the interview bias. The objective of the questionnaire in this study was to elicit information on the important aspects of performance appraisal namely, core job tasks, KPAs, competencies, performance standards and performance indicators for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

4.3.1 The questionnaire

A five page, self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix F) consisting mainly of limited option questions with some open questions, was designed to establish the core job tasks, KPAs, competencies, performance standards and performance indicators for subject librarians at the five academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal.

4.3.2 Categories of information

The questionnaire consisted of 2 sections (A and B). Section A was designed to establish general information about the subject librarians as well as specific information relating to their job titles, professional experience and institutions at which they were employed. Specific information dealt with performance appraisal in the respondent's library.

Section B highlighted the important aspects of performance appraisal. A range of specific subject librarian job tasks were outlined which the respondent had to rate in terms of 1-5 (with 1 - not important; 2 - fairly important; 3 - uncertain; 4 - important; 5 - very important). The respondent also had to tick if they were appraised formally or informally in their own work situation on those specific job tasks outlined in the questionnaire.

The Likert scale is one of the most commonly used summated scales. In this case, the sum of responses to the items favoring subject librarian performance appraisal, minus the sum of responses to the items opposing performance appraisal, would constitute the scale score. Likert type scales are often used together with individual, nonsummated scales. The data collected by a Likert-type scale are, for all practical purposes interval level and proceed to analyse the data accordingly (Powell 1994: 94).

In the questionnaire for the present study, questions 1-10 pertained to performance appraisal in the respondent's library. Questions 11-14 highlighted important aspects of subject librarian job tasks, question 15 dealt with KPAs. Question 16-17 dealt with subject librarian competencies, behaviour traits and standards or criteria for quality library service. Question 18-19 dealt with performance indicators / methods for performance appraisal of subject librarians.

Questions in each of these sections tested the respondent's experience and knowledge of performance appraisal for subject librarians in the KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

The above questions were elicited from the literature review in Chapter 3. Questions that were included in the questionnaire were based upon the important aspects of performance appraisal

as highlighted in the literature review.

4.3.3 Forms of questions

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 122) distinguished between two types of questions commonly used in questionnaires namely open ended questions and structured questions. Both types were used in the study. Considerations influencing the form of questions posed in this study, were the content of questions, and the level of precision that the writer wanted the answers to have, as well as avoiding monotony in compilation and completion of the questionnaire.

4.3.3.1 Closed questions (forced-choice)

Closed questions are drafted in advance, complete with all possible answers, which could be given (Newell 1993: 101). Advantages of the closed questions (or limited option questions as they are also called) include the fact that they can be pre-coded and responses can easily be entered in a computer, save time and money and they are less time-consuming for the respondent to complete (Newell 1993: 101). Disadvantages of closed questions are that they force the respondent to choose between the answers provided (Newell 1993:102). To overcome this limitation a general question was posed which elicited what each respondent's recommendations were for composing relevant guidelines based on subject librarian job tasks and KPAs, competencies, performance standards and indicators.

Most of the questions in the data-gathering instrument in the present study were closed or limited option questions.

4.3.3.2 Open questions (open-ended)

Newell (1993: 102) describes open questions as those that allow individuals to respond in any way they wish. Open questions were used in the questionnaire where the range of options from

subject librarians could not be predicted.

Newell (1993: 103) points out the drawbacks of the open questions to respondents and researchers. The former are required to spend time considering and recording an answer and the latter might have to deal with responses that are ambiguous, wide-ranging and difficult to categorize as well as time-consuming to code and analyse. However, open-ended questions give the respondent an opportunity to express their own opinions on the topic.

4.3.4 Pre-testing the questionnaire

Powell (1997: 94) stresses the importance of pre-testing a questionnaire:

A pretest gives the researcher an opportunity to identify questionnaire items that tend to be misunderstood by the participants, do not obtain the information that is needed etc.... The pre-test offers certain advantages beyond helping to refine the data collection instrument. It can permit a preliminary testing of the hypothesis, point out a variety of problems not anticipated relating to design and methodology, facilitate a practice run of the statistical procedures to be used, and perhaps even indicate that the final study may not produce any meaningful results and therefore should be rethought or abandoned.

4.3.4.1 Population for the pre-test

The necessity to pre-test to assess whether the “line of questioning (in a data gathering instrument) is understandable and simple to use” has been stressed by Newell (1993: 112-113).

The pre-test was conducted to examine the clarity, content validity, and relevance of the questions. Ten library professionals were chosen from websites of Cape Town and Gauteng academic libraries.

4.3.4.2 Administering the pre-test

The questionnaire was sent via e-mail on the 09 September 2003. The pre-test population was given one week from this date to complete the questionnaire. A reminder was

sent out towards the end of the first week. Only three responded to the pre-test via e-mail and one printed copy was received by the researcher. No problems were encountered and thus no changes were made to the pre-test instrument.

4.3.5 Distribution

Once the design of the questionnaire had been completed and checked, a copy of the covering letter (see Appendix E) and the questionnaire (see Appendix F) were mailed electronically to all the members of the population on the 01 October 2003, using the lists of names and addresses from the institutional websites. Since the researcher is a subject librarian at the Durban Institute of Technology, the respondents were generally known to her.

The cover letter briefly explained the purpose of the study, while the front page of the questionnaire included the instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. The writer requested recipients to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researcher before the 24 October 2003 using the internal postal services per institution where possible. Reminders to complete the questionnaire were sent on the 22 October 2003 to all the respondents.

4.3.6 Response Rate

The response rate was initially low and only nine questionnaires were completed and returned by the due date. Therefore, the researcher extended the deadline for completing the questionnaire to the 05 November 2002. Of the 43 questionnaires that were sent out 39 were returned, yielding a response rate of 90.6 %.

4.4 Data analysis

In this study the method for data analysis was determined by the type of data collected and the purpose for which the study was conducted to meet the objectives. A coding key/matrix in Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the present study. The findings are presented in Chapter 5.

4.5 Evaluation of the method used

The validity of a study refers to its ability to measure what it sets out to measure (Newell 1993: 99). A factor that should be taken into account when considering the validity of a study is sensitivity (Newell 1993: 106-107) which leads to respondents over-reporting what they perceive as desirable behaviours. This has to be considered as a distinct possibility because most of the subject librarians know the problems associated with performance appraisal in academic libraries.

As far as the reliability of the study is concerned, its ability to obtain similar results if the same questions and a similar population were used (Newell 1993: 99) could be tested. In this regard, it could be feasible to administer the questionnaire to other subject librarians throughout South Africa because it encompassed relevant aspects relating to performance appraisal for information services in academic libraries.

4.6 Summary

The need to gain pertinent information about developing guidelines for performance appraisal of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal resulted in a literature search and a questionnaire survey being used as research methods. Both methods have been described in this chapter and the latter evaluated.

Chapter 5

Results of the survey

5. Introduction

The results of the survey of the population of subject librarians, which was conducted by means of an e-mailed questionnaire, are reported in this chapter. The purpose behind each question is explained and the results are reported.

5.1 Response rate

Of the 43 questionnaires distributed, 39 were returned, indicating a response rate of 90.6%. This relatively high response rate for an e-mailed questionnaire is possibly due to the fact that the researcher constantly followed up with respondents. Also, contact was made with certain individuals in each academic library's subject librarian unit and these individuals returned the questionnaires to the researcher.

5.2 Questionnaire results

In line with the intentions of the research, the results are reported under broad headings for sections A and B of the questionnaire. The introduction of the questionnaire looked at the demographics of the population. Section A examined the status of performance appraisal in academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal. Section B examined the important aspects of performance appraisal (PA) pertaining to job tasks, key performance areas (KPA's), skills and competencies as well as performance appraisal methods for subject librarians.

5.2.1 Demographics of the population

The introduction to the questionnaire in this study dealt with the demographics of the population which is outlined below.

5.2.1.1 Job title

Personal details were asked from respondents. Job title is indicated below.

Table 1 - Job title

| Job Title | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Subject Librarian | 20 | 51.3 |
| Librarian | 8 | 20.5 |
| Senior Librarian | 6 | 15.4 |
| Manager | 2 | 5.1 |
| No Response | 3 | 7.7 |
| Total | 39 | 100 |

The highest number 20 (51.3%) of respondents were designated “Subject Librarian”. Librarians consisted of eight (20.5%) and Senior Librarians consisted of six (15.4%) of the respondents.

5.2.1.2 Professional experience

The researcher wished to ascertain the professional experience of the respondents. The following table depicts the findings.

Table 2 - Professional experience

| Professional Experience | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than 5 years | 4 | 10.3 |
| 6 - 10 years | 10 | 25.6 |
| 11 - 15 years | 14 | 35.9 |
| 16 - 20 years | 4 | 10.3 |
| More than 20 years | 5 | 12.8 |
| No Response | 2 | 5.1 |
| Total | 39 | 100.0 |

A large majority 33 (84%) of the respondents had more than five years of experience as a professional librarian.

5.2.1.3 Subject librarian experience

Respondents were asked to indicate their subject librarian experience. The findings are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3 - Subject Librarian experience

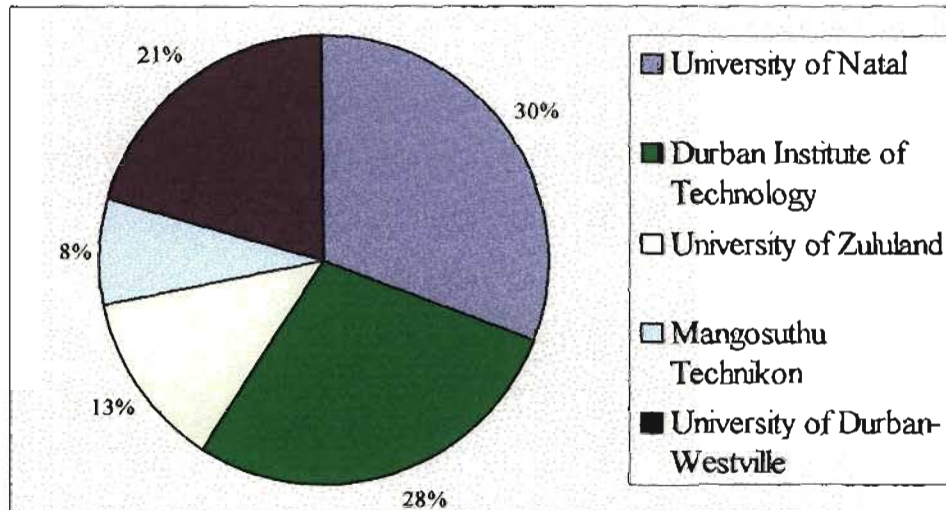
| Subject Librarian Experience | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than 5 years | 8 | 20.5 |
| 6 - 10 years | 17 | 43.6 |
| 11 - 15 years | 8 | 20.5 |
| 16 - 20 years | 2 | 5.1 |
| More than 20 years | 1 | 2.6 |
| No Response | 3 | 7.7 |
| Total | 39 | 100 |

A large majority 28 (77.7 %) of the respondents had over five years of experience as a subject librarian.

5.2.1.4 Institution of employment

Figure 1 indicates which institution the subject librarians were employed in.

Figure 1 - Institution of Employment

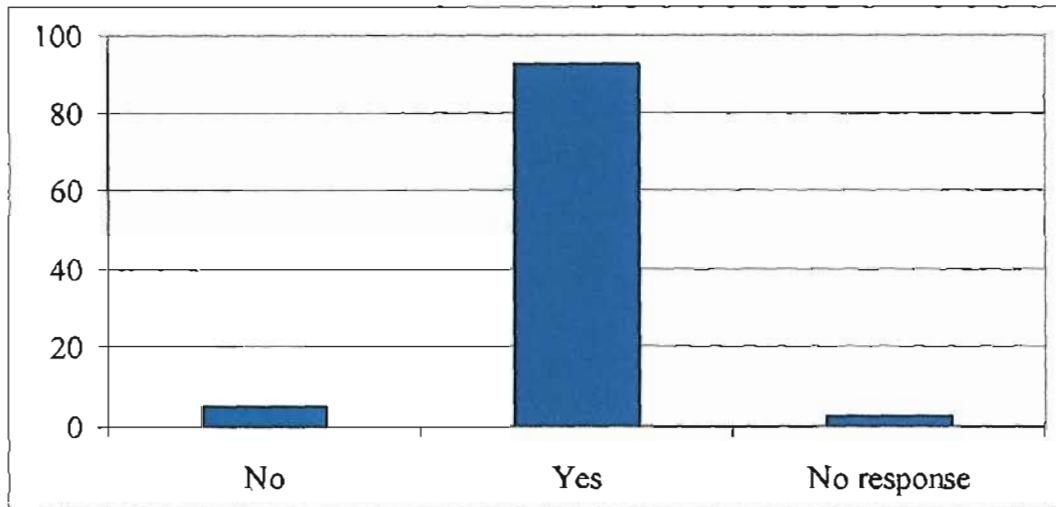


Sixty four percent of the respondents were from the universities in KwaZulu-Natal, while 26 % were from the technikons.

5.3 Section A - Status of performance appraisal in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries

Section A attempted to ascertain the status of performance appraisal in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Respondents was asked if they knew what the library mission or vision was at their institution. The findings are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Library mission or vision



Ninety two percent of the respondents knew what their library mission or vision statements were.

5.3.1 Commitment on policy for performance appraisal (PA)

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their institution had a written commitment or policy for performance appraisal. The findings are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4 - Commitment or policy for PA

| Response Type | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| No | 31 | 79.5 |
| Yes | 3 | 7.7 |
| No Response | 5 | 12.8 |
| Total | 39 | 100 |

Performance appraisal per institution revealed that 79.5 % had no written commitment or policy. A small minority of the respondents 3 (7.7%) stated that there was a written commitment or policy in place at their institution.

5.3.2 Performance appraisal of staff

Respondents were asked if performance appraisal of staff was conducted in their library. The

findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 - Performance appraisal of staff per institution

| | No | | Yes | | Total | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|------------|-------|--------------|------|
| Institution of Employment | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| University of Natal | 17 | 39.5 | 3 | 6.9 | 20 | 46.5 |
| Durban Institute of Technology | 8 | 18.6 | 1 | 2.3 | 9 | 20.9 |
| University of Zululand | 5 | 11.6 | 1 | 2.3 | 6 | 13.9 |
| Mangosuthu Technikon | 3 | 7.0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7.0 |
| University of Durban-Westville | 3 | 7.0 | 2 | 4.7 | 5 | 11.7 |
| Total | 36 | 83.5 | 7 | 16.21 | 43 | 100 |

A large majority of the respondents 35 (83.5%) had not experienced performance appraisal in their academic libraries.

5.3.3 Performance appraisal guidelines

Respondents were asked whether there were guidelines for performance appraisal of staff at their institution. Table 6 reflects the findings.

