

External Review of the Health Sciences Library, McMaster University
To be overseen by the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic, Health Sciences
Finalized September 25, 2012

Mandate

To assess the operations and management of the Health Sciences Library in terms of how it is furthering the goals and meeting the needs of the Faculty of Health Sciences and its members, as well as assessing its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. This will include examining its strengths and challenges; the scope and balance of its services and resources; its leadership and organizational structure; its staffing and budgetary models; and, importantly, advising on future directions and opportunities.

Background

It has now been ten years since an external review of the library took place in 2002, prior to a major physical renovation and services reorganization (<http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/documents/HSL-External-Review-Ridley-August2002.pdf>). The current Director of the Health Sciences Library will be stepping down at the end of June 2013 after five years in the position. In anticipation of a search for a new Director during the winter of 2013, we are undertaking a review of the library.

Timeframe

Site visits the week of October 22-24; final report by end November.

A self-study by the Health Sciences Library, key orienting documents, a list of key stakeholders and a tentative schedule of meetings will be provided to the reviewer two weeks in advance of the site visits.

Reviewer

One person will be engaged to do an external review of the Health Sciences Library. The individual selected will be a current or recently retired Director of an academic health sciences library, preferably in Ontario. Requirements will include

- Stature in the field of academic health librarianship, including a demonstrated successful record of leadership and innovation;
- A solid grasp of complex academic environments, including specific experience with hospital library collaboration;
- A high level of communication and analytical skills;
- Previous experience in conducting such a review.

Specific areas to be covered

Strategic directions:

- Are the directions clear?
- Are the priorities clear? Are they the right ones?
- What is the Library's capacity to respond to and/or lead anticipated change in health sciences libraries regionally/nationally/globally?

Alignment with the institutional mission:

- Is the Library aligned with the Faculty of Health Sciences strategic plan and at a high level, with McMaster's "Forward With Integrity"?
- Is the Health Sciences Library's value to the institution measured and reported appropriately?
- How do these compare with national and international standards? Are there other comparators that should be adopted?

Meeting user needs:

- Building an Academic Health Sciences Library Network:
 - What are the key challenges and how might we address them?
 - What are the opportunities in developing a network and do they include commercial opportunities?
- Is the support for Hamilton-based and distributed learning appropriate and adequate?
- Are current communication strategies and tools effective?
- Are the mechanisms for feedback to the Health Sciences Library effective?
- Is the Health Sciences Library meeting the needs of researchers?

Service and staffing models:

- Is the current organizational model optimal?
- Are current staffing levels, both numbers and qualifications, appropriate to needs? Are the human resources deployed effectively?
- What staffing/resource models would best fit a distributed learning network?

Innovation:

- Is the current use of technologies effective and forward-looking?
- Is the adoption of digital resources well justified and executed?
- What are the opportunities for the Health Sciences Library to be on the cutting edge of health sciences libraries regionally, nationally and globally?

Fiscal Responsibility:

- Is the budget aligned with articulated needs?
- Are the strategies that the director uses to augment the Health Sciences Library budget optimal and what other opportunities could be exploited?
- How could the director manage increasing costs?

Collaboration:

Is collaboration optimal with:

- the faculty and staff of the Faculty of Health Sciences?
- the University Library?
- other health libraries in the area?
- provincially, nationally, internationally?

Succession planning:

- What should we be looking for in a new director?