ALA accreditation at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>ALA-accredited MLIS programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Institutions with ALA-accredited MLIS programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>U.S. states (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico) with ALA-accredited programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Canadian provinces with ALA-accredited programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>ALA-accredited programs offering 100% online programs †</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Program with candidacy status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Programs with pre-candidacy status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19,978</td>
<td>Students enrolled in ALA-accredited MLIS programs in fall 2010 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,672</td>
<td>Graduates of ALA-accredited MLIS programs during the 2009-2010 academic year *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† As identified by the programs
* As reported by programs to the Office for Accreditation
COA announces accreditation actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association (ALA) has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

Continued accreditation status was granted to the following programs:
- Master of Library and Information Science offered by the University of Denver;
- Master of Arts and Master of Science in Library Science offered by the University of Kentucky;
- Master of Library and Information Science offered by the University of Western Ontario.

The next comprehensive review visit at each institution is scheduled to occur in 2018.

Continued accreditation status and release from conditional status was granted to the following program:
- Master of Library and Information Studies offered by the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2018.

Candidacy status was granted to the following program:
- Master of Information Studies offered by the University of Ottawa.

The first comprehensive review visit is scheduled to take place in fall 2013.

The following institutions have programs that are being visited in the fall 2011 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Dallas, TX.
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Kent State University (OH)
- Queens College, City University of New York
- Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- St. John's University (NY)

The following institutions have programs that will be visited in the spring 2012 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2012 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA.
- University at Buffalo, SUNY
- Indiana University
- Louisiana State University
- University of Missouri
- University of Southern Mississippi
ALA accreditation indicates that the program meets or exceeds the Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies, established by COA and adopted by ALA Council. The accreditation process involves rigorous, ongoing self-evaluation by the program and verification of evidence through an external review. COA evaluates each program for conformity to the Standards, which address mission, goals and objectives; curriculum; faculty; students; administration and financial support; and physical resources and facilities.

A complete list of programs and degrees accredited by ALA can be found at http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditedprograms/directory/index.cfm. Individuals who would like more information about a particular program should contact the program.

The ALA COA is a leading force in accreditation, having evaluated educational programs to prepare librarians since 1924. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognizes ALA COA as the authority for assessing the quality of education offered by graduate programs in the field of library and information studies.

From the Director: OUTLOOK

By Karen L. O'Brien, Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

ALA fiscal year 2012, which began September 1, 2011, is showing signs of promise as well as danger. As education goes, so goes ALA in so many ways. What is showing up in LIS program reporting is increasing strain in resources, especially at public institutions. Projections made two years ago seem naively optimistic now. The prospects of meeting objectives may seem ever more elusive as position eliminations or delays in hiring strain us all. Even so, a great deal is being accomplished. Programs are wisely choosing to declare areas of particular focus for their comprehensive reviews to get the most out of their investment in accreditation.

One of the strengths in LIS education is the great variety of programs and approaches, each in a very unique context. Capitalizing on niche is a great tradition in LIS education. The Office for Accreditation highlights this variety in approach in conference sessions at ALISE (Association for Library and Information Science Education) and ALA. At the 2010 Annual ALISE Conference, for instance, panelists from four programs discussed approaches to involving the constituents (Standard I.1) who define these various niches.

At the 2011 ALA Annual Conference, an approach to student learning outcomes assessment (http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~jcarey/oa/ALA%20COA%20Presentation%202011%20Final.ppt) was highlighted. Attendance at the standing-room-only session broke all records for a COA program. Other resources from that conference program are available at http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditedprograms/resourcesforprogramadministrators/index.cfm.
Both of the above-mentioned sessions focused on Standard I: Mission, Goals, and Objectives, often cited by COA as the most crucial of the Standards. As we move through the five-year standards review cycle, Standard II: Curriculum is the next in focus. A summary of the results of the survey on Standard II is available on the Standards Review site at http://www.oa.ala.org/accreditation/?page_id=61. COA will analyze the results of the surveys on Standards I and II at its upcoming fall meeting and construct the next web survey to be released in May. The COA session at ALA 2012 Annual Conference, scheduled for Monday, June 25, 10:30-Noon, is being planned on the topic of Standards review and will include discussion of the results of the first and second surveys.