Table 6 - Guidelines for performance appraisal

| Guidelines for PA | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| No | 35 | 89.7 |
| Yes | 4 | 10.3 |
| Total | 39 | 100 |

The majority 89.7% of the respondents indicated that their libraries did not have guidelines for performance appraisal of subject librarians.

5.3.4 Contents of the guidelines

Respondents who indicated that their libraries had guidelines, were asked if they knew the contents of the guidelines. The results are reflected in Table 7.

Table 7 - Contents of the guidelines

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 3 | 75.0 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| No Response | 1 | 25.0 |
| Total | 4 | 100.0 |

This question was asked of all four respondents who had guidelines for performance appraisal in their library. Three (75%) of the four respondents knew the contents of these guidelines.

5.3.5 Performance appraisal forms

The four respondents with performance appraisal guidelines were asked to indicate for whom the performance appraisal forms had been designed. The findings are indicated in Table 8.

Table 8 - Performance appraisal forms

| PA forms | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Designed specifically for subject librarians | 2 | 50 |
| Designed for library staff generally | 0 | 0 |
| Designed for institutional / faculty staff | 0 | 0 |
| Combination of above | 1 | 25 |
| No response | 1 | 25 |
| Total | 4 | 100.0 |

Of the three respondents who answered, two indicated that performance appraisal forms had been designed specifically for subject librarians.

5.3.6 Performance appraisal approach

The seven respondents who indicated that Performance Appraisal was conducted in their libraries, were asked to stipulate what approach was used to conduct subject librarian appraisals. Table 9 indicates the findings.

Table 9 - Performance appraisal approach

| Approach | Frequency | % |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Interviews | 1 | 14 |
| Observation | 3 | 43 |
| No response | 3 | 43 |
| Total | 7 | 100.0 |

Of the four respondents that answered the question, one stated that interviews were used, and three stated that the observation approach was the most commonly used.

5.3.7 Responsibility for performance appraisal

Respondents with guidelines were asked who was responsible for conducting performance appraisal. The results are reflected below.

Table 10 - Responsibility for PA

| Person responsible | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Director / Manager of the library | 1 | 33.0 |
| Immediate Supervisor | 2 | 34.0 |
| No Response | 1 | 33.0 |
| Total | 4 | 100.0 |

Three of the respondents (67.0%) respondents indicated that performance appraisal was conducted by senior library personnel.

5.3.8 Frequency of performance appraisal

Respondents who indicated that they were appraised, were asked to indicate how often they were appraised in their institutional library.

Table 11 - Frequency of performance appraisal

| Period | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| Monthly | 1 | 14.3 |
| Quarterly | 1 | 14.3 |
| Other | 1 | 14.3 |
| No Response | 4 | 57.1 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

Two of the respondents indicated that performance appraisal was conducted monthly and quarterly.

5.3.9 Satisfaction with performance appraisal

Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the current procedures for appraising subject librarians.

Table 12 - Satisfaction with PA

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Dissatisfied | 1 | 14.3 |
| Uncertain | 1 | 14.3 |
| Satisfied | 1 | 14.3 |
| No response | 4 | 57.1 |
| Total | 7 | 100.0 |

Different responses were received from the three (42.8%) respondents who answered the question.

5.3.10 Reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction

The majority of the respondents gave no reasons for the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with performance appraisal.

5.4 Section B - Important aspects of performance appraisal for subject librarians

Section B highlights the important aspects of performance appraisal for subject librarians. This section was relevant and applicable to all 39 respondents.

5.4.1 Main tasks or duties performed by the subject librarian

Subject librarians were asked to identify what main tasks or duties they performed at work and whether they were appraised on their job tasks. They were also asked to indicate what aspects of their job tasks they were appraised on. This was not reflected by all the subject librarians, given that only seven (17.9%) of the respondents indicated that performance appraisal was undertaken in their libraries. The findings are reflected in the tables below.

5.4.1.1 Reference services

Subject librarians were asked to indicate their rankings on the job task reference services.

The findings are presented in Table 13.

Table 13 - Reference services

| | <i>Very Imp.</i> | | <i>Important</i> | | <i>Uncertain</i> | | <i>Fairly Important</i> | | <i>Not Important</i> | | <i>No response</i> | | <i>Total</i> | |
|------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| <i>Statement</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>%</i> |
| A | 16 | 41.0 | 8 | 20.5 | 1 | 2.6 | 3 | 7.7 | 2 | 5.1 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 9 | 23.1 | 10 | 25.6 | 5 | 12.8 | 5 | 12.8 | 1 | 2.6 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 13 | 33.3 | 9 | 23.1 | 4 | 10.3 | 3 | 7.7 | 1 | 2.6 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| D | 20 | 51.3 | 7 | 17.9 | 2 | 5.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| E | 22 | 56.4 | 7 | 17.9 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - Reference enquiries

B - General policy/ service/ directional enquiries

C - Literature searches: manual

D - Literature searches: computer

E - Assistance with information retrieval in a variety of formats

The majority of respondents 22 (56.4%) indicated that information retrieval in a variety of formats was very important to their job task.

5.4.2 Instruction and teaching

Respondents were asked to rate the various facets relating to instruction and teaching of bibliographic skills for users. The findings are presented in Table 14.

Table 14 - Instruction and teaching

| | Very Imp. | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| Statement | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| <i>A</i> | 19 | 48.7 | 7 | 17.9 | 1 | 2.6 | 3 | 7.7 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| <i>B</i> | 21 | 53.8 | 6 | 15.4 | 1 | 2.6 | 2 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| <i>C</i> | 26 | 66.7 | 4 | 10.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| <i>D</i> | 20 | 51.3 | 8 | 20.5 | 1 | 2.6 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| <i>E</i> | 12 | 30.8 | 13 | 33.3 | 2 | 5.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 28.2 | 39 | 100 |
| <i>F</i> | 9 | 23.1 | 8 | 20.5 | 7 | 17.9 | 3 | 7.7 | 1 | 2.6 | 11 | 28.2 | 39 | 100 |
| <i>G</i> | 18 | 46.2 | 9 | 23.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 2 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| <i>H</i> | 13 | 33.3 | 11 | 28.2 | 6 | 15.4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - Information skills programme and the ability to give presentations.

B - Bibliographic instruction conducted for class groups.

C - General orientation of the library services and usage of resources.

D - Advanced orientation of library services and usage of resources.

E - Informal instruction and orientation to individual users.

F - Refresher courses for users.

G - Training and development courses for library or academic staff.

H - Individualised library services eg. courses for postgraduates.

General orientation and usage of resources was ranked very important by 26 (66.7%) of the respondents. Bibliographic instruction and teaching was equally ranked by 21 (53.8%) of the respondents.

5.4.3 Current awareness services

Respondents were asked to indicate how important current awareness services were to their job tasks. Table 15 denotes the results.

Table 15 - Current awareness services

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|----------------------------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|-----|---------------|---|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Current awareness services | 8 | 20.5 | 15 | 38.5 | 6 | 15.4 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| SDI | 8 | 20.5 | 13 | 33.3 | 5 | 12.8 | 2 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 28.2 | 39 | 100 |

Twenty three (59%) of the subject librarian respondents did consider current awareness services and SDI 21 (53.8%) as being important or very important to their job tasks.

5.4.4 Statistics and reports

Respondents were asked to indicate their ratings for the compilation of statistical reports and analysis for purposes of evaluation. The findings are reported below.

Table 16 - Statistics

| Statement | Very Important | | Import. | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|------------|----------------|------|---------|------|-----------|------|------------------|-----|---------------|---|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Statistics | 9 | 23.1 | 15 | 38.5 | 5 | 12.8 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |

Twenty four (61.6%) respondents believed that the compilation of statistical reports was either very important or important to their job tasks.

5.4.5 Management and organisation

Respondents were asked to identify the different sectors which broadly encompasses management and organisation in subject librarian job tasks. The findings are presented in Table 17.

Table 17 - Management and organisation

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No resp. | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|-----|---------------|------|----------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 22 | 56.4 | 5 | 12.8 | 3 | 7.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 13 | 33.3 | 13 | 33.3 | 4 | 10.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 9 | 23.1 | 17 | 43.6 | 1 | 2.6 | 3 | 7.7 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| D | 10 | 25.6 | 16 | 41.0 | 2 | 5.1 | 2 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| E | 8 | 20.5 | 10 | 25.6 | 6 | 15.4 | 2 | 5.1 | 4 | 10.0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - Collection management and development

B - Planning and designing information services including virtual library services

C - Planning and designing library promotional material

D - Planning and designing teaching material

E - Supervision of staff

Collection management and development was ranked highest by 22 (56.4%) of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal. Eight (20.5%) of the respondents ranked supervision of staff as very important.

5.4.6 Information technology

Facets of information technology job tasks relating to a subject librarian were given for respondents to rate. The findings are reflected in Table 18.

Table 18 - Information technology

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|--|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| Evaluating software / websites | 14 | 35.9 | 11 | 28.2 | 3 | 7.7 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5.1 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| Ability to use IT | 19 | 48.7 | 11 | 28.2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| Ability to create IT systems for library | 5 | 12.8 | 11 | 28.2 | 5 | 12.8 | 4 | 10.3 | 3 | 7.7 | 11 | 28.2 | 39 | 100 |

The ability to use information technology systems and databases was rated as very important by 19 (48.7%) of the respondents, followed by evaluating software/websites 14 (35.9%). Less than half of the respondents 16 (41%) rated the ability to create information technology systems as important.

5.4.7 Communication

Respondents were asked to rate aspects of communication pertaining to their job tasks for performance appraisals. Table 19 reflects these findings.

Table 19 - Communication

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|-----|------------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 15 | 38.5 | 12 | 30.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.6 | 11 | 28.2 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 14 | 35.9 | 13 | 33.3 | 2 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.6 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 15 | 38.5 | 11 | 28.2 | 3 | 7.7 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| D | 13 | 33.3 | 11 | 28.2 | 2 | 5.1 | 4 | 10.3 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - with other staff for integration of library resources into academic curricula

B - for personal development in job tasks

C - to network internally for the purpose of customer focus

D - to network with the external library and information services (LIS) sector

The above factors, as indicated in the coding key, ranked as being important in respect to communication. Over 57% indicated that communication with other staff for integration of library resources into academic curricula and communication for personal development in job tasks were considered very important or important.

5.4.8 Professional development and continuous education

Respondents were given aspects of professional development and continuous education and asked to rate these. The findings are presented in Table 20.

Table 20 - Professional development and continuous education

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 6 | 15.4 | 14 | 35.9 | 6 | 15.4 | 3 | 7.7 | 1 | 2.6 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 9 | 23.1 | 12 | 30.8 | 4 | 10.3 | 5 | 12.8 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 6 | 15.4 | 10 | 25.6 | 8 | 20.5 | 2 | 5.1 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |
| D | 8 | 20.5 | 14 | 35.9 | 2 | 5.1 | 3 | 7.7 | 3 | 7.7 | 9 | 23.1 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - Attendance at personal development seminars.

B - Attendance at LIS related seminars / activities / programmes.

C - Presentation of LIS papers at conferences / meetings.

D - Attaining further qualifications.

Subject librarians in the survey indicated that professional development was an important component of PA. Attendance at LIS seminars ranked highest (23.1%), the second ranking was attaining further qualifications (20.5%). Of equal importance to attendance at personal development seminars (15.4%), was presentation of LIS papers at conferences / meetings.

5.4.9 Cataloguing and classification of resources

Respondents were asked to rank cataloguing and classification in terms of their importance to their job tasks. The findings are presented in Table 21.

Table 21 - Cataloguing and classification of resources

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|-----|------------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 14 | 35.9 | 9 | 23.1 | 3 | 7.7 | 2 | 5.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 10 | 25.6 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - Cataloguing and Classification

The majority 23 (79.3%) indicated that cataloguing and classification were important or very important to their job tasks.

5.4.10 Performing other duties

Respondents were asked to indicate how important performing other duties were in their job tasks and if they were appraised on this. The findings are given in Table 22.

Table 22 - Performing duties in other departments of the library

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|----------------------|----------------|-----|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Perform other duties | 3 | 7.7 | 8 | 20.5 | 6 | 15.4 | 10 | 25.6 | 2 | 5.1 | 10 | 25.6 | 39 | 100 |

Eleven (28.2%) stated that it is important to perform duties in other parts of the library, while 10 (25.6%) of the respondents did not answer this question.

5.4.11 Representation

The following table depicts the importance subject librarians attach to representing the institution or library.

Table 23 - Representing the institution or library

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|----------------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | 100 |
| Representation | 5 | 12.8 | 10 | 25.6 | 9 | 23.1 | 4 | 10.3 | 1 | 2.6 | 10 | 25.6 | 39 | 100 |

Ten (25.6%) of subject librarians indicated that it is important to represent the institution or library in their job tasks.

5.4.12 Other job performance areas

Respondents were asked to provide other job performance tasks or duties not listed in the questionnaire. Table 24 depicts the results.

Table 24 - Other important job performance areas or tasks for a subject librarian

| Other suggestions for important job performance areas or tasks for a subject librarian? | Frequency | % |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Attendance of Faculty Board Meetings | 4 | 10.3 |
| Willingness to go the extra mile | 3 | 7.7 |
| Building a Collection | 2 | 5.1 |
| Mentoring | 2 | 5.1 |
| Marketing of Library Services | 2 | 5.1 |
| Drafting of Policy | 1 | 2.6 |
| Attend workshops, but not present paper | 1 | 2.6 |
| Electronic Journals | 1 | 2.6 |
| No Response | 23 | 59 |
| Total | 39 | 100 |

A large majority 23 (58.9%) did not answer this question. Mentoring was the only new area mentioned by respondents which was not listed by the researcher in the questionnaire.

5.5 Key performance areas for subject librarians

KPAs describe the major outcomes of a job which directs tasks. Respondents were asked to outline the three most important KPAs for a subject librarian. Table 25 represents the findings.

Table 25 - Summary of KPA rankings

| KPAs | Number | Percentage |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| Reference Services | 10 | 25.6 |
| Instruction and Teaching for all | 9 | 23.1 |
| Management and Organization | 5 | 12.8 |
| Communication | 4 | 10.3 |
| Information Technology | 3 | 7.7 |
| Cataloguing and Classification of Resources | 3 | 7.7 |
| Professional Development and Continuous education | 2 | 5.1 |
| Current Awareness Services | 2 | 5.1 |
| Statistics | 1 | 2.6 |
| | | 100.0 |

The highest number of respondents 10 (25.6%) indicated that reference services, followed by instruction and teaching 9 (23.1%) were the most important KPAs. Collection development and management KPAs were a priority for 5 (12.8%) of the subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Statistics 1(2.6%) was least important.

5.6 Subject librarian competencies

The questionnaire consisted of a section on competencies, behaviour traits and standards or criteria for service excellence in the subject librarian unit.

