

Health Librarians Job Descriptions and Grading

The Health SIG Study Days at Hutt Valley DHB in September 2018 included a session on Job Descriptions for DHB Librarians. This session followed on from discussion first raised at the New Plymouth Study Days in late 2016.

There is a wide variance between the DHBs and the roles and recognition of their Librarians, with little standardisation. A working group was formed at the Hutt Valley DHB hosted Health SIG Study Day session on 18 September 2018 to review progress and make recommendations on where to from here.

There are twenty DHBs in New Zealand. While all have a library service, library staffing, services and resources provided for DHB Staff vary greatly. The total number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff employed to provide services to DHB Staff across New Zealand is fewer than 35. (Including a component of staffing provided by the University libraries under contract to the Auckland, Canterbury and Capital & Coast District Health Boards).

The Health SIG has been surveying the DHB Libraries for a few years, in order to establish benchmarking data. The 2018 Survey conducted in March noted (from 18 respondents):

For the purposes of the survey:

Small libraries are those serving a population under 100,000

Medium libraries are serving a population 100,000 – 250,000

Large libraries are serving a population 250,000 – 450,000

Very large libraries are those serving a population over 450,000

Size of organisation:

The smaller the organisation the fewer FTEs that organisation has and generally the smaller the library staff, though one library of a medium size has fewer than one library staff.

Three libraries have fewer than 1 staff, and two have more than 5.

Many of the DHBs having library staffing fewer than 2 FTE and as noted, a number have fewer than 1 FTE.

Reporting lines for librarians vary, as do their recognition and grading. Most DHB Librarians acknowledge being recognised and valued within their organisations, however for some, this is not reflected in their job description, position grading or remuneration.

Being a cohort of <40 in a DHB workforce of > 34,000 (Medical and Nursing FTE)¹ has made it hard for some DHB Librarians to progress their standing.

Some work has been done by LIANZA on job description templates and remuneration and there is data available on the LIANZA website in the member area:

<https://db.lianza.org.nz/database/just-for-you/remuneration-information/>

We began by pulling together over 65 individual sector job descriptions from tertiary, public, special, and school libraries and ranging from entry level roles to

¹ <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/health-workforce/dhb-clinical-staffing-numbers>

those of individuals in senior management. We worked with Strategic Pay to turn these into "generic job descriptions" and the information seemed to fall "full changed to fall" naturally into five tiers, at Library Assistant, Librarian, Team Leader/Manager, Specialist, and Senior Manager levels. (Accessed 26 November 2018)

A summary table with grade range as noted on the Salary Data PDFs is collated below.

LIANZA Benchmark Role Positions

Position	Grade range
Library Assistant - Entry level	4-6
Entry Level Assistant Librarian	7-9
Mid-Level Librarian	10-12
Specialist	13-15
Team Leader / Management	13-15
Senior Management	16-18

A description of each of these positions is included as Appendix 1 and the LIANZA website has links to position descriptions for each.

This would appear to form a good basis for DHB Librarians to work from when engaging with their managers and the Unions to have their positions graded appropriately, as it is benchmarked within the New Zealand context.

Another useful resource to provide to line managers is the New Zealand Health Libraries Official Standards (2008), which includes recommended minimum Hospital Library staffing levels (Appendix 2).

It will require some work by the librarians to map their roles to the most appropriate position. Many would arguably fall within the Mid-Level Librarian or the Team Leader / Management positions.

There are two Unions that may be relevant for DHB Librarians - the Public Service Association (PSA) <https://www.psa.org.nz/> and the Association of Professional and Executive Employees (APEX) <https://apex.org.nz/>

The PSA is currently (as at November 2018) engaging with various workforce sectors within the DHBs, with representatives indicating that there is scope to work with DHB library staff, potentially aligning them within the Allied MECA, as this recognises that some occupations that never used to require degrees now do. Discussion with the union representative

Indicated that to join the Allied collective requires us (the DHB Librarians) to ask, outlining why we think we fit. If the PSA agrees then we vote amongst ourselves to accept, and then PSA works with DHBs to enact it (so we could be a part of the new deal).

The alternative, and potentially preferred option is to prepare a business case for DHB Technical Advisory Services (TAS) for presenting at a national level by a senior DHB HR representative (in discussion) on behalf of the Health SIG.

Recommendations

1. Utilisation of the LIANZA role positions and grading to inform line managers and union representatives.
2. Formation of a sub-group of DHB Librarians to prepare a business case for presenting to TAS for national level recognition of DHB Librarians.
3. Endorse continuing the Health SIG Survey with the addition of some questions regarding reporting lines and an open question on return on investment examples.
4. It is time to review the New Zealand Health Libraries Official Standards (2008), and incorporate the LIANZA role information into the revised standards.

Working Group Members

Kareen Carter	Wellington Medical & Health Sciences Library
Megan Clark	Philson Library, University of Auckland
Maryann Cowgill	Wairarapa DHB Library
Viv Kerr	Hawkes Bay DHB Library
Charmaine Tarrant	Taranaki DHB Library

14 December 2018

APPENDIX 1 – LIANZA Position Descriptions

<https://db.lianza.org.nz/database/just-for-you/remuneration-information/>

Library Assistant – Entry Level

The library assistant role is an entry level position involving general shelving duties and customer enquiries within the library, as well as, assisting with the day-to-day provision of basic library services including the issuing and processing materials.

Specific responsibilities may include:

- Performing excellent customer service mainly surrounding customer enquiries
- General day-to-day operation of the issuing systems, such as, issuing and renewing materials.
- Processing new/re-classified materials and maintaining library shelving standards

Entry Level Assistant Librarian

The role of an assistant librarian is essentially that of a customer service orientated role involving recommending and issuing books, handling enquiries from the general public and managing catalogues. Assistant librarians may also be required to perform technical tasks such as the preparation and analyses of statistical data and general systems maintenance.