**Strategic Planning**

This fall, the COA will consider with fresh eyes what is to be accomplished in the new COA Strategic Plan (PDF) (http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/missionhistory/plan/strategic%20plan%202015%20documents/strategic_plan_2.pdf). Communication about Standards review, revision, and monitoring is central to the plan.

**Welcoming New COA Members**

Two new COA members (http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/committees/ala/ala-coa.cfm) begin their four-year terms this fall: Anthony Bernier (Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science, San Jose State University) and Mary Stansbury (Associate Professor and Domain Chair, Library and Information Science Program, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver). A current member of COA, Ken Haycock, accepted appointment to serve as Chair. Brian Andrew (Procurement Counsel, MEMC Electronic Materials, Inc.), one of the Committee’s two excellent public-at-large members, has generously agreed to continue serving for a second two-year term.

Orientation for new COA members will be conducted by select senior members of COA and by Office for Accreditation staff at ALA headquarters in Chicago this fall, immediately preceding the COA fall meeting. Orientation has proven especially crucial for new COA members to understand the ethical and operational context in which the Committee operates as an accreditor. The Code of Good Practice (http://www.aspa-usa.org/principles_aspa.asp), promulgated by the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA), provides guidance, as does the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (http://www.chea.org/default.asp), which recognizes ALA-COA (http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/accreditation/chearecognition.cfm) as the accreditor in good standing for the professional degree in library and information studies.

**Accreditation Recognition Review**

Comprehensive review of ALA-COA by the CHEA is now underway (http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/accreditation/chearecognition.cfm). Continued eligibility was conferred by the CHEA Board of Directors in January 2010 and the application for reaffirmation of recognition was submitted in August. This fall, the COA Chair and I will meet
with the CHEA Committee on Recognition, which will make its recommendation to the CHEA Board of Directors as to whether ALA should be reaffirmed for recognition. The CHEA Board will make its decision at its meeting in January 2012, which occurs just after the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Dallas.

Programs Seeking Initial Accreditation
The University of Southern California has submitted an application for ALA precandidacy status. The COA will meet with USC representatives this fall to discuss their plans.

East Carolina University representatives plan to meet with the COA this fall to discuss their application for candidacy of the Master of Library Science program (http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/grcat/programLIBS.cfm). If the COA votes to grant candidacy status, the program will enter into the two-year comprehensive review process.

The COA has granted candidacy status to the Master of Information Studies program (http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1727&monControl=Programmes&ProgId=985) at the University of Ottawa. The visit to the program by an ALA external review panel is scheduled for fall 2013.

By Ken Haycock, Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation, and coordinator of the Center for Information Research and Innovation, San Jose State University

Strategic Planning for the Committee on Accreditation (COA)
Like ALA-accredited programs, the COA operates within a larger organization, in this case the American Library Association. The Committee plans strategically for a future that reflects both the priorities of the parent organization and the unique demands of accreditation.

The COA value proposition is that accreditation provides assurance that graduate programs in Library and Information Studies (LIS) meet approved standards of quality. Our focus is thus on serving the general public by being responsible for the execution of the accreditation program of the ALA and to develop and formulate standards of education for graduate programs of library and information studies leading to a master’s degree.

The COA vision is to foster a thriving and diverse system leading to continuous improvement of a high quality first professional degree program.

To this end, the Committee has worked over the past year to develop strategic directions that will support the continuous improvement of programs while protecting the public through application of appropriate standards.
Over the course of the COA Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/accreditation/coa/COAStratPlan20112015.pdf), the COA will review, revise and monitor the standards for accreditation based on research and evidence; interpret and illustrate the standards for program deans/directors/chairs and faculty as well as other stakeholder groups, including ALA; review COA roles, policies and procedures; investigate opportunities to expand the scope of the Committee’s work; and monitor rigorously the successful implementation of intended improvements to both process and product.

