

## **LSS Compared to MLS Competencies**

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*(In 2008, the American Library Association Council approved basic competencies for librarians with a master's in library science. In the same year, the Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC) Program prepared a set of competencies for library support staff. Dr. Applegate compared the two sets of competencies to determine the similarities and differences.)*

LSS = Library Support Staff. Permanent library employees without the MLS. The Library Support Staff Certification project (<http://www.ala.org/lsscp/lsscpcompetencysets.html>) is a program approved and organized by the American Library Association. Currently it is designed for LSS in public and academic libraries.

In this presentation, the MLS competences are laid out and then *corresponding LSS competencies* are listed.

There are three main points to keep in mind when considering how the competencies relate to each other.

- LSS competency language tends to be more specific with concrete examples. Readers may differ as to whether a concept is included in the MLS competences' broader language. A key example is the use in MLS of "all groups" vs. the more specific LSS "persons with disabilities" and other diversity concerns.
- The MLS competencies are ALL intended to be required for ALL MLS holders. In contrast, only three competency sets (F-foundations, CT-communication and teamwork, and T-technology) are required of all LSS. The MLS competencies do not address specific user groups such as youth.
- The question of fictional or recreational "information" is an example of a mismatch either of level of specificity or broad requirements. The MLS competences throughout are phrased in terms of "information" (does "information" include literature)? while there are two LSS competencies (adult reader's advisory and youth services) which explicitly name recreational or non-informational library resources.

Summary of differences:

In ALA-MLS but not in core or elective LSS:

- **History:** of libraries, librarianship, human communication.
  - National, international policies, trends....
  - Certification/licensure requirements
- **Research:** Methods, findings, critique
- **Lifelong learning of patrons** (of staff is included)

In LSSC but not (directly mentioned in) ALA-MLS

- Customer service
- Teamwork/co-worker interpersonal relations
- Content (knowledge of resources, tools)
- Non-informational reading

- Diversity (specific mention of diverse needs and disabilities)
  - Some MLS mention of “all groups” and “assistive”

<p><b>Required</b> of all LSS for certification:          F Foundations (F)          CT Communications-Teamwork (CT)          T Technology</p>	<p>^ Indicates an <b>elective</b> LSS competency area: complete 3 for certification</p> <p>^A Access Services          ^R-A Adult Readers Advisory          ^CC Cataloguing and Classification          ^CM Collection Management          ^R Reference          ^S Supervision and Management          ^Youth Services</p>
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LSS competencies start with either “LSS will **know**” or “LSS will **be able to.**”

<b>ALA-MLS</b>	<b>LSSCP</b>
<b>1. Foundations of the Profession</b>	<b>LSS competencies</b>
1A. The ethics, values, and foundational principles of the library and information profession.	F2: Know: The ethics and values of the profession, including an understanding of the Library Bill of Rights, the ALA Code of Ethics, freedom of information, confidentiality of library records and privacy issues.  ^A5: Know: Principles, policies, and procedures regarding user privacy in library services. ^R-A10: Be able to: Make recommendations without judgment regarding reading, listening, or viewing preferences. ^Y16: Be able to: Follow policies and procedures related to challenged resources
1B. The role of library and information professionals in the promotion of democratic principles, intellectual freedom, and diversity of thought.	F1: Know: The mission and roles of a library in its community and the mission of libraries in general.
1C. The history of libraries and librarianship.	
1D. The history of human communication and its impact on libraries.	
1E. Current types of library (school, public, academic, special, etc.) and closely related information agencies.	F6. Know: How libraries are governed and funded, and the place of libraries within organizations or government

	structures.
1F. National and international social, public, information, economic, and cultural policies and trends of significance to the library and information profession.	
1G. The legal framework (e.g. copyright and intellectual property laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act) within which libraries and information agencies operate.	<p>CT2: Know: The importance of upholding policies and decisions, and when to make exceptions.</p> <p>^R2: Know: Legal issues in reference services, including user privacy, confidentiality, and copyright.</p> <p>^A4: Know: Copyright issues pertaining to access functions such as reserves, document delivery, and interlibrary loan.</p> <p>^S1: Know: Basic regulations and laws that govern employment; library policies, and procedures; and how policies are influenced by local, state, and federal laws and regulations.</p> <p>^Y5: Know: Legal and other issues affecting youth.</p> <p>^Y15: Be able to: Manage youth problem behavior and emergency situations.</p> <p>^S7: Know: The value of written, approved policies and the difference between policies and procedures.</p> <p>^S14: Be able to: Review existing and develop new policies and procedures.</p>
1H. The importance of effective advocacy for libraries, librarians, other library workers, and library services.	<p>F10: Be able to: Communicate and promote the library's values and services to staff, volunteers, users and the community.</p> <p>^S11: Know: Principles of marketing the library and its services.</p> <p>^S15: Be able to: Develop and implement a marketing plan for the library and evaluate its effectiveness.</p>
1I. The techniques used to analyze complex problems and create appropriate	CT13: Know: Basic concepts of effective decision-making.