5.6.1 Knowledge of the total information environment

Respondents were asked to give their ratings on their knowledge of the total information environment and the interconnections within it in terms of the data. The findings are represented in Table 26.

Table 26 - Knowledge of the total information environment

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|-----|---------------|---|-------------|---|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 31 | 79.5 | 8 | 20.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 32 | 82.1 | 7 | 17.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 32 | 82.1 | 7 | 17.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| D | 32 | 82.1 | 7 | 17.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| E | 17 | 43.6 | 16 | 41.0 | 5 | 12.8 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| F | 17 | 43.6 | 17 | 43.6 | 5 | 12.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

- A - Within the total information environment, the SL should be skilled and literate in information technology and communication.
- B - Within the total information environment, the SL should exhibit a thorough knowledge of varied information resources to meet the needs of users.
- C - Within the total information environment, the SL should provide assistance to users, at their level of need.
- D - Within the total information environment, the SL should be proficient in planning and executing effective search strategies.
- E - Within the total information environment, the SL should plan and design bi-annually, pro-active value added services aimed at both users and potential library users.
- F - Within the total information environment, the SL should display a thorough understanding of library policies and services to inform users and potential users.

The majority of respondents indicated that B, C and D were the most important subject librarian competencies, each being rated by 32 (82.1%) of the respondents.

5.6.2 Customer services

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the various components of customer services in terms of performance appraisal. The results are presented in Table 27.

Table 27 - Respondents' views on the provision of active customer service

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 24 | 61.5 | 11 | 28.2 | 1 | 2.6 | 1 | 2.6 | 2 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 9 | 23.1 | 14 | 35.9 | 9 | 23.1 | 5 | 12.8 | 2 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 29 | 74.4 | 10 | 25.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| D | 25 | 64.1 | 14 | 35.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| E | 11 | 28.2 | 21 | 53.8 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10.3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.6 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

- A - When providing active customer service, the SL is poised and ready to engage approaching patrons and is not engrossed in other activities that detract from availability to patrons.
- B - When providing active customer service, the SL roves through the reference / subject collections offering help wherever possible.
- C - When providing active customer service, the SL provides prompt and timely information resources or services.
- D - When providing active customer service, the SL offers the user other relevant resources or use of other information services.
- E - When providing active customer service, the SL follows up with the user.

The provision of prompt and timely information resources and services to the user was rated very important by 74.4% of respondents.

5.6.3 Managerial skills

Respondents were asked to rate the managerial skills for subject librarians. The findings are presented in Table 28.

Table 28 - Subject librarian managerial skills

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|-----|------------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------------|---|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 15 | 38.5 | 18 | 46.2 | 3 | 7.7 | 2 | 5.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 21 | 53.8 | 18 | 46.2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 26 | 66.7 | 12 | 30.8 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - The SL should have the ability to influence and motivate other team members in implementing policy or planning pro-active services for the library.

B - The SL should have the ability to analyse and solve problems.

C - The SL should have the ability to provide high quality services by carefully analysing and planning both information sources and services.

Analytical and problem-solving skills together with analysing existing information sources and planning new resources and services were most highly rated in terms of importance to subject librarian competencies being listed as very important by 21 (53.8%) and 26 (66.7%) of the respondents respectively.

5.6.4 Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills were outlined in the questionnaire for respondents to rate. Table 29 provides the findings.

Table 29 - Respondents' views on the interpersonal skills of the subject librarian

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No resp. | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|---|------------------|---|---------------|---|----------|-----|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 32 | 82.1 | 6 | 15.4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.6 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 30 | 76.9 | 8 | 20.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.6 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 30 | 76.9 | 7 | 17.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5.1 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

A - The SL should communicate in a receptive, cordial and encouraging manner with all.

B - The SL should display a positive attitude and demeanour towards users.

C - The SL should exhibit good listening skills towards users and colleagues.

The majority of respondents(over 76.9%) indicated that all of the above interpersonal skills were very important.

5.6.5 Other subject librarian competencies, standards or behaviour traits

An open ended question was given for respondents to complete. Table 30 outlines a summary of the results.

Table 30 - Other important subject librarian standards

| Statement | Count | % |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Be knowledgeable in academic courses | 6 | 15.4 |
| Knowledge of different cultures and behaviour | 3 | 7.7 |
| Staff development | 1 | 2.6 |
| Marketing skills | 1 | 2.6 |
| Customer confidentiality | 1 | 2.6 |
| Ability to serve outside of job description | 1 | 2.6 |
| No response | 26 | 66.7 |
| Total | 39 | 100 |

The majority 26 (66.7%) did not respond to this question. Of the 13 (33.3%) who responded, approximately half of the respondents indicated that the subject librarian needed to know the academic curricula within their job designation. Knowledge of different cultures and behaviours was ranked as second to subject librarian knowledge of academic environment with three of the 13 respondents indicating this.

5.7 Performance indicators/ methods

A variety of performance indicators / methods are used to measure performance. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the indicators and these are listed in Table 31.

Table 31 - Ratings of performance appraisal methods

| Statement | Very Important | | Important | | Uncertain | | Fairly Important | | Not Important | | No response | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|-------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| A | 5 | 12.8 | 10 | 25.6 | 15 | 38.5 | 2 | 5.1 | 5 | 13.0 | 2 | 5.1 | 39 | 100 |
| B | 5 | 12.8 | 10 | 25.6 | 13 | 33.3 | 6 | 15.4 | 2 | 5.1 | 3 | 7.7 | 39 | 100 |
| C | 8 | 20.5 | 17 | 43.6 | 10 | 25.6 | 2 | 5.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 1 | 2.6 | 39 | 100 |
| D | 9 | 23.1 | 22 | 56.4 | 5 | 12.8 | 3 | 7.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |
| E | 17 | 43.6 | 16 | 41.0 | 3 | 7.7 | 2 | 5.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 100 |

Key:

- A - Obtrusive test to determine how effectively job tasks / duties are performed
- B - Unobtrusive test to determine how effectively job tasks / duties are performed
- C - Use of a structured checklist to determine the strategies employed for learning interventions by the subject librarian
- D - Use of a structured checklist of desired behaviours
- E - Patron survey / questionnaire to determine customer satisfaction

The method which elicited the most favourable response was patron surveys to

determine customer satisfaction, 17 (43.6%) of the respondents indicated that patron surveys or questionnaires, followed by the use of a structured checklist of desired behaviours as the most important indicators for performance appraisal of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

5.8 Other comments related to performance appraisals of subject librarians

An open ended question was included in the questionnaire for respondents to include other suggestions related to performance appraisal guidelines. Table 32 depicts the findings.

Table 32 - Other comments related to the performance appraisal of subject librarians

| Statement | Count | % |
|---|--------------|------------|
| Should focus on long term improvement, not short term gain | 2 | 5.1 |
| Set standards to be able to provide an effective, uniform service | 2 | 5.1 |
| Provide unobtrusive ways of evaluating efforts | 1 | 2.6 |
| Workshop areas that need attention | 1 | 2.6 |
| Use comments from clients/users/colleagues | 1 | 2.6 |
| Compare standards with other institutions | 1 | 2.6 |
| No response | 31 | 79.5 |
| Total | 39 | 100 |

Of the eight respondents who provided responses the only comments mentioned more than once were standards should be set to provide an effective, uniform service as

well as focus on long term improvement not short term gain when appraising subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

5.9 Summary

The vast majority of subject librarians who responded to the questionnaire were not appraised in their job tasks. Performance appraisal for subject librarians appears to be seriously lacking in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. The findings of the study reflect that subject librarians consider their priority job tasks to be reference, instruction and teaching as well as planning an active customer service for students and staff of their institutions.

Chapter 6

Interpretation of the results

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are considered in light of the research problem, the objectives of the study and the literature reviewed. The purpose of the study has been to emphasize the importance of performance appraisal for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. This study will provide much needed preliminary guidelines for conducting appraisals of subject librarians' jobs in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries, whether these are conducted formally or informally.

The objectives were to:

- Determine the status of performance appraisal guidelines for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- Determine the important aspects or job tasks of subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries, for purposes of performance appraisals.
- Establish a set of key performance areas (KPAs) for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- Identify the critical competencies, behaviour traits or standards for subject librarians working in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- To determine performance indicators or methods in the guidelines, in relation to best practice, for subject librarians working in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

The order of the discussion in this chapter follows that of the order of the objectives of the study.

The results for each of the 19 questions in the questionnaire are therefore discussed in light of the objectives of the study. The findings that are interpreted in this chapter relate only to subject librarians who responded to the questionnaire. However, in view of the high response rate of the survey, it is possible to make generalisations about the whole population.

6.2 Status of performance appraisal

This section explores the findings relating to the current status of performance appraisal of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

6.2.1 Library mission or vision

The majority of subject librarians (92%) who participated in the survey indicated that they knew what their library mission or vision was. Bunge (1994: 197) stated that the only valid measure of performance is the extent to which the library achieves its mission. This indicates a strong possibility that most subject librarians were aligning their job tasks to the mission or vision of their institutional academic library. The predominant mission of academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal were highlighted in chapters 2 and 3. Prozesky and Cunningham (1986: 96) stated that the subject librarian aims to support the teaching and research goals of the institution they are employed in. The authors advocate that the subject librarian is uniquely placed to fulfil this aim.

6.2.2 Commitment to performance appraisal

The majority (79.5%) of respondents from KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries, indicated that there was no written commitment or policy concerning staff appraisal in their libraries. Dalton (1988: 29) stated that public sector accountability gives added impetus to commit to performance appraisal. There is an increased pressure on higher education and its libraries to justify their performance in terms of efficiency.

In light of the pressure exerted on higher educational libraries for accountability, it is surprising that there appears to be a lack of commitment for performance appraisal in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

6.2.3 Performance appraisal of staff

Due to the lack of commitment or policy for performance appraisals, it seems that most of the institutions in the study did not practise performance appraisal. The minority of respondents, seven (17.9%) from the institutions of University of Natal, Durban Institute of Technology and the University of Durban-Westville (Table 5) indicated that their performances were appraised. The researcher could not find substantial evidence in the form of documentation (for example performance appraisal forms for subject librarians) to support this data. It is possible that performance appraisal was conducted informally at these institutions.

6.2.4 Performance appraisal guidelines

A large majority 35 (89.7%) in Table 6 of the respondents indicated that their libraries did not have guidelines for performance appraisal of subject librarians. This suggests that performance appraisal guidelines are greatly needed in academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal. Authors such as Sluss (1986: 85); September (1988: 106-7); Verrill (1993: 98) stated that performance appraisal is designed to serve one or more of the following functions:

- to change or modify inappropriate or inferior work behaviour
- to initiate and formulate dialogues between employer and employee concerning perceptions of quality and quantity of performance
- to stimulate and further develop both the appraiser and the appraised in terms of their efficient and effective job performance
- to assess potential of the employee as regards training and development opportunities
- to determine appropriate compensation levels for the employee

- to provide documentation of work behaviour in cases where disciplinary action may be warranted.

It is evident from the literature, that guidelines for performance appraisal are therefore an essential practice for effective personnel management in academic libraries. The job functions of the subject librarian personnel are not being determined via performance appraisal. The study moves towards addressing this gap which is prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

6.2.5 Contents of the guidelines

Three of the four respondents who indicated that they had performance appraisal guidelines in their institution or in their personal possession, knew the contents thereof.

6.2.6 Performance appraisal forms

From the small minority (seven) of respondents who indicated that PA was conducted, two respondents stated that the appraisal form was designed specifically for subject librarians.

Performance appraisal in academic libraries is often seen as a formal means of documenting the value of an employee to the institution. The recording of the employee's performance by the library manager is usually in terms of a scale which ranges from 'poor' to 'outstanding', covering such categories as knowledge of the job, quality of work, ability to learn, initiative, co-operation and judgement. The rating form is supplemented by written comments about the rating to explain decisions and to make recommendations about the librarian's performance (September 1988: 108). An example of a good rating form is enclosed in Appendix C.

6.2.7 Performance appraisal approach

The literature review revealed that interviews and observation were the common approaches used to conduct appraisal of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal. September (1988:106) stated that structured discussion and consultation are essential for a successful approach to conduct performance appraisal.

6.2.8 Responsibility for performance appraisal

Performance appraisal in academic libraries is a personnel management tool and is generally conducted by the supervisor (September 1988: 106). The results of this study also indicated that performance appraisals which took place were conducted by the immediate supervisor in academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal.

6.2.9 Frequency of performance appraisal

No patterns could be established from the data, in terms of frequency of subject librarian appraisals. Of the three respondents, (Table 11) one indicated that performance appraisal was conducted monthly while the other stated quarterly. The third was a no response.

6.2.10 Satisfaction with performance appraisal

The findings indicated that no definite levels of satisfaction with performance appraisals could be established. Reasons for either satisfaction or dissatisfaction could not be ascertained from the respondents.

6.3 Important aspects of performance appraisal for subject librarians

Section B of the questionnaire established what the main tasks or duties performed by subject librarians were. According to authors such as Stueart and Moran (1998: 180) and Stueart and Sullivan (1991: 9) all job descriptions, including subject librarians' job descriptions, contain important aspects for performance appraisal:

- Tasks or duties and behaviours that are important to the job;
- Standards or performance measures which are expected for each duty;
- Skills, knowledge and abilities (SKA) required to successfully perform in the job.

6.3.1 Main tasks or duties performed by subject librarians

In order to understand what a subject librarian should be appraised upon, one must examine the main tasks and duties performed by the subject librarian. The researcher outlined all the vital aspects of subject librarian tasks, skills and behaviours which are further discussed below and all categories were in the main considered important and none were rated as unimportant by more than 50% of the respondents.

6.3.1.1 Reference services

Subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal identified reference services as most important in their job duties. Stilwell (2002: 1) argues that the development of knowledge and skills essential for information searching plus the analysis, synthesis, ordering and management of that information is crucial for service to the user. The findings in this study indicated that 41% of the respondents thought reference services were very important to their job tasks. In the reference services category it was interesting to note that assistance with information retrieval in a variety of formats, was rated highest (56.4%) by the respondents. The findings in this study are concurrent

with the literature review. The data reveals that the subject librarian is well disposed to offering reference services or assistance with information retrieval for users. Tyckoson (2001: 188) also indicated that “the subject librarian’s task is to offer reference services and provide factual information to the user”.

6.3.2 Instruction and teaching

The vast majority of subject librarians (66.7%) in Table 14, identified general orientation as very important to their job tasks while 51.3% stated advanced orientation or bibliographic instruction and usage of resources as very important to their job duties. This finding could be attributed to increased student numbers which have spread existing subject librarian staff more thinly. Widening modes of access have brought in more part-time students; more student centred learning demands a greater range of teaching skills; and the explosion of electronic information (from CD-ROM to the Internet) requires continuous updating of knowledge and skills (Bluck 1996: 97).