While the language of the standards has not changed to any considerable extent over the past twenty years, some areas have become more important than others. Still others have changed in perspective. For example, the assessment of program-level (as opposed to course-level) intended student learning outcomes has evolved in importance on the higher education landscape in general and thus is being reviewed more rigorously than in the past. Similarly, the notion of distance education has moved from a program’s supplementary technological innovation to “simply” another program delivery model requiring the application of the same standards but in less traditional ways. We need to review with colleagues these differing interpretations in order to ensure relevance as we move forward.

It has also become obvious that the Committee could perform a valuable role by providing resources and support for programs, through stronger linkages with deans and directors, through resource books and guides to complement training programs for academic administrators and faculty, and perhaps templates and consultative assistance as appropriate.

Consistency and relevance will also require enhanced orientation and training for COA members and External Review Panelists; clearer guidelines on criteria for appointment to the Committee, which needs to act at arm’s length from the ALA; and clarification of the procedure for appeals.

The Committee has also been approached by agencies in other countries about (co-) accreditation of international/overseas programs and the COA intends to evaluate these opportunities within a framework of excellence and quality assurance. ALA-COA currently accredits graduate LIS programs in Canada as well as the U.S.

Along with the ongoing rigorous application of the Standards for Accreditation, the Committee intends to focus on constituent relationships, so that the COA can continue to improve its work in support of LIS.
Spotlight on process and policy
By Laura Dare, Assistant Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

Accreditation statuses

In each issue we focus on an aspect of process or policy of ALA accreditation. This issue’s column provides an overview and explanation of the various accreditation statuses. If you have an idea for a future column, please send it to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

Many of the inquiries we receive in the Office for Accreditation have to do with the accreditation status of an MLIS program. “I’m considering attending [XYZ] University and notice that their next accreditation review is in 2013 – what happens if their accreditation is withdrawn?” “I heard that [ABC] College has a program with candidacy status – when will it be accredited?” “My program at [JKL] University is now on conditional status – what does that mean for me?” Sorting out what the various statuses signify can be a challenge.

There are currently 63 ALA-accredited programs, of which 59 have continued accreditation, one has initial accreditation, and three have conditional accreditation status. There are three programs on the path toward initial accreditation: one program with candidacy status, and two programs with precandidacy status. Each status has reporting and review requirements. For more information on the accreditation statuses below, see the referenced sections in the Accreditation Process, Policies, and Procedures (AP3) manual (http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditedprograms/standards/AP3SecondEdition_revised1-09-11.pdf).

Continued Accreditation
This status is granted to programs that have continuously demonstrated evidence of compliance with the ALA Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies. The vast majority of accredited programs have this status. Programs with continued accreditation must report at least annually to the COA and go through a comprehensive review process every seven years. If the COA determines that a program with continued accreditation is seriously out of compliance with the Standards, it must first place the program on conditional status before accreditation can be withdrawn; accreditation cannot be withdrawn from a program with continued accreditation status. See AP3, Section I.7.7.

Initial Accreditation
This is granted to a program when it is accredited for the first time, following a comprehensive review process where the program demonstrates compliance with the Standards. One accredited program currently has this status. The path to initial accreditation takes at least five years and involves extensive reporting throughout the precandidacy and candidacy stages. After a program is initially accredited, it enters into the regular accreditation reporting cycle with its next comprehensive review in seven years. When a program is granted initial
accreditation, students who graduated from the program during the academic year preceding the academic year in which the on-site review visit occurred are considered to have graduated from an ALA-accredited program. See AP3, Section I.7.6.