Specific responsibilities may include:

- Performing excellent customer service mainly surrounding customer enquiries
- General day-to-day operation of the issuing systems, such as, issuing and renewing materials.
- Processing new/re-classified materials and maintaining library shelving standards

Mid-Level Librarian

Mid-Level librarians assist in the general operation of the library. Positions at this level require a general library qualification and previous library experience to handle complex queries, whilst ensuring that critical library systems continue to function effectively.

Specific responsibilities may include:

- Provide excellent customer service
- Actively participate within events and programmes
- Develop and deliver subject expertise for a chosen area
- Arrange and run user education courses

Specialist

A specialist role is defined as being Trained towards a specific task/system within the library, such as, (but not necessarily limited to), database management, cataloguing and quality assurance. Specialists may not be wholly restricted to this and may still assist with the day-to-day operation of the library.

Specific responsibilities can include:

- The management and development of key library systems.
- Liaising with staff and customers.
- Managing and controlling the usage of subsystem resources.
- Participate in department planning including making recommendations for policy/process improvement

Team Leader / Management

A Team Leader assists in the management and operation of the library. Their responsibilities may overlap with the specialist role. Team Leaders coordinate and control the provision of day-to-day services in the library.

Specific responsibilities may include:

- Managing day-to-day operational processes and procedures.
- Providing clear directions and instructions for staff.
- Providing and improving customer service.
- Establishing and maintaining external relationships.
- Assisting with financial and budget planning.

Senior Management

There are two main differences between salary grades 16-18 and lower level management roles.

- The first is in the planning tasks required of the position. Managers at this level no longer just manage budgets but are expected to deliver them.
- The second is in the interaction with stakeholders. At lower management levels these interactions tend to be purely transactional, whereas at higher levels the manager is expected to build ongoing relationships.

Within the grade 16-18 range the task most likely to impact the grading of a position is in the size of the library and team (larger teams tend to signify greater levels of complexity). Individuals operating at level 16 can expect to be paid at the lower quartile, while individuals working at level 18 can expect to be paid in the upper quartile.

APPENDIX 2 – Recommended Minimum Hospital Library Staffing Levels

Hospital Library Staffing Levels: Categories and Criteria

The following categories and associated criteria are intended to provide a guide on minimum levels of staffing for hospital libraries in conformity with their respective roles, functions and overall size:

The criteria for the categorisation of hospital libraries are:

- 1) *Numbers of potential library users*
- 2) *Bed number criteria*
- 3) *Service criteria*
- 4) *Expenditure criteria*
- 5) *Collection criteria*

1) User criteria

- a) 2,000 or more professional staff/tertiary students/other library users
- b) 1,000-2,000 professional staff/tertiary students/other library users
- c) 500-1,000 professional staff/tertiary students/other library users
- d) Fewer than 500 staff/tertiary students/other library users

2) Bed number criteria

- a) More than 600 beds
- b) 350-600 beds
- c) 150-350 beds
- d) Fewer than 150 beds

3) Service criteria

- a) Population greater than 200,000 people
- b) Population 150-200,000
- c) Population 90,000-150,000 people
- d) Population fewer than 90,000 people

4) Expenditure criteria

- a) Expenditure excl capital >\$2.5m
- b) Expenditure excl capital \$500k-2.5m
- c) Expenditure excl capital \$100k-500k
- d) Expenditure excl capital <\$100k

5) Collection criteria

(An online subscription to a package = one subscription)

- a) Hard copy books >10,000, or Journal subscriptions >500, or Online subscriptions >50
- b) Hard copy books 7,000-10,000, or Journal subscriptions 300-500, or Online subscriptions 30-50
- c) Hard copy books 4,000-7,000, or Journal subscriptions 100-300, or Online subscriptions 10-30
- d) Hard copy books <4000, and Journal subscriptions <100, and Online subscriptions <10

Institutional categories

In the larger categories of libraries the ratio of professional librarians to other library staff should be at least 1:2

Category 1: The library scores a) in four or more of the criteria above

Category 2: The library scores a) in at least two and b) in at least two criteria above

Category 3: The library scores b) in at least three criteria above

Category 4: The library scores b) in at least two and c) in at least two criteria above

Category 5: The library scores c) in at least three criteria above

Category 6: The library scores c) in at least one criterion above

Category 7: All criteria above score d)

(Alternative numerical scoring – Each a)=4, b)=3, c)=2, d)=1 then score total scores into categories 1-7 – eg Score 17-20 = cat 1, Score 14-16 = cat 2, Score 11-13 = cat 3, Score 9-10 = cat 4, Score 7-8 = cat 5, Score 5-6 = cat 6, Score 4 = cat 7.)

Recommended Minimum Library Staffing Levels per category. It would be expected that Library managers, librarians, deputy librarians and assistant librarians are 'professional' i.e. eligible for registration. All numbers are FTE.

Category 1

1 library manager

1 deputy librarian

1 assistant librarian

4 library assistants/clerical officers

Total FTE = 8

Category 2

1 library manager

1 deputy librarian

1 assistant librarian

3 library assistants/clerical officers

Total FTE = 6

Category 3

1 library manager

1 assistant librarian

2 library assistants/clerical officers

Total FTE = 4

Category 4

1 librarian

2 library assistants/clerical officers

Total FTE = 3

Category 5

1 librarian

1 library assistant/clerical officer

Total FTE = 2

Category 6

1 librarian

0.5 library assistant/clerical officer

Total FTE = 1.5

Category 7

1 librarian

Total FTE = 1

Source: <http://www.lianza.org.nz/sites/default/files/HealthLibraryStd.pdf> (2008)