Tyckoson (2001: 187) stated that “the act of instruction carries with it three distinctive facets: the subject content being taught; the process of using that information in the research process; the ability to critically evaluate information”. He also stated that to be successful the librarian must teach or transfer knowledge to the patron.

The results of the data collected on instruction and teaching concurs with the literature.

6.3.3 Current awareness

Current awareness service was ranked by 59% of respondents as important to their job tasks. The findings also indicated that SDI services (Table 15) were important. In this context it is important that the librarian must understand the general interests of the academic institution and meet the specific needs of each patron. Reading levels, language skills, and educational backgrounds of users, as well as awareness of sources, all provide the foundation for good information service delivery (Tyckoson 2001: 189).

6.3.4 Statistics and reports

More than 60% of the respondents believed that the compilation of statistical reports was important in performance appraisal. Library managers, however, need to provide effective formats in order for subject librarians to generate meaningful statistical reports. Statistical reports provide the mechanism to improve both productivity and services in the academic library. Feedback regarding statistical reports compiled, is crucial for improved communication and service excellence.

6.3.5 Management and organisation

Collection management and development was highly rated (Table 17) in this study. This is in keeping with the literature that collection management and development is very important to a subject librarian's job task (Bluck 1996). Planning and designing materials for promotion or teaching of information services in academic libraries was highly valued by subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal. The study results indicated that supervision of staff was not ranked as a priority for subject librarians. Although subject librarians are considered as junior management in the hierarchical structure of KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries, they are generally not allocated supervisory responsibilities.

6.3.6 Information technology

The findings revealed that the ability to use information technology systems and databases was rated as very important by 48.7 % of the respondents. Evaluating software/websites was considered very important by 35.9 % of the respondents. The ability to create IT for library usage was not considered an important duty for a subject librarian (Table 18).

The results of this study are well supported in the literature. Woodsworth (1997) suggests that

technological competencies are the most critical ones for librarians, even if they obtained their professional qualifications recently. It is widely recognised in the literature that there is a need for librarians that are well trained in information technology (Hoskins 2002).

6.3.7 Communication

Communication with both colleagues and academics for efficient and effective integration of library resources into information service provision was important to subject librarians. The findings of this study revealed that more than 50% of the respondents rated communication as very important. This is supported in the literature. The literature review (Prozesky and Cunningham 1986: 109 and Marshall et al 1996: 1-2) indicated that good communication skills are essential for effective information service delivery.

6.3.8 Professional development and continuous education

Twenty of the thirty nine subject librarian respondents in the survey ranked this aspect as very important for performance appraisal. This rating is supported by Woodsworth (1997: 2) who said that “ due to constant changes it would be difficult for subject librarians to survive without any effort to ongoing professional development, continuing education and staying aware of trends in the field”.

6.3.9 Cataloguing and classification of resources

Cataloguing and classification of resources were considered important aspects of subject librarians' job tasks in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries (Table 21). Academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal have separate cataloguing departments within the library whose main job function is cataloguing and classification of resources. However, subject librarians at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) are responsible for classification. The findings are surprising due to the fact that subject librarians consider cataloguing and classification as important. The reality is that subject librarians do not perform this duty.

6.3.10 Performing other duties

Six subject librarians were not certain and ten did not respond to the question about being appraised on performing other duties in other departments of the library. Performing other duties in other departments were viewed by the majority of the respondents as not central to their core job tasks. It is the researcher's belief that this generally refers to a temporary or ad hoc task. Thus it is not good practice to appraise staff for duties conducted outside their job descriptions. It is important for managers however, to recognise initiative and willingness of subject librarians to assist the library with duties outside their job description.

6.3.11 Representation

Fifteen respondents indicated that it is important or very important to represent the institution and they considered this as important for their performance appraisal.

6.3.12 Other job performance areas

Mentoring as a job task mentioned by 5.1% of the respondents, was the one area not listed by the researcher. This suggests that performance appraisals for subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries should take cognisance of mentoring as a job task.

6.4 KPAs for subject librarians

The study findings revealed the KPAs for KwaZulu-Natal academic subject librarians in order of priority (Table 25):

1. Reference services (25.6%)
2. Instruction and teaching (23%)
3. Management and organisation (12.8%)

In the management and organisation performance area, collection development was featured prominently. The literature suggests that the role of the subject librarian centers around four main areas: academic liaison, collection development, information skills teaching (instruction and teaching) and reference work (Bluck 1996). The findings of the present study are in accordance with the literature.

6.5 Subject Librarian competencies

The researcher looked at competencies, behaviour traits and standards for service excellence in the subject librarian unit.

6.5.1 Knowledge of the total information environment

Knowledge of the total information environment competency was ranked as very important to

subject librarians' performance for service excellence. The data revealed over 79.5% of the respondents believed that it is either important or very important for the subject librarian to exhibit a thorough knowledge of varied information resources to meet the needs of users; should provide assistance to users, at their level of need; should be proficient in planning and executing effective search strategies and be skilled and literate in information technology and communication.

The competencies of planning and designing of pro-active value added services and displaying a thorough understanding of library policies and services were not as important as the former competencies of knowledge of the total information environment. Bluck (1996: 101) argues that the essential qualities or skills required for subject librarians are: IT skills and awareness; interpersonal skills (with library users and with colleagues); presentation skills (for teaching programmes); and team work skills for working in a group. This study's findings concur with the literature on personal and professional competencies.

6.5.2 Customer services

A prominent finding was that the provision of prompt and timely information resources and services to the user was ranked by the respondents (74.4%) as very important for customer service. Subject librarians also felt that the need to offer the user other relevant resources or information services which they believed are very important for customer service.

Interesting to note, was that the roving of the subject librarian in the library to assist patrons was not considered very important. This implies that users ought to know their subject librarian as well as take the initiative to approach the subject librarian for assistance.

6.5.3 Managerial skills

The majority of subject librarians (66.7%) ranked analysing existing information sources and

planning new resources and services as very important in the managerial skills category. Thus analytical and problem solving skills were critical for subject librarian performance.

6.5.4 Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills were rated as very important or important by subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Table 29 indicates that zero % ratings were given for uncertain, fairly important and not important for interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are highly valued in the literature on librarian competencies. Studies conducted by Odini and Rockman (in Buttlar and Du Mont 1996: 47) and Braun (2002: 46) considered the following interpersonal skills as the most important for the training of subject librarians:

- two-way communication skills (oral, written, listening, questioning)
- a positive and confident professional behaviour style;
- leadership and team work; and
- understanding human behaviour and interpersonal relationships.

6.5.5 Other subject librarian competencies, standards or behaviour traits

The findings of this study, revealed the following competencies in order of priority as important for subject librarians:

- become knowledgeable in academic courses (15.4%)
- knowledge of different cultures and behaviours (7.7%)
- ability to serve outside the job description (2.6%)
- customer confidentiality (2.6%)
- marketing skills (2.6%)
- staff development (2.6%)

The above findings are supported by Buttlar and Du Mont (1996: 44) who stated that librarians will not only need the basic core of traditional skills and professional knowledge, but flexibility; lifetime learning; people skills; technological skills; business skills including marketing and valuing diversity.

6.6 Performance indicators/methods

The majority of respondents (43.6%) indicated that patron surveys were the most important indicator of performance as compared with the use of a structured checklist of desired behaviours (23.1%), use of a structured checklist of learning intervention strategies (20.5%), unobtrusive testing (12.8%) or obtrusive testing (12.8%), for performance appraisal of subject librarians.

The findings above are supported in the literature. User satisfaction is the single best measure of quality of service for the library overall despite the caveats of its use. A high rating at least suggests that the library has lined up its service objectives with those of the users and is delivering accordingly (Winkworth 1993b: 251).

The researcher is of the opinion that subject librarians may feel stressed about being tested (either obtrusive or unobtrusive testing) on tasks performed and prefer to be guided by checklists as indicated in the survey findings. Authors such as Schwartz and Eakin (1986: 5) and Winkworth (1993b: 250) stated that the unobtrusive or obtrusive or a combination of both performance indicators, are best practice for measuring individual performance .

6.7 Other comments related to performance appraisals of subject librarians

Of the eight respondents who provided other comments, two indicated that standards should be set to provide an effective, uniform service, as well as focus on long term improvement not short

term gain when appraising subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. It is interesting to note that the findings (Table 32) in this open ended question, also support unobtrusive ways of evaluating subject librarian performance.

6.8 Summary

In the absence of guidelines for performance appraisal, this chapter outlined and discussed the significant findings pertaining to performance appraisal of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. These findings may be used to develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

The major findings was that there appears to be generally a lack of commitment for performance appraisal in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Performance appraisal guidelines are greatly needed in academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal.

The prominent KPAs as indicated in this study for KwaZulu-Natal subject librarians were:

1. Reference services
2. Instruction and teaching
3. Management and organisation (including collection development).

The following subject librarian competencies were also rated as important in this study:

1. Knowledge of the total information environment
2. Customer services
3. Managerial skills
4. Interpersonal skills

The findings also indicated that patron surveys and user satisfaction were the best indicators of performance. The above findings are supported in the literature.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop preliminary guidelines for performance appraisal of subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. In this chapter, conclusions and recommendations are made after briefly revisiting the objectives of the study.

7.1.2 Revisiting the objectives of the study

Objectives of the research were to:

- Determine the status of performance appraisal guidelines for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- Determine the important aspects or job tasks of subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries, for purposes of performance appraisals.
- Establish a set of key performance areas (KPA's) for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- Identify the critical competencies, behaviour traits or standards, arising from best practice for subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries
- To determine performance indicators or methods in the guidelines, in relation to best practice for subject librarians working in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

The purpose behind the objectives was to facilitate recommendations that would emphasize the importance of performance appraisals in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries and help to develop preliminary guidelines.

7.2 Conclusions

The survey of 43 subject librarians (of whom 39 responded) in the academic libraries of the Durban Institute of Technology, Mangosuthu Technikon, University of Durban-Westville, University of Natal, Durban and Pietermaritzburg and University of Zululand, resulted in several significant findings.

The findings of this study revealed that performance appraisal of subject librarians is virtually non-existent in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. A large majority (79.5%) of the respondents in the study indicated that there was no written commitment or policy for performance appraisal in place at their institution. Thus, generally performance appraisals were not conducted in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries and few formal guidelines were drawn up.

The value of performance appraisal guidelines are stated succinctly by McElroy (1989: 98) that

if libraries are to flourish and serve their organizations well, we need to secure a better understanding of function, and how we should be judged. Sensitive guidelines can help libraries in the short term by improving resources; that is their traditional role. More important, they can better the long-term management of libraries, both internally by librarians, and from top management, by putting questions of role, service, resources and judgement of performance on the agenda in an informed environment.

The study was able to establish basic guidelines drawn from the literature review and the results of the survey conducted in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. Good guidelines for conducting performance appraisal for subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal will consist of the appraising of job tasks, deciding on key performance areas (KPA's) and determining the relevant competencies, skills and behaviour traits.

According to authors such as Stueart and Moran (1998: 180) and Stueart and Sullivan (1991: 9) all job descriptions, including subject librarian job descriptions, contain five general areas:

- Tasks or duties and behaviours that are important to the job;
- Standards or performance measures which are expected for each duty;
- Skills, knowledge and abilities (SKA) required to successfully perform in the job;
- Conditions which make relationships and the performance of responsibilities easy or difficult; and
- Qualifications: education and experience necessary to ensure successful performance of responsibilities.

This study specifically addressed the first three areas as listed above and as stated in the research objectives. The significant findings of this study which are supported in the literature, have shed light on the KPAs for KwaZulu-Natal academic subject librarians. The KPAs in order of priority were:

1. Reference services
2. Instruction and teaching
3. Management and organisation, including collection management

As noted above the findings are in accordance with the literature which suggests that the role of the subject librarian centers around four main areas: academic liaison, collection development, information skills teaching (instruction and teaching) and reference work (Bluck 1996).

According to Sluss (1986); Prozesky and Cunningham (1986) and the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA: 1996), the goals of the subject librarian unit are threefold:

- to educate students and staff in the use of the library services,
- to assist students and staff in finding information, and
- to teach students and staff to think critically about the use of information sources.

Another significant finding of the study was the identification of a set of competencies, behaviour traits and standards for service excellence in the information services unit.

The data analysis revealed that 79.5% of the respondents ranked knowledge of the total information environment as very important to subject librarian performance for service excellence. The data revealed that a large majority of the respondents believed that it is important for the subject librarian to exhibit a thorough knowledge of varied information resources to meet the needs of users; should provide assistance to users, at their level of need; should be proficient in planning and executing effective search strategies and be skilled and literate in information technology and communication.

A prominent finding was that the provision of prompt and timely information resources and services to the user was ranked by 74.4% of the respondents as very important for customer service. The findings also revealed that, to provide a proactive customer service, the subject librarian must offer the user other available and relevant resources or information services.

In the managerial skills category, the significant findings were that analytical and problem solving skills were critical for subject librarian performance.

The results for interpersonal skills in this study indicated that the subject librarian should communicate in a receptive, cordial and encouraging manner with all users, the subject librarian should display a positive attitude and demeanor towards users as well as exhibit good listening skills towards users and colleagues.

The following professional and personal competencies identified by Jenkins (1990) are applicable to the present study:

- Job knowledge: the demonstration of technical, administrative, managerial, supervisory or other specialized knowledge required to perform the job;
- Planning and organizational effectiveness: appraisal takes into consideration the extent to which the employee effectively plans, organizes, and implements tasks or programs.

Assessment is made on the individual's productivity compared to the standards of the position;

- **Interpersonal relations:** assessment is made on how well the employee gets along with other individuals in the performance of job duties. Consideration is given to the employee's cooperativeness, tact and courtesy; and
- **Attitude:** enthusiasm, dedication and interest displayed regarding position responsibilities and duties. Consideration is given to whether the employee expresses willingness to undertake projects, supports organizational goals and demonstrates flexibility in response to changing circumstances.

Interpersonal skills are highly valued in the literature on librarian competencies. Studies conducted by Odini and Rockman (in Buttlar and Du Mont 1996) and Braun (2002) also considered relevant interpersonal skills applicable for subject librarian performance. The findings of this study concurred with the above authors. The following aspects of subject librarian competencies were considered by subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal as pertinent to their performance:

- knowledge of the total information environment
- customer services
- analytical and problem solving skills
- interpersonal skills
- knowledge of different cultures and behaviours
- marketing skills

The above conclusions provide a basis for the establishment of preliminary guidelines for performance appraisal of subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries. They equip both manager and subject librarian with the important aspects which should be dealt with in

performance appraisal. The researcher advocates that performance appraisal should be conducted in a nurturing environment which enhances continuous development. Performance appraisal for subject librarians in KwaZulu-Natal should be based on the job tasks, KPAs, skills and competencies outlined in this study. The present study has identified the skills and competencies required for subject librarians to fulfil their job purpose. The competencies outlined in this study would allow subject librarians to realise their productivity. Performance indicators/methods are used to measure performance. The use of a structured checklist of desired behaviours and the use of a structured checklist of learning intervention strategies was preferred by subject librarians for appraising their performance.