**Conditional Accreditation**
This status is given to an accredited program that is out of compliance with one or more standards and must make significant changes to maintain its accreditation. There are currently three programs with conditional accreditation. Programs with conditional accreditation status remain accredited, and the conditional status is noted in their listings in the Directory of ALA-Accredited Programs. Programs with conditional status are required to submit and have approved annual reports that detail the program’s plans for and progress toward coming into compliance. When the COA places a program on conditional status, it schedules a comprehensive or progress review in three years and meets with program personnel to discuss their plans. Only after a period of conditional accreditation and review, if a program is unable to come into compliance, may COA withdraw accreditation. See AP3, Section I.7.8.

**Precandidate for Accreditation**
Precandidacy indicates the institution’s and program’s commitment to achieving ALA accreditation. A precandidate program must establish, measure, and meet goals and objectives in order to achieve candidacy status and to comply with the standards. Precandidacy also provides the program and the COA with a means to communicate formally about programmatic development. There is no guarantee that a program with precandidacy status will ultimately achieve accreditation. Programs with precandidacy status do not appear in the directory of ALA-accredited programs. See AP3, Section I.7.3.

**Candidate for Accreditation**
A program is moved from precandidacy to candidacy status when the COA determines that the program is ready to begin the two-year process that culminates in the Program Presentation, comprehensive review of the program, and the COA’s accreditation decision. There is no guarantee that a program with candidacy status will ultimately achieve accreditation. Programs with candidacy status do not appear in the directory of ALA-accredited programs. See AP3, Section I.7.4.

**Withdrawn Accreditation**
This category is assigned to a program that is no longer accredited by the ALA Committee on Accreditation. Accreditation may be withdrawn by the program voluntarily or by the COA following the comprehensive or progress review of a program with conditional accreditation. In either case, the Office for Accreditation and the COA will work closely with the program to develop and implement a plan to graduate currently enrolled students. Any student who is enrolled in the program before the withdrawal of accreditation and who completes the degree requirements within twenty-four (24) months after the withdrawal date is considered to have graduated from an ALA-accredited program. See AP3, Section I.7.9.
The various statuses of ALA accreditation and their associated processes and policies are designed to assure quality of MLIS programs, foster continuous program improvement, and protect the interests of programs, their constituents, and the profession. As always, we in the Office for Accreditation are happy to provide more information on the accreditation process. Contact us at accred@ala.org.

News and announcements

ALA accreditation information now accessible directly from the ALA.org home page
Accreditation-related pages rank near the top in usage statistics of the ALA website. Now you can link to the directory of accredited programs as well as other accreditation-related pages directly from the left navigation on the ALA.org home page. This will make it easier for prospective students as well as members to locate information on ALA-accredited master’s programs in library and information studies. The URLs for these pages have changed, though, so if you had bookmarked specific pages, you’ll need to update those bookmarks.

External Review Panel Chair training at 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Dallas, TX
Date: Friday, January 20, 2012
Time: 1:30pm – 4:30pm
Location: Sheraton Dallas Hotel, Trinity 1

External Review Panelists who have participated in two or more on-site visits are invited to attend training for ERP Chairs. The session will prepare attendees to lead an external review of MLIS programs seeking accreditation. The session will include a panel discussion, featuring experienced ERP Chairs and Office for Accreditation staff. People who are currently assigned to chair a review are strongly encouraged to attend.

Program heads who want to learn more about the site visit and the role of the ERP Chair in the review process are welcome to attend as observers. If you’re interested in attending, please RSVP and indicate that you’d like to observe the session.

Please RSVP by January 3 to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org, and include “ERP Chair Training” in the subject line.

New External Review Panelists sought
The Office for Accreditation seeks experienced library and information professionals to participate in the accreditation process as External Review Panelists. We are particularly in need of librarians and educators with specializations and experience in the following areas:

- Archives and records management
• School librarianship
• Public librarianship
• Information science
• Information technology
• LIS graduate program administration
• Service to diverse populations
• French language skills
• Spanish language skills

Find out more about what’s involved in serving on an External Review Panel at http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/ERP_service_info.cfm. If you are interested and meet the minimum qualifications, please complete the External Review Panel Member Information Form, available at http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/becomereviewer/ERPform.cfm, and plan to attend the training session in June at the 2012 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim.