The findings in this study revealed that user satisfaction or patron surveys were the most important indicator of the level of performance of librarians. The findings are well supported in the literature review. User satisfaction is the single best measure of quality of service for the library overall, despite the caveats of its use. A high rating at least suggests that the library has lined up its service objectives with those of the users and is delivering accordingly (Winkworth 1993b: 251).

In identifying the above professional and personal skills or competencies of subject librarians, it is hoped that an attempt will be made by both manager and employee, to build a high level of competency and also realign service provision in academic libraries via performance appraisal.

7.3 Recommendations

In light of the above, the following recommendations are made with regard to performance appraisal of subject librarians employed in academic libraries of KwaZulu-Natal:

Library managers and supervisors of the institutions surveyed for this study need to realize the value of performance appraisal in their libraries. Management should ensure that performance appraisal is conducted in a professional manner in a nurturing environment conducive to enhancing quality and productivity. According to Lipow and Carver (1989: 87) staff are the most

important resource in a library: they constitute the largest budget, they deliver the library's services, they operate the library's equipment, they shape the library's image. The magnitude of change due to technological developments suggests that libraries have to devote greater resources to staff development and training. Library managers need to make a strong commitment to staff development and training, encompassing performance appraisal, to ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively in an information environment that is demanding and rapidly changing.

Training processes and procedures should be constantly evaluated and modified to meet changing needs. This will ensure that subject librarians keep pace with the technological changes and will ensure that their competencies and skills are constantly updated.

A needs analysis should be conducted to determine individual and organisational strengths and weaknesses in terms of performance appraisal in each academic library. This study has aimed to contribute to an initial guideline for appraising subject librarians in academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal. The job tasks, KPAs, competencies, skills and behaviour traits were outlined and discussed.

As academic mergers are resulting in the new institutions of the Durban Institute of Technology and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, appraising staff performance is even more important because users will be expecting the same level of quality and service throughout all the libraries of the new merged institutions. Performance appraisal of subject librarians is a mechanism to improve service provision and enhance quality output via training and development.

Library managers, supervisors and staff should be aware of the implications of staff training and development legislation in South Africa, particularly the Skills Development Act, 1998 and related legislation. Taking this legislation into account, there should be no excuses, such as lack of funds to prevent the building of professional or personal skills and competencies for subject librarians.

Academic institutions in KwaZulu-Natal should employ a Skills Development Facilitator who

would be responsible for developing and planning a staff skills strategy as well as implementing a training programme according to institutional needs. This study has identified the desired skills, competencies and behaviour traits for effective information service provision to effect this implementation in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

7.3.1. Future research

The current study has provided initial guidelines for performance appraisal of subject librarians in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In the light of the findings of the present study future research is needed:

- ❑ Job descriptions are an important component of performance appraisal. The principles and best practice of drawing up job descriptions for librarians could be examined and developed for KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.
- ❑ An investigation as to why performance appraisal is not being conducted in academic libraries in KwaZulu-Natal should be undertaken. What are the factors hampering its progress and what will be some of the recommendations to enhance productivity and accountability in higher educational libraries?
- ❑ Standards or performance indicators must be developed which will measure the performance of library personnel. Standards or performance indicators provide a framework for performance appraisal for both the manager and the employee. Further, standards and indicators provide benchmarking mechanisms for managers to determine if the librarian “meets” standards, “exceeds” standards or “falls short” in his/her performance. The development of standards and performance indicators also provides a guideline for individual librarians to evaluate their performance.

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review and updating of job descriptions. Provision should also be made for appraisal on various levels, e.g. self-appraisal, peer review, and supervisory appraisal. Peer review should be anonymous and self-appraisal and supervisory appraisal should include opportunity for consultation between the employee and the supervisor. Discussion and consultation can occur only if the employee receives the evaluation information before the supervisor's appraisal is finalized. The final evaluation report should include the response to the appraisal of the individual who was appraised. Within the framework of a participative management philosophy, staff participation is more important than the format of the appraisal procedure.

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Appendix 1 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Academic Affairs Library Performance evaluation review

Name _____ Date _____

Section unit _____ Job title _____

Date of appointment _____ Present supervisor _____
(to present position)

A. Job knowledge:

| Superior | Above standard | Up to standard | Below standard | Seriously deficient |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|

B. Effectiveness with others:

| Superior | Above standard | Up to standard | Below standard | Seriously deficient |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|

C. Quality of work:

| Superior | Above standard | Up to standard | Below standard | Seriously deficient |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|

D. Quantity of work:

| Superior | Above standard | Up to standard | Below standard | Seriously deficient |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|

E. Dependability:

| Superior | Above standard | Up to standard | Below standard | Seriously deficient |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|

F. Initiative:

| Superior | Above standard | Up to standard | Below standard | Seriously deficient |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|

Supervisor's explanations or comments: (Use this space to explain or clarify the ratings. Thoroughly explain those marked 'Superior', 'Below standard', or 'Seriously deficient'.)

Appendix 2 Performance evaluation review

Employee's Name _____ Date _____

To be filled out after (and as a result of) the discussion between staff member and supervisor.

Overall evaluation:

| | | | | |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Superior | Above standard | Up to standard | Below standard | Serious deficien |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|

In this space list any agreements that have resulted from the review. (Regarding either career goals or needed improvement methods to achieve these.)

Signature of supervisor _____ Date _____

I have read and discussed this evaluation with my supervisor. My signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with evaluation. My comments follow. (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

- ☐ Present job description is accurate.
- ☐ New description or changes on attached sh

Signature of employee _____ Date _____

Signature of reviewer _____ Date _____

Note: Any additions to or modifications of this evaluation require a personal discussion with the person being evaluated and the evaluating supervisor. Attach additional sheets, if necessary.

Appendix 3 Duke University Libraries annual professional personnel update and evaluation

(Detach this sheet and use it as the beginning page of the completed evaluation form.)

The Librarian fills in the following blanks:

Name of librarian _____ Date _____

Department _____ Position _____ Rank _____

Date of professional appointment at Duke _____
to present position _____ to present rank _____

Period covered by update and evaluation _____
(indicates leaves of absence or part-time work)

I have been notified of upcoming review for _____ reappointment; _____ promotion; _____ continu
appointment.

Appendix 4 Duke Universities Libraries annual personnel update and evaluation

For librarians not being reviewed by CAP, the annual evaluation process begins July 1. It includes an update of the librarian's job description, an update and self-evaluation of job-related and other professional activities, an evaluative essay by the supervisor, and the librarian's response to this evaluation. In some cases, as for multiple-role librarians and librarians in large departments, more than one supervisor may serve as evaluator. When librarians are being reviewed by CAP for promotion and continuing appointment, the process

begins no later than July 1 and should be completed by Au 1, at which time all documents must be deposited with Personnel Librarian. For remaining librarians, the pro should be completed and the documents deposited within days after their initiation, or October 1.

This form is designed to provide information to aid librarian to grow professionally. In addition, it will serve as basis for promotion and continuing appointment decis salary determinations, and other personnel actions. criteria for promotion in the paper 'Ranking Structure Duke University Librarians' and the criteria for contin

appointment in the paper 'Continuing Appointment' provide basic guidelines for the evaluation.

This form or a comparable form will be used in the Law Library and the Medical Center Library by deleting phrases or sections containing references to positions and to CAP which are not applicable to those libraries.

Procedures

The librarian and evaluator complete Steps I – V below on separate sheets. The first and last of these sheets are attached to this instruction sheet. Steps VI – VIII are on the final page. In providing information on separate sheets, use the corresponding step numbering and lettering of the procedures. Steps I – III are to be completed by September 1.

Step I. Job description. The librarian and evaluator decide whether the current job description is fully adequate. If no change is needed, a copy of the current description is attached to the evaluation form. If changes are required, the current description is revised or a new job description is prepared. In either of these cases, a copy of the current description and of the revised description is attached to the evaluation form, one copy retained by the librarian, and one copy retained by the department head.

Step II. Professional achievement and growth. The librarian completes steps II and III and gives them, along with this form, to the evaluator.

A. Job-related activities. Describe activities of the preceding year in your area of work responsibility. Highlight special projects, innovations, work that received recognition outside the department, etc.

B. Other professional activities.

1. List library-related activities outside regular duties, such as committee work, special projects, liaison with other departments (if not included in A above), etc.
2. List university service outside the library.

Appendix 5

3. List professional affiliations, indicating memberships, offices, committee work, etc. Indicate level of participation.
4. List conventions, conferences, workshops, etc. attended. Indicate level of participation.
5. List course or degrees completed. Indicate whether audited or taken for credit, name of institution, and date. Provide any appropriate description of course content.
6. List research and publications. Include books, articles, reviews, and oral or written presentations of a professional nature.

7. List classes taught. Indicate institution, course, and date.
8. List any other relevant activities or recognition not covered in the above categories, such as honors, consultant work, etc.

C. If you are being reviewed for promotion to Library Assistant Senior, list the names of three to five persons who are qualified to evaluate your work and/or professional contributions and who may be consulted by CAP for additional information. If you are being reviewed for promotion to the upper two ranks or for continuing appointment, list the names of at least six persons according to the above directive. CAP may consult additional persons as it deems appropriate. Include the address for any person not connected with the Duke University libraries. Your supervisor is automatically included in the evaluation procedure and therefore are not listed here.

Step III. Self-evaluation. Based on information supplied in Steps I and II, assess and evaluate your own professional growth and achievement during the preceding year. Indicate progress toward achieving last year's goals and include goals for next year's work.

Step IV. Supervisory evaluation. The evaluator completes this step and returns it to the librarian *within ten days*. The evaluator may wish to discuss a draft copy with the librarian before completing the final evaluation. Sections A through C may be combined in a single essay.

In an analytical essay:

- A. Discuss the librarian's work performance, based on the job description attached and information supplied in Steps II and III. Include an evaluation of the appropriateness of the goals set.
- B. Discuss the overall development of the librarian, using as a starting point information presented in Steps II and III.
- C. State whether the librarian's performance (i) fails to meet professional standards for his rank and position; (ii) meets these professional standards; or (iii) more than meets these professional standards for his rank and position and to what extent.

If the librarian does not have continuing appointment, indicate whether progress toward continuing appointment is satisfactory and, if not, why not.

- D. State whether you recommend this librarian for: renewal of appointment; non-renewal of appointment; continuing appointment; and/or promotion in rank. Fully justify the recommendation in the essay which precedes it.

Appendix 6

Step V. Librarian's response. The evaluator returns the form, completed through Step IV, to the librarian, who comments, if he wishes, on the evaluation and returns the form, completed through Step V, to the evaluator *within five days*.

Appendix 7 Update and evaluation

(Detach this sheet and add to end of completed evaluation form)

Step VI. Conference. Within one week of the completion of Steps I - V, the librarian and evaluator meet and discuss the document fully and attach their signatures. These signatures indicate that both parties have fully discussed the evaluation (Step IV) and the librarian's response (Step V).

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| _____ Evaluator's signature | _____ Date |
| _____ Librarian's signature | _____ Date |

Step VII. The evaluator forwards the form (completed through step VI) to his immediate supervisor for review. Signature indicates that the reviewing librarian has read the librarian's evaluation and response.

| | |
|---|---------------|
| _____ Signature of reviewing librarian | _____ Date |
|---|---------------|

Comments:

If the reviewing librarian holds a position below that of assistant University Librarian, he forwards this form to the appropriate librarian at that level or above for signature and comments if appropriate.

| | |
|---|---------------|
| _____ Signature of Assistant or Associate University Librarian | _____ Date |
|---|---------------|

Comments:

Appendix 8

Step VIII. By July 1 librarians being reviewed by CAP must submit a job description and the names of suggested references to the Personnel Office. By August 1 (for librarians being reviewed by CAP) or October 1 (for all other librarians) the highest level reviewing librarian must deposit the entire annual update and evaluation form in the office of the Personnel Librarian, who then contacts the librarian being interviewed for final comments and signature. The completed update is thereafter available to the library administrators, the librarian's supervisors, the reviewed librarian, and CAP when required for its deliberations.

It shall be the responsibility of the Personnel Librarian to provide a copy of the update to the individual librarian.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| _____ Librarian's signature | _____ Date |
|--------------------------------|---------------|

Comments:

Appendix 10 Perkins Library support staff annual performance appraisal interim form

I. Definition and Purpose

In *Roberts' Dictionary of Industrial Relations*, performance appraisal is defined as 'a systematic review of an individual employee's performance on his job to evaluate the

Appendix 9 Perkins Library. Duke University support staff annual performance appraisal interim form

This form is to be used by the *Staff Member*. *Attachments recommended.*

Name _____ Date _____

Period covered

Department _____ by review _____

Job classification _____

I. Job description (attach current job description)

II. Achievements during review period

III. Areas where growth and improvements are needed

IV. Areas where training and development would be beneficial

V. Goals for the future (to be set in consultation with supervisor. Include, whenever possible, goals for each area of job responsibility. Personal or career goals may also be included.)

VI. Final comments

effectiveness or adequacy of his work.' Another author defines performance appraisal as the technique used to let employee know where he stands in an organization. The underlying assumption behind this latter definition is that employees want to know not only how they are regarded, but also what the future may hold for them in the organization.

Believing this assumption to be valid, the purpose of the library's interim appraisal plan for support staff is as follows:

1. To assess the employee's performance against the job requirements as set forth in the job description
2. To provide an opportunity for the employee, in consultation with the supervisor, to establish goals that can improve performance and cause the employee to achieve maximum growth and development.
3. To give every level of library administration a better understanding of the staff member's capabilities and potential in the organization.

The new form which will replace the JPAR until the university adopts a uniform plan, is designed in two parts, one to be the primary responsibility of the staff member, the other to be the primary responsibility of the supervisor. The objective is that both parties may take an active role in the review process. Honest, open communication is essential. Mutual agreement in the areas of job duties, goals, and measurable achievements must be earnestly sought.

Implementation of the new appraisal plan is expected to provide particular benefits to staff members, in that they will receive feedback on their job performance and can thus take definite steps to improve that performance. The appraisal will also provide important, useful information to supervisors when employees are being considered for promotions and transfers. In addition, if the University implements a superior performance award as expected, the appraisal will serve as documentation for determining which employees will be recommended for this merit award.