If you know someone who might be interested in serving as an External Review Panelist, please encourage him/her to apply, or send a recommendation to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

**AASL/NCATE program review session at 2011 AASL National Conference in Minneapolis**
Date: Friday, October 28, 2011
Time: 3:15pm-4:30pm
Location: Room M100 J, Minneapolis Convention Center

Are school librarians entering the field prepared to teach for learning, promote literacy and reading, administer their programs, advocate for students and the profession, and serve as instructional leaders within their schools? What quality assurance is in place to ensure that newly prepared school librarians have the required knowledge and skills? We will explore standards for preparation, NCATE program and recognition reports, and opportunities for program reviewer training. Concerned about the future of the profession? Attend this session!

**AASL/NCATE program review training at 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Dallas, TX**
Date: Friday, January 20, 2012
Time: 8:00am – 12noon
Location: Sheraton Dallas Hotel, Majestic 01

New and experienced reviewers and report compilers are invited to this session. Participants will learn about the NCATE process, application of the AASL Standards, and appropriate assessments. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.
Prospective reviewers can find out more about the AASL/NCATE program review process at http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/informationprogram.cfm.

**Student Learning Outcomes resources**
At the ALA 2011 Annual Conference in New Orleans, COA sponsored a program on the use of student learning outcomes (SLOs) and outcomes assessment in the accreditation process. The program featured a presentation by Jim Carey, Associate Professor Emeritus, University of South Florida. Jim’s presentation and other outcomes and assessment resources can be found on the Resources for LIS Program Administrators page (http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditedprograms/resourcesforprogramadministrators/index.cfm).

**ALA Standards for Accreditation review survey results**
The Standards review process includes gathering comments from stakeholders. Results of online surveys of stakeholders on Standard I: Mission, Goals, and Objectives and Standard II: Curriculum are now available at http://www.oa.ala.org/accreditation/?page_id=61, where you can also find more information on the Standards review process.

**External Review Panel information session at Ontario Library Association SuperConference**
The Office for Accreditation will present an information session about ALA accreditation and opportunities for library and information professionals to participate in the quality assurance of MLIS programs in Canada and the U.S. Join us on Thursday, February 2, 2012, from 10:40am until 11:55am.

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**External Review Panelists acknowledged**

External review panelists contribute substantial time and energy to the accreditation process to assure quality in LIS education. We extend our appreciation to the following panelists who served during the spring 2011 academic term.

**Chairs**
- Diane L. Barlow, University of Maryland
- Ann Curry, University of Alberta
- Steven W. Hagstrom, Tarrant County College (TX)
- Marilyn Irwin, Indiana University

**Panelists**
- George Abbott, Syracuse University (retired)
- Eileen G. Abels, Drexel University
AASL/NCATE recognition news

Spring 2011 AASL recognition decisions
The following programs, which are part of NCATE-accredited education units, received AASL National Recognition or National Recognition with Conditions during the spring 2011 semester. National Recognition is awarded to education master’s programs in school librarianship that have been reviewed and approved by AASL’s program reviewers using the ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation.

- College of Notre Dame of Maryland, School Library Program
- Old Dominion University (VA), Library Science
- Olivet Nazarene University (IL), Library Information Specialist
- Plymouth State University (NH), Library Media Specialist
- Salem State University (MA), Library Media Studies
- University of Maryland College Park, Library Science - School Library Media Specialization
- William Paterson University (NJ), School Library Media Specialist

Spring 2011 reviewers
We extend our appreciation to the following program reviewers and auditors who served during the spring 2011 semester:
The next issue of *Prism* will be published in April of 2012. Stay tuned!