II. Instructions

A. Staff member form

1. Job description — The supervisor has the responsibility for determining the limits or parameters of the job in question. On the other hand, the employee is in a better position than anyone else to know what duties are actually being performed. Thus, both the supervisor and the employee should bring to the interview a list of assignments and duties as each sees them. During the discussion, changes may be recommended. Based on organizational needs, which may include the desire for cross-training or the wish to provide job enrichment, duties may be added or deleted. In any case the end result should be understanding and agreement concerning the duties to be performed.

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2. Achievements during review period — If earlier goals were set, the employee should state progress made toward meeting these goals. The employee may also indicate participation in job-related or staff development activities, especially if these activities contributed to growth and development. When no previous review has occurred, the employee should cite achievements since the beginning of employment.
3. Areas where growth and improvement are needed — As a result of looking at the job requirements and assessing how well one meets this requirements, the employee should

identify areas where growth or improvement is needed. Every employee has both strengths and weaknesses. Once that premise is accepted, self-analysis becomes less painful.

4. Areas where training and development would be beneficial — Employees should list particular areas where courses, workshops, or in-service training classes might be undertaken to improve job performance and to enhance development. Specific topics may be suggested.
5. Goals for the future — During the first part of the interview, the employee and the supervisor should have defined the areas of job responsibilities. In most cases goals should be set for each area and should logically include items already mentioned in Roman numerals III and IV. Personal and career goals may also be stated.
6. Final comments — Upon completion of the entire annual performance review, the employee may wish to make a final response.

B. Supervisor's form

1. Job responsibility — Based on the job description, the supervisor and the employee should work together to define the key areas of job responsibilities. If earlier goals have been set for any of these areas, a summary statement should be included in the second column on the chart. The degree to which these goals have been accomplished should be noted in the third column, along with the reasons which aided or impeded progress.
2. Highlights of performance — Since every employee has both strengths and weaknesses, this section provides an opportunity for discussing areas where growth has already taken place, as well as areas where growth is needed. In preparing this section, supervisors should measure job accomplishments against job requirements, taking into account factors like quality and quantity of work, knowledge of specific duties, and inter-personal relationships. Particular strengths, such as leadership ability or analytical skills needed in the library, though not necessarily in this job, should be included. Conversely, when there are liabilities, like attendance or use of time, these too should be addressed.
3. Training and development — In determining whether special training would improve the individual's performance, the supervisor should once again examine job responsibilities and performance. Particular attention should be given to meeting the training needs of staff members who may have assumed new duties or who may be implementing new procedures. Consistent with organizational needs, if the employee has the ability to increase or expand job responsibilities after proper training, that avenue may likewise be explored.
4. Overview of performance or final comments — Several questions may be answered in this overview. Is employee meeting expectations of the job, making an outstanding contribution, or performing below accepted standards? How does this employee compare with others at this level with the same amount of experience? What progress has the employee made while in this job? How can this employee further develop his potential in the library?

Appendix 15 Section II (supervisor's form)

(Areas of responsibility from job description)

A. Needs improvement/training

B. Fully meets job expectations

Goals for improvement /training or general comments. May include comments on progress in meeting last year's goals, plus new goals for the coming year. Required if X in column A.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Appendix 16

Signature of supervisor _____ Date _____

Signature of employee _____ Date _____
(indicates read and discussed)

Signature of department head _____ Date _____

Signature of AUL _____ Date _____

Appendix 17 TE*MS criteria weighting form^a

Please distribute 100 points, in multiples of five, among the following criteria.

Job-related performance criteria**— Interpersonal skills**

Develops and maintains smooth and effective working relationships with superiors, peers, subordinates; interacts effectively with library patrons; maintains good relationships with campus units outside the library; supports, encourages and fosters cooperation among subordinates; is approachable.

— Professional/technical knowledge

Keeps up-to-date in knowledge of the library profession in general and, if appropriate, subject area; possesses sufficient job knowledge to perform effectively in assigned responsibilities.

— Professional/technical competence

Applies professional knowledge in all areas of responsibility; provides professional/technical advice to others within the libraries and to library patrons.

— Communication skills

Communicates clearly orally and in writing; keeps subordinates, peers and superiors informed; uses both

formal and informal communication channels appropriately.

— Initiative and Reliability

Persists with extra effort to attain objectives; overcomes obstacles to get the job done; takes initiative in identifying and completing work that needs to be done.

— Planning and organizing

Formulates short and long-range goals and objectives; forecasts possible problems for the unit/organization and develops strategies for addressing these problems; organizes work in order to accomplish the most important assignments first; handles problems before they escalate into crises; completes assignments in a timely manner.

— Decision making/problem solving

Makes sound and timely decisions, taking into account all relevant information; develops effective and creative solutions to organizational problems; recognizes and responds effectively to unexpected situations.

— Teamwork

Cooperates with peers, subordinates and superiors; shares equally in departmental responsibilities and activities; participates in accomplishing library projects and objectives.

^a Constance Corey and Virginia Steel, 'Pay for Performance: The TE*MS Experiment', In: Association of College and Research Libraries National Conference. (4th: 1986, Baltimore, MD.) *Energies for Transition*. (Association of College and Research Libraries, 1986), p.126-128.

Appendix 18 TE*MS: Team evaluation rater selection form

Please list five individuals with whom you interact in your job and who are in a position to make valid observations of your job performance. If fewer raters are available, list fewer, but five are strongly recommended.

| | Name | Frequency of contact | Internal/external | Rater relationship |
|----|-------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Frequency of contact

1 = Once a month; 2 = 3 times a month; 3 = 9 or more times a month

Internal/external

Internal = Someone from within the department
External = Someone from outside the department

Rater relationship

Example of a team selected by a reference librarian

| Title | Relationship | Objectives | Weight | Score |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| Head, Reference department | +1 | 1. | | |
| Reference librarian colleague | 0 | 2. | | |
| Reference department paraprofessional | -1 | 3. | | |
| Catalog librarian | 0 | 4. | | |
| Head, library instruction | +1 | 5. | | |

MS score
Average score

Appendix 19 TE*MS evaluation form

Team evaluation ('TE')

Please circle the performance level that best applies to each criterion

| Job-related performance criteria | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Interpersonal skills |
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Professional/technical knowledge |
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Professional/technical competence |
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Communication skills |
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Initiative and reliability |
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Planning and organizing |
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Decision-making/Problem-solving |
| M | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Teamwork |
| | | | | | | TE score |

Management system ('MS')

List, weight and evaluate the primary objectives of each librarian as established at the beginning of the evaluation year

Appendix 20 Rater feedback report

Consistency with the team consensus

| Ratees | Criteria | | | | | | | | H |
|--------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | |
| Ann | * | * | H | * | * | * | H | * | G ₁ |
| Carla | L | * | * | L | L | * | * | L | G ₁ |
| Paul | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | G ₁ |
| Rob | * | — | — | L | L | * | * | * | G ₁ |

Consistency

* = Within 20% of the team consensus

H = More than 20% higher than the team consensus

L = More than 20% lower than the team consensus

— = Criterion not rated

Halo

good = More than 20% variation among criteria

Poor = Less than 20% variation among criteria



Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers

Revised by MOUSS Management of Reference Committee and approved by the RUSA Board of Directors, June 2004. ([Listing of members and authors.](#))

Introduction

The face of Reference Services has changed significantly since the original RUSA Guidelines for Behavioral Performance were first published in 1996¹. Intended to be used in the training, development, and/or evaluation of library professionals and staff, the Guidelines have subsequently been favorably evaluated by the profession, and currently enjoy widespread acceptance as standards for the measurement of effective reference transactions.²

The original Guidelines dealt primarily with face-to-face interactions between Reference staff and library users. Even at the time, however, the world of Reference was moving beyond the traditional Reference Desk. Email and online chat services have since become popular with both patrons and library staff, and are expanding in all types of libraries, from public to academic to school libraries and beyond. Although some of the statements in the original Guidelines can be applied to remote forms of reference, the lack of traditional visual and non-verbal cues produces a different type of library-patron interaction.

One constant that the shift away from in-person encounters has not lessened is the need for good communication skills. The Virtual Reference Desk recognized this and incorporated an "Interactive" component into their "Facets of Quality for Digital Reference Services," stating that "[d]igital reference services should provide opportunities for an effective reference interview, so that users can communicate necessary information to experts and to clarify vague user questions."³

In all forms of reference services, the success of the transaction is measured not only by the information conveyed, but also by the positive or negative impact of the patron/staff interaction. The positive or negative behavior of the reference staff member (as observed by the patron) becomes a significant factor in perceived success or failure. This connection has been born out in the work of researchers like Gers and Seward (1985), who found that "behaviors have a strong influence on performance"⁴, and Whitlatch (1990), who stated "Librarian courtesy, interest, and helpfulness are crucial in providing successful reference service. Libraries must select and retain staff who have these service orientations toward users."⁵ Matthew Saxton (2002) put the Guidelines to a statistical test, and found that they did indeed correlate highly to a successful reference transaction.⁶

The original RUSA Ad Hoc Committee that designed the Guidelines recognized the need for future adaptation to deal with issues related to remote users, and in late 2001 the RUSA Standards and Guidelines Committee requested that the RSS Management of Reference Committee undertake this revision. The revised Guidelines reflect the understanding that while in-person and remote reference interviews share some points in common, each also has its own peculiar characteristics that need to be addressed separately in the formation of standard guidelines.

With this in mind, the original format has been rearranged to reflect the changes in our profession. The five main areas (Approachability, Interest, Listening/Inquiring, Searching, and Follow Up) remain the same, but three distinct categories have been added (where appropriate) under each. They are:

General--Guidelines that can be applied in any type of reference interaction, including both in person and remote transactions.

In Person--Additional guidelines that are specific to face-to-face encounters, and make the most sense in this context.

Remote--Additional guidelines that are specific to reference encounters by telephone, email, chat, etc., where traditional visual and non-verbal cues do not exist.

Some of the original Guidelines have also been rewritten to make the service ideal they convey apply more generally. The goal of this document's revision has been to create a conceptual framework and service ethic with which reference professionals can consider all patron reference interactions, and help establish a service standard for their institution.

Note: The term *librarian* in this document applies to all who provide reference and informational services directly to library users.

1.0 Approachability

In order to have a successful reference transaction, patrons must be able to identify that a reference librarian is available to provide assistance and also must feel comfortable in going to that person for help. In remote environments, this also means placing contact information for chat, email, telephone, and other services in prominent locations, to make them obvious and welcoming to patrons.

Approachability behaviors, such as the initial verbal and non-verbal responses of the librarian, will set the tone for the entire communication process, and will influence the depth and level of interaction between the staff and the patrons. At this stage in the process, the behaviors exhibited by the staff member should serve to welcome the patrons and to place them at ease. The librarian's role in the communications process is to make the patrons feel comfortable in a situation that may be perceived as intimidating, risky, confusing, and overwhelming.

To be approachable, the librarian:

General

1.1 Establishes a "reference presence" wherever patrons look for it. This includes having Reference Services in a highly visible location and using proper signage (both in the library and on the library's Web site) to indicate the location, hours, and availability of in-person and remote help or assistance.

1.2 Is poised and ready to engage approaching patrons. The librarian is aware of the need to stop all other activities when patrons approach and focus attention on the patrons' needs.

1.3 Acknowledges others waiting for service.

1.3.1 Employs a system of question triage to identify what types of questions the patrons have when more than two patrons are waiting. Frequently asked questions, brief informational questions, directional questions, and referrals can be answered quickly, allowing more time to devote to in-depth reference questions.

In Person

1.4 Establishes initial eye contact with patrons, and acknowledges the presence of patrons through smiling and attentive and welcoming body language.

1.5 Acknowledges patrons through the use of a friendly greeting to initiate conversation, and by standing up, moving forward, or moving closer to them.

1.6 Remains visible to patrons as much as possible.

1.7 Roves through the reference area offering assistance whenever possible. Librarians should make themselves available to patrons by offering assistance at their point-of-need rather than waiting for patrons to come to the reference desk. To rove successfully, the librarian should:

1.7.1 Be mobile. Get the patrons started on the initial steps of their search, then move on to other patrons.

1.7.2 Address the patrons before addressing their computer screen. Patrons are more likely to confide in librarians and discuss their needs if they do not perceive the librarians as "policing" the area.

1.7.3 Approach patrons and offer assistance with lines such as, "Are you finding what you need?" "Can I help you with anything?" or "How is your search going?"

1.7.4 Check back on the patron's progress after helping them start a search.

1.7.5 If the reference desk has been left unattended, check back periodically to see if there are patrons waiting for assistance there.

Remote

1.8 Should provide prominent, jargon-free links to all forms of reference services from the *home page* of the library's Web site, and throughout the site wherever research assistance may be sought out. The Web should be used to make reference services easy to find and convenient.

2.0 Interest

A successful librarian must demonstrate a high degree of interest in the reference transaction. While not every query will contain stimulating intellectual challenges, the librarian should be interested in each patron's informational need and should be committed to providing the most effective assistance. Librarians who demonstrate a high level of interest in the inquiries of their patrons will generate a higher level of satisfaction among users. To demonstrate interest, the librarian:

General

2.1 Faces the patron when speaking and listening.

2.2 2.2 Focuses attention on the patrons.

In Person

2.3 Faces patrons when speaking and listening.

2.4 Maintains or re-establishes eye contact with patrons throughout the transaction.

2.5 Signals an understanding of patrons' needs through verbal or non-verbal confirmation, such as nodding of the head or brief comments or questions.

Remote

2.6 Maintains or re-establishes "word contact" with the patron in text-based environments by sending written or prepared prompts, etc., to convey interest in the patron's question.

2.7 Acknowledges user email questions in a timely manner.

2.8 States question-answering procedures and policies clearly in an accessible place on the Web. This should indicate question scope, types of answers provided, and expected turnaround time.

3.0 Listening/Inquiring.

The reference interview is the heart of the reference transaction and is crucial to the success of the process. The librarian must be effective in identifying the patron's information needs and must do so in a manner that keeps patrons at ease. Strong listening and questioning skills are necessary for a positive interaction. As a good communicator, the librarian:

General

- 3.1 Communicates in a receptive, cordial, and encouraging manner.
- 3.2 Uses a tone of voice and/or written language appropriate to the nature of the transaction.
- 3.3 Allows the patrons to state fully their information need in their own words before responding.
- 3.4 Identifies the goals or objectives of the user's research, when appropriate.
- 3.5 Rephrases the question or request and asks for confirmation to ensure that it is understood.
- 3.6 Seeks to clarify confusing terminology and avoids excessive jargon.
- 3.7 Uses open-ended questioning techniques to encourage patrons to expand on the request or present additional information. Some examples of such questions include:
- Please tell me more about your topic.
 - What additional information can you give me?
 - How much information do you need?
- 3.8 Uses closed and/or clarifying questions to refine the search query. Some examples of clarifying questions are:
- What have you already found?
 - What type of information do you need (books, articles, etc.)?
 - Do you need current or historical information?
- 3.9 Maintains objectivity and does not interject value judgments about subject matter or the nature of the question into the transaction.

Remote

- 3.10 Uses reference interviews or Web forms to gather as much information as possible without compromising user privacy.

4.0 Searching

The search process is the portion of the transaction in which behavior and accuracy intersect. Without an effective search, not only is the desired information unlikely to be found, but patrons may become discouraged as well. Yet many of the aspects of searching that lead to accurate results are still dependent on the behavior of the librarian. As an effective searcher, the librarian:

General

4.1 Finds out what patrons have already tried, and encourages patrons to contribute ideas.

4.2 Constructs a competent and complete search strategy. This involves:

- Selecting search terms that are most related to the information desired.
- Verifying spelling and other possible factual errors in the original query.
- Identifying sources appropriate to the patron's need that have the highest probability of containing information relevant to the patron's query.

4.3 Explains the search strategy and sequence to the patrons, as well as the sources to be used.

4.4 Attempts to conduct the search within the patrons' allotted time frame.

4.5 Explains how to use sources when appropriate.

4.6 Works with the patrons to narrow or broaden the topic when too little or too much information is identified.

4.7 Asks the patrons if additional information is needed after an initial result is found.

4.8 Recognizes when to refer patrons to a more appropriate guide, database, library, librarian, or other resource.

4.9 Offers pointers, detailed search paths (including complete URLs), and names of resources used to find the answer, so that patrons can learn to answer similar questions on their own.

In Person

4.10 Accompanies the patrons in the search (at least in the initial stages of the search process).

Remote

4.11 Uses appropriate technology (such as co-browsing, scanning, faxing, etc.) to help guide patrons through library resources, when possible.

5.0 Follow-up

The reference transaction does not end when the librarian leaves the patrons. The librarian is responsible for determining if the patrons are satisfied with the results of the search, and is also responsible for referring the patrons to other sources, even when those sources are not available in the local library. For successful follow-up, the librarian:

General

- 5.1 Asks patrons if their questions have been completely answered.
- 5.2 Encourages the patrons to return if they have further questions by making a statement such as "If you don't find what you are looking for, please come back and we'll try something else."
- 5.3 Roving (see 1.7) is an excellent technique for follow-up.
- 5.4 Consults other librarians or experts in the field when additional subject expertise is needed.
- 5.5 Makes patrons aware of other appropriate reference services (email, etc.).
- 5.6 Makes arrangements, when appropriate, with the patrons to research a question even after the reference transaction has been completed.
- 5.7 Refers the patrons to other sources or institutions when the query cannot be answered to the satisfaction of the patron.
- 5.8 Facilitates the process of referring patrons to another library or information agency through activities such as calling ahead, providing direction and instructions, and providing the library and the patrons with as much information as possible about the amount of information required, and sources already consulted.
- 5.9 Takes care not to end the reference interview prematurely.⁷

Remote

- 5.9 Suggests that the patrons visit or call the library when appropriate.

Endnotes

- 1. RUSA. "Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Services Professionals." *RQ*, 36 (Winter 1996) 200-3. [[Return to text](#)]
- 2. For example, see: Gatten, Jeffrey N., and Carolyn J. Radcliff. "Assessing Reference Behaviors with Unobtrusive Testing." In *Library Evaluation: A Casebook and Can-Do Guide*, ed. Wallace, Danny P. and Connie Van Fleet. (Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 2001), 105-115. [[Return to text](#)]
- 3. Virtual Reference Desk. "Facets of Quality for Digital Reference Services, Version 5." June 2003. Available: <http://www.vrd.org/facets-06-03.shtml> [[Return to text](#)]
- 4. Gers, Ralph and Lillie J. Seward. "Improving Reference Performance: Results of a Statewide Study." *Library Journal*, November 1, 1985. 32-35. [[Return to text](#)]
- 5. Whitlatch, Jo Bell. "Reference Service Effectiveness." *RQ*, Winter 1990. 205-220. [[Return to text](#)]

6. Saxton, Matthew L. Evaluation of Reference Service in Public Libraries Using a Hierarchical Linear Model: Applying Multiple Regression Analysis to a Multi-Level Research. Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA, 2000. [[Return to text](#)]

7. Ross, Catherine Sheldrick and Patricia Dewdney. "Negative Closure: Strategies and Counter-Strategies in the Reference Transaction." *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 38(2) 1998. 151-63. [[Return to text](#)]

RUSA RSS Management of Reference Committee Members and Document Authors

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The New York Public Library

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EMPLOYEE NAME _____
PERIOD COVERED: FROM _____ TO _____

STAFF EXEMPT AND STAFF NONEXEMPT EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Objectives

The staff performance appraisal system is designed to enhance:

1. **COUNSELING AND COMMUNICATION:** An employee should be evaluated on his/her performance on a regular basis; work-related issues of mutual concern to the employee and the supervisor should be discussed, and efforts to establish performance goals should be initiated.
2. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** The evaluation process should be used to identify individual professional development needs and opportunities, consistent with the professional goals of the employee and the advanced training skills appropriate for the job and office.
3. **PERSONNEL DECISIONS:** Performance appraisals can contribute to a variety of personnel actions, including among others, considerations for promotions and salary increases.

NOTE: Some employees have been called upon or have volunteered to participate in University affirmative action activities. These activities are frequently in addition to an employee's regular job. Any involvement in such activities should be considered along with the employee's regular work performance when completing an appraisal. While it is important for each employee to perform all of his or her regular duties well, performance appraisals should take into account the employee's entire contribution to the University.

Instructions

The first eight PERFORMANCE CRITERIA may be utilized for all Staff Exempt and Staff Nonexempt employees. The ninth criterion (Supervisory Abilities) should be utilized only for employees with supervisory responsibilities.

For each PERFORMANCE CRITERION (sections A through I), the appraiser must:

- (1) Provide a performance rating by circling the appropriate number (1 to 12), or
- (2) Write a narrative appraisal in the "Supporting Comments" section, or
- (3) Provide both a rating and a narrative in the "Supporting Comments."

For the OVERALL EVALUATION (section J), the appraiser MUST provide a numerical performance rating (1 to 12).

Appraisers are reminded of the added value of the narrative sections and are encouraged to supplement the rating with supporting comments and, where appropriate, suggestions. For each PERFORMANCE CRITERION on which the employee is given an inadequate rating (i.e., 1 to 3), the appraiser MUST provide supporting comments.

In any case where performance under a specific criterion or the OVERALL EVALUATION of an employee is considered to be inadequate, the "Suggestion" portion of the form should also be used. It may be helpful if suggestions, such as recommendations for training or the development of performance objectives, are discussed and jointly agreed upon between the supervisor and the employee. Some of the PERFORMANCE CRITERIA may not be appropriate to a particular position. In such circumstances, simply indicate "Not Applicable" under the narrative for the criterion. You may attach a separate piece of paper listing any other criteria which are more applicable to the employee's position, utilizing the same evaluation procedures outlined above.

The descriptions of performance under each PERFORMANCE CRITERION are intended only as suggestions of attributes to be considered. If a particular phrase or behavioral example appears to be inappropriate in appraising an employee, the supervisor may simply cross that phrase out. Further clarification of any evaluation may, of course, be added in the "Supporting Comments" section.

Blank copies of the appraisal form may be made as a guide to employees at any time. Furthermore, a mutual review of the employee's position description (either during or prior to the interview) is encouraged to insure the currency and accuracy of the position description, as well as establish a basis for understanding the duties being appraised.

STAFF EXEMPT AND STAFF NONEXEMPT EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ POSITION TITLE: _____
COLLEGE/DEPT: _____ PERIOD COVERED: FROM _____ TO _____
DATE STARTED AT UNIVERSITY: _____ DATE STARTED THIS POSITION: _____

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

A. JOB KNOWLEDGE: The demonstration of technical, administrative, managerial, supervisory or other specialized knowledge required to perform the job. Consider degree of job knowledge relative to length of time in the current position. If applicable, consider the individual's endeavors to increase job knowledge through additional formal or informal study, seminars, readings, or other professional activities both on and off the job.

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|--|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Displays deficiencies in job knowledge; further training required | | | | | |
| Shows strength sometimes but is not consistent. | | | | | |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | Demonstrates average to high level of job knowledge | | |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | Demonstrates consistently high level of job knowledge. | | |

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

B. PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: The extent to which the employee effectively plans, organizes and implements tasks or programs. Consider the extent to which the employee displays the basic fundamentals of good organization and work planning and the employee's effectiveness in time management. Consider the degree to which the employee meets deadlines, handles emergencies, and appropriately establishes goals and priorities. Assess the individual's productivity compared to the standards of the position.

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Displays poor planning; lack of organization apparent even in routine assignments; frequently misses deadlines | | | | | |
| Does routine tasks adequately; difficulty in managing multiple or complex assignments; occasionally misses deadlines | | | | | |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | Average or better; most tasks are planned, organized, and implemented effectively and on time | | |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | Displays outstanding ability to plan, organize, and implement tasks and programs and to meet deadlines. | | |

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

C. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS: How well the employee gets along with other individuals in the performance of job duties. Consider effectiveness of relations with co-workers, subordinates, supervisor and, if applicable, the general University community and the public in the handling of position responsibilities. Consider the employee's cooperativeness, tact and courtesy.

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|--|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Has difficulty in relating to others; not readily cooperative. | | | | | |
| Relates to others fairly well; works better with some persons than others. | | | | | |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | Works well with others; facilitates cooperation | | |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | Is very effective interpersonally; works extremely well with subordinates, peers, and superiors. | | |

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

D. **ATTITUDES:** Enthusiasm, dedication and interest displayed regarding position responsibilities and duties. Consider whether the employee expresses willingness to undertake projects, supports organizational goals and endeavors, and demonstrates flexibility in response to changing circumstances.

- 1 2 3 Generally displays negative attitude toward job; criticizes without offering constructive suggestions; inflexible.
- 4 5 6 Accepts job duties, occasionally with reluctance.
- 7 8 9 Displays interest in duties and responsibilities; flexible in response to changing circumstances.
- 10 11 12 Highly dedicated and enthusiastic; strongly supportive of organizational goals.

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

E. **INITIATIVE:** The degree to which the employee is self-starting and assumes responsibilities when specific directions are lacking. Consider how well the employee follows through on assignments, taking appropriate independent action when necessary, and the relative amount of supervision required.

- 1 2 3 Needs detailed instructions; requires constant supervision to keep assignments going.
- 4 5 6 Follows through on some assignments without continuous direction; requires some follow-up to keep assignments progressing.
- 7 8 9 A self-starter; follows through on assignments independently.
- 10 11 12 Exceptionally self-reliant; completely follows through on assignments.

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

F. **RESOURCEFULNESS:** Extent to which employee devises ways and means to deal with challenges in the performance of job duties. Consider the modification of, or recommendations for the modification of, existing methods or procedures to meet new or changing circumstances and the development of new ideas or methods.

- 1 2 3 Rarely develops more effective ways of handling assignments.
- 4 5 6 Occasionally offers worthwhile ideas and suggestions when encouraged to do so.
- 7 8 9 Has necessary resourcefulness to devise or suggest new methods, or to modify existing ones, to meet changing circumstances.
- 10 11 12 Frequently makes worthwhile suggestions; readily develops ideas and solutions to problems.

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

G. **JUDGMENT:** Evidence of ability to analyze available data or circumstances concerning a situation, develop alternative solutions, and recommend or select a proper course of action.

- 1 2 3 Makes frequent errors in judgment; often overlooks consequences of decisions.
- 4 5 6 Judgment usually sound under normal circumstances; occasionally exercises questionable judgment.
- 7 8 9 Exercises good judgment; aware of impact of decisions on related areas.
- 10 11 12 Exceptionally sound and sensible judgment; foresees and evaluates impact of decisions on related areas.

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

H. **COMMUNICATION SKILLS:** Effectiveness in conveying ideas, information and directions to others. Consider clarity of oral and written communications as related to the employee's responsibilities.

- 1 2 3 Displays an inability to communicate clearly.
- 4 5 6 Sometimes lacks clarity or conciseness; generally can communicate desired information.
- 7 8 9 Communicates in an organized, clear and concise manner.
- 10 11 12 An outstanding communicator; can communicate complex information extremely well.

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

I. **SUPERVISORY ABILITY:** COMPLETE ONLY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY. Extent to which the employee applies sound, acceptable supervisory practices in the execution of higher supervisory responsibilities. Consider evidence of demonstrated skill in arousing interest and enthusiasm in subordinates rather than solely relying on authority to get the job done. Consider the employee's effectiveness in selecting and developing personnel.

- 1 2 3 Causes morale problems; does not adequately handle employee relations.
- 4 5 6 Somewhat competent as supervisor but is not consistent.
- 7 8 9 Encourages subordinates in self-development; creates and maintains a comfortable, cooperative work environment.
- 10 11 12 Dynamically leads subordinates to discover their own potential within their positions; provides inspiration and outstanding leadership to subordinates.

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

J. **OVERALL EVALUATION:** The overall evaluation should reflect the assessment of the employee's total performance, based upon the foregoing criteria. In making the assessment, consider the criteria according to the employee's duties and responsibilities, taking care not to overemphasize one particular criterion.

- 1 2 3 Improvement is required in order to perform at an acceptable level.
- 4 5 6 Generally performs adequately; need for improvement in specific areas is evident.
- 7 8 9 Performs duties and responsibilities well; occasionally excels.
- 10 11 12 A noteworthy employee; this employee is a top performer.

Supporting Comments: _____

Suggestions: _____

Signature of the Appraiser _____ Date _____

Concurrence of Administrative Officer _____ Date _____

*Signature of Individual Appraised _____ Date _____

*Signature indicates only that the evaluation has been reviewed, and does not necessarily signify concurrence. A response to this appraisal may be made on a separate sheet and attached.

dance is expected, and then only when absolutely necessary

Assessment: staff evaluations based on above criteria; supervisor observations and record-keeping; peer and staff feedback

REFERENCE LIBRARIAN¹

Note: The task of Reference Librarians is to assist library users in locating information, either from resources available within the library, or from some other source. The behaviors identified below, representing standard performance, are not meant to be inclusive: they are merely examples of the conduct expected of those who are assigned to Reference duty.

A. Responsibilities to library users

1. Conveys a warm, yet professional attitude
Includes, but is not limited to:
 - Listens carefully, asks questions as necessary in order to be sure s/he understands what is needed
 - Treats all users with equal courtesy and consideration; is tactful and nonjudgmental
 - Avoids behaviors, casual remarks, or jokes that could be construed as sexist
 - Invites approach by acknowledging the presence of library patrons as they enter the Reference area (make eye contact, smiles, etc.)
 - Appears to be truly concerned with the user's request
 - Tries to instill confidence in users who project or express feelings of inadequacy, etc.
 - Encourages user to return to the desk for further help if his/her information need is still not satisfied after s/he has followed the suggestions first provided
 - Readily asks colleagues for help when needed
2. Gives full attention to the primary task
Includes, but is not limited to:

LIBRARY/BIBLIOGRAPHIC INSTRUCTION COORDINATOR

Note: As mentioned earlier, for all positions included in this book, the individual library must decide what percentage of the employee's time should be allotted to each function. For example, the Library/Bibliographic Instruction Coordinator would certainly have as part of his or her performance standards the Unit Head and Library/Bibliographic Instruction Provider modules, and in many libraries, also the Reference Librarian module.

A. Manages library instructional programs

Includes, but is not limited to:

Takes primary responsibility for providing library instruction

Matches instructional requests from teaching faculty with available and qualified staff members, checks space availability, then confirms appointments within 2 working days

Maintains up-to-date and easily accessible schedule of classes and tours

Sees to it that instructional facilities and equipment are properly maintained and kept in good order, always ready for the next scheduled session

Troubleshoots equipment in need of repairs; either repairs or schedules service calls within 24 hours

Designs program evaluation forms, assures that evaluation is done on an ongoing basis, and analyzes results so that feedback can be used to improve curriculum

Sees that needed equipment is ordered promptly, and follows up on delivery and/or damage

Prepares and disseminates clear, up-to-date policies and procedures governing the instructional program

Coordinates instructional planning with library staff; always keeps colleagues informed of program changes and equipment problems that may affect them

Serves as a responsive and cooperative liaison between library and teaching faculty with regard to library instruction services provided

Provides statistical and evaluative reports to library administration as scheduled or requested

B. Oversees preparation of instructional materials

Includes, but is not limited to:

Serves as consultant and/or writes and produces instructional materials, handouts, guides, videos, etc.

Monitors materials produced in-house for consistency, attractiveness, and informational quality

Sees to it that sufficient quantities of instructional materials are on hand and available at all times to staff members who need them

Keeps literature racks in Reference Department filled with appropriate user guides

Maintains current copies of all user guides on library WWW page

Reviews instructional materials on a systematic basis to determine when updating or revision is needed

Takes responsibility for keeping up-to-date with desktop publishing software and for training/assisting other staff in use of this technology

- Encourages instructor to be present during session if at all possible
 - Presents a program that is clear, accurate, focused, and carefully geared to student needs
 - Times presentation so that it is completed within the period allotted
 - Finds ways to make students active participants, rather than passive listeners
 - Makes the effort to be warm, personable, enthusiastic about the subject; uses appropriate humor if possible
 - Remains available for questions and/or followup at the conclusion of the presentation
 - Provides class with personal e-mail address, office phone number, or other appropriate means of contacting instruction provider later, in case there are additional questions
 - Solicits feedback from professor regarding success and usefulness of presentation, including suggestions for future modifications in content
- C. Uses instructional media appropriately and effectively
- Includes, but is not limited to:
 - Prepares (or arranges for preparation of) helpful and attractive overheads, WWW pages, and/or other instructional media as needed
 - Checks room in advance to be sure all needed equipment is present and in good working order
 - Provides useful, clearly written handouts for session attendees
 - Uses instructional media that are concise and well designed and show good use of graphics

- Ensures that handouts in sufficient quantity for all attendees are ready well in advance of the scheduled presentation
 - Shares instructional materials with coworkers
- Assessment: BI evaluation forms, instructor feedback, peer feedback, supervisor observations*

ACQUISITIONS/SERIALS/COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT LIBRARIAN

- A. Manages functions of the department Includes, but is not limited to:
 - Reviews budget reports daily/weekly/monthly
 - Monitors expenditures/encumbrances to ensure that funds are being expended at an appropriate rate
 - Prepares coherent and persuasive written justifications for requested supplemental funding or extraordinary expenditures
 - Oversees and annually reviews allocation of funds according to subject area, academic department, etc.
 - Keeps appropriate parties (academic department heads, subject bibliographers, etc.) informed of current budget allocation status on a monthly basis
 - Supervises verification/ordering/receipt/bindery fund disbursement processes to ensure that correct procedures are being followed
 - Reviews verification/ordering/receipt/bindery fund disbursement processes on a systematic basis to determine when updating/revision/streamlining is needed
 - Works cooperatively with Business Office and Cataloging/Processing Department so that materials are received promptly and flow smoothly and rapidly through the system to the shelves
 - Is an expert user of the library's online system, able to answer all staff questions and train new staff effectively
 - Makes sound decisions on selection of vendors based on judgement of most important factors relevant to specific situation (e.g., delivery speed/reliability/availability vs. cost/discount, etc.)

- Ensures that written acknowledgements of gifts are promptly dispatched
 - Sees that up-to-date printouts of periodicals holdings are provided to designated service units per established schedule
 - Orders needed supplies and equipment promptly and follows up on delivery problems and/or damage
 - Prepares and disseminates clear, up-to-date policies and procedures governing the acquisitions process
 - Provides statistical/financial/evaluative reports to library administration as scheduled or requested
- B. Collection development and evaluation
 - Includes, but is not limited to:
 - Scans reviewing media/retrospective catalogs on an ongoing basis in order to identify potential additions to the collection
 - Assists in identifying materials to be moved to storage
 - Reviews materials received/identified via approval plan; publishers' advertising, user/faculty/departamental requests, gifts, and other sources in order to determine whether these materials should be added to the collection
 - Researches ownership vs. access options, evaluates cost benefit, and decides which option is appropriate for various materials needed by the library's users
 - Utilizes information sources available (use studies, IL requests, accreditation documents, staff feedback, etc.) in order to determine which subscriptions should be renewed/dropped
 - Knows and uses professionally accepted standard criteria to evaluate/supervise evaluations of the adequacy of

APPENDIX E

07 October 2003

Dear Colleague

I am presently completing my MIS degree at the University of Natal (Information Studies, School of Human and Social Studies). To this end I am conducting research aimed at developing guidelines for performance appraisal (also referred to as performance evaluation or performance measurement) of subject librarians employed in KwaZulu-Natal academic libraries.

Performance appraisals of subject librarians are either formally or informally applied in South African academic libraries. It appears that there are few, if any, guidelines to assist this process. It is the intention of this study to contribute to the development of such performance appraisal guidelines.

The attached questionnaire is designed to elicit your views in designing a practical, realistic set of guidelines. As a subject librarian, your input on the issues will be most valuable and, of course, much appreciated.

Individual responses will be used for research purposes only and kept confidential.

Kindly return the questionnaire before the 24 October 2003.

If you would like a summary of the research results, please indicate at the end of the questionnaire which will be forwarded to you after submission of the thesis.

Thank you for your time and input!

Yours sincerely



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QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to elicit your response on performance appraisal issues pertaining to subject librarians. Kindly tick the appropriate block or fill in your rating in the block as indicated.

Personal Details

Name (optional) : _____ Job Title: _____

Professional Experience: less than 5years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 11-15yrs ☐
 16-20yrs ☐ more than 20yrs ☐

Subject librarian experience: years _____

Institution employed in:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| University of Natal | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mangosuthu Technikon | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Durban Institute of Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> | University of Durban-Westville | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| University of Zululand | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Section A pertains to performance appraisal in your library.

1. Do you know what your **Library mission or vision** is? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Does your institution have a **written commitment or policy** for assessing the performance of the library service?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Is performance appraisal of staff conducted in your library? Yes ☐ No ☐
 If no, proceed to **section B - question 11**
4. Does your library have **guidelines for performance appraisals**? Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Do you know the contents of the guidelines ? Yes ☐ No ☐
6. What performance **appraisal form** is designed to evaluate subject librarians?
 Designed for subject librarians specifically ☐
 Designed for library staff generally ☐
 Designed for institutional academic/ faculty staff ☐
 Designed for administrative staff ☐
 Combination of the above ☐
7. What **approach** is used for conducting subject librarian appraisals?
 Interviews ☐ Observation ☐ Essay/Report type ☐
 Other ☐ Please specify _____

8. Who **conducts** the performance appraisal for a subject librarian?
 Director/Manager of the library ☐ Immediate Supervisor ☐ Peers ☐
 Human Resource Manager ☐ Other ☐ Please specify _____
9. How **often** is performance of subject librarian appraised in your library?
 Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Bi-annually ☐ Annually ☐ Other ☐
- 10.1 How satisfied are you with your library's **current procedures** for appraising subject librarians?
 Very satisfied ☐
 Satisfied ☐
 Uncertain ☐
 Dissatisfied ☐
 Very dissatisfied ☐
- 10.2 If you ticked dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please elaborate.

Section B highlights important aspects of performance appraisal.

11. Listed below are various subject librarian performance areas for which detailed specific job tasks are given. Please indicate in the left hand block if you are appraised on the specific job tasks. If performance appraisal is not done in your library, please leave blank. In the right hand side block, indicate your rating in terms of 1-5.
(1- not important; 2-fairly important; 3- uncertain; 4- important; 5-very important)

| Tick if you are appraised on | Your rating (1-5) |
|--|--------------------------|
| 11.1 Reference Services | |
| 11.1.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Reference Enquiries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.1.2 <input type="checkbox"/> General policy/service/directional enquiries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.1.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Literature searches : manual | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.1.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Literature searches : computer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.1.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with information retrieval in a variety of formats | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.2 Instruction & Teaching for undergraduates, postgraduates, staff, visitors. | |
| 11.2.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Information Skills Programme and the ability to give presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.2.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Bibliographic Instruction conducted for class groups | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.2.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Orientation of library services and usage of resources | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Tick if you are appraised on | Your rating (1-5) |
|--|--------------------------|
| 11.2.4 <input type="checkbox"/> General Orientation of the library and resources | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.2.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Informal Instruction and Orientation to individual users | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.2.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Refresher Courses for users | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.2.7 <input type="checkbox"/> Training and Development Courses for library staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.2.8 <input type="checkbox"/> Individualized library services eg. courses for postgraduates | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.3 Current Awareness Services | |
| 11.3.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing Current Awareness Services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.3.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.4 Statistics | |
| 11.4.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Compilation of statistical reports and analysis for purposes of evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.5 Management and Organization | |
| 11.5.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Collection Management and Development | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.5.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and designing information services including virtual library services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.5.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and designing library promotional material | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.5.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and designing teaching material | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.5.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.6 Information Technology | |
| 11.6.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating software/web sites | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.6.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to use information technology systems and databases | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.6.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to create information technology systems for the library | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.7 Communication (includes verbal and written communication) | |
| 11.7.1 <input type="checkbox"/> with other staff for integration of library resources into academic curricula | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.7.2 <input type="checkbox"/> for personal development in job tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.7.3 <input type="checkbox"/> to network internally for the purpose of customer focus | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.7.4 <input type="checkbox"/> to network with the external Library and Information Services (LIS) sector | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.8 Professional Development and Continuous Education | |
| 11.8.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at personal development seminars | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.8.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at LIS related seminars/activities/programs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.8.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation of LIS papers at conferences/ meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.8.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Attaining further qualifications | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11.9 Cataloguing and Classification of resources | |
| 11.9.1. <input type="checkbox"/> Cataloguing and Classification of resources | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Performs duties in other departments of the library | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. ☐ Represent the Institution or Library as designated by your Manager ☐
14. Can you suggest other important job performance areas or tasks for a subject librarian, which are not listed above?
-
15. **Key performance areas (KPA's)** listed from question 11.1.1 to 11.9.1 in bold, describe the major outcomes of a job which directs tasks. What would you consider to be the three most important KPA's and why ?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
16. In performing subject librarian tasks, the following **competencies** (abilities and knowledge), behaviour traits and standards or criteria have been identified for service excellence. Please indicate your rating of the importance of these in terms of *1-5 (1 - not important; 2-fairly important; 3- uncertain; 4- important; 5-very important)*
- 17.1 Knowledge of the total information environment and the interconnections within it. In terms of this, the subject librarian should :**
- 17.1.1 Be skilled and literate in information technology and communication ☐
- 17.1.2 Exhibit a thorough knowledge of varied information resources to meet the needs of users ☐
- 17.1.3 Provide assistance to users, at their level of need ☐
- 17.1.4 Be proficient in planning and executing effective search strategies. ☐
- 17.1.5 Plan and design bi-annually, pro-active value added services aimed at both users and potential library users ☐
- 17.1.6 Display a thorough understanding of library policies and services to inform users and potential users ☐
- 17.2 Provide active customer service by giving prompt, friendly and accurate assistance to users. In terms of this the subject librarian :**
- 17.2.1 Is poised and ready to engage approaching patrons and is not engrossed in other activities that detract from availability to the patrons. ☐
- 17.2.2 Roves through the reference/subject collections offering help whenever possible. ☐
- 17.2.3 Provides prompt and timely information resources or services. ☐
- 17.2.4 Offers the user other relevant resources or use of other information services ☐
- 17.2.5 Follows-up with the user. ☐

17.3 Managerial skills for subject librarian. In terms of these the subject librarian should have:

- 17.3.1 The ability to influence and motivate other team-members in implementing policy or planning pro-active services for the library ☐
- 17.3.2 The ability to analyse and solve problems ☐
- 17.3.3 The ability to provide high quality services by carefully analyzing and planning both information sources and services. ☐

17.4. Interpersonal skills for subject librarian. In terms of these the subject librarian should:

- 17.4.1 Communicate in a receptive, cordial and encouraging manner with all clientele or colleagues, regardless of age, gender, disability or language proficiency ☐
- 17.4.2 Display a positive attitude and demeanor towards users ☐
- 17.4.3 Exhibit good listening skills towards users and colleagues ☐

18. Can you suggest other important subject librarian standards; competencies; or behavior traits, essential for quality library service, which are not listed above?

19. Performance indicators/methods provide the mechanism to measure performance targets or standards achieved eg. statistics, testing, output/outcomes.
Please rate the following **performance appraisal methods (also referred to as indicators)** for a subject librarian in terms of 1-5 (*1 - not important; 2-fairly important; 3- uncertain; 4- important; 5-very important*)

- 19.1 Obtrusive test to determine how effectively job tasks/duties are performed ☐
- 19.2 Unobtrusive test to determine how effectively job tasks/duties are performed ☐
- 19.3 Use of a structured checklist to determine the strategies employed for learning interventions by the subject librarian ☐
- 19.4 Use of a structured checklist of desired behaviours. This will include specific behaviours such as approachability, interest, listening/inquiring, searching, follow-up to gauge critical success of job tasks performed ☐
- 19.5 Patron survey/questionnaire to determine customer satisfaction ☐

20. Any other comments relating to performance appraisal of a subject librarian employed in a KwaZulu-Natal academic library :

I would like a copy of the research results. Yes ☐ No ☐

Address (e-mail or other)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INPUT. IT IS MOST VALUED!