solutions.	
<p>1J. Effective communication techniques (speech and writing).</p> <p><i>See separate section at end: Customer Service</i></p>	<p>CT7: Be able to: Write clearly, logically, and concisely.</p> <p>CT8: Be able to: Select the most appropriate medium for communicating, based on the language, communication styles, and needs of diverse receivers (user and staff).</p> <p>CT9: Be able to: Listen effectively and transmit information accurately and understandably.</p> <p>CT15: Be able to: Promote communication and respect among team members.</p> <p>CT16: Be able to: Identify critical and sensitive library issues, and choose appropriate strategies to communicate this information among the public, supervisors, team members, and peers as appropriate.</p> <p>^Y7: Be able to: Demonstrate written and oral communication skills for working with youth, their parents and other caregivers, other library staff, and the personnel of agencies serving youth.</p>
1K. Certification and/or licensure requirements of specialized areas of the profession.	

<b>2. Information Resources</b>	<b>LSS competencies</b>
2A. Concepts and issues related to the lifecycle of recorded knowledge and information, from creation through various stages of use to disposition.	<p>^CM5: Know: Basic organization of the publishing industry and familiarity with vendors of materials, supplies, equipment, and services.</p>
2B. Concepts, issues, and methods related to the acquisition and disposition of resources, including evaluation, selection, purchasing, processing, storing, and de-selection.	<p>F5cd: Know: Basic principles of acquisitions and collection development.</p> <p>^CM2: Know: The general purpose of collection management in libraries.</p> <p>^CM3: Know: The basic principles of selecting and discarding of all types of library materials.</p> <p>^CM4: Basic principles for ordering, processing, and claiming all types of library materials.</p>

	<p>^CM8: Be able to: Use standard sources to <i>assist</i> with collection development and procurement.</p> <p>^CM9: Be able to: Apply effective procedures for verifying, ordering, and receiving orders; resolving problems, and accounting for expenditures.</p> <p>^CM10: Be able to: Apply appropriate methods for accurate preparation of all library materials.</p> <p>^CM13: Be able to: <i>Assist</i> with decisions regarding weeding, material retention, and replacement.</p> <p>^CM14: Be able to: Explain and apply the library policy for accepting gifts of materials.</p> <p>^Y8: Be able to: <i>Assist</i> with selecting appropriate materials for a youth collection.</p> <p>^A7: Know: Principles of security for people, equipment, and collections.</p> <p>^R-A14: Be able to: Suggest additions to the collection based on trends in materials requested and borrowed.</p>
2C. Concepts, issues, and methods related to the management of various collections.	
<i>Circulation/access: assumed to be included in "management."</i>	<p>F5b: Know: Basic principles of circulation systems, including interlibrary loan and collection maintenance</p> <p>^A2: Know: Processes for circulating library materials.</p> <p>^A8: Be able to: Propose and explain explain library policies and procedures regarding access services.</p>
2D. Concepts, issues, and methods related to the maintenance of collections, including preservation and conservation.	<p>^CM7: Know: Basic principles for preserving all types of library materials.</p> <p>^CM11: Be able to: Maintain the collection using standard preservation techniques.</p> <p>^CM12: Be able to: Use standard methods for material rebinding and storage.</p>
<b>3. Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information</b>	<b>LSS competencies</b>
3A. The principles involved in the	

organization and representation of recorded knowledge and information.	^CC10: Be able to: Explain the library's classification system to others and assist others to find desired resources.
3B. The developmental, descriptive, and evaluative skills needed to organize recorded knowledge and information resources.	^R-A13: Be able to: Assist in compiling resource lists and displays of books, recordings, films, and media by genre, historical period, subject, author, composer or director. ^CC9: Be able to: Perform basic copy cataloging, including reviewing and editing cataloging records.
3C. The systems of cataloging, metadata, indexing, and classification standards and methods used to organize recorded knowledge and information.	F5c: Know: Basic principles of current cataloging and classification systems  ^A1, ^R4 and ^CC4: Know: Classification and organization systems for collections. ^CC2: Know: Basic tools, both print and online, for cataloging. ^CC3: Know: The basics of MARC format and cataloging rules. ^CC5: The basics of subject headings and authority control. ^R13: Be able to: Interpret bibliographic record and citation formats.

<b>4. Technological Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>LSS competencies</b>
4A. Information, communication, assistive, and related technologies as they affect the resources ,service delivery, and uses of libraries and other information agencies.	T2: Know: Technology's role in creating, retrieving, and delivering library resources, functions and services. T4: Know: Basic computer operations needed to access library applications software and productivity tools. T5: Know: Basic networking technologies and protocols. T12: Be able to: Perform basic troubleshooting of technical problems, and resolve or appropriately refer those problems.  ^R5: Know: Basic search methods, display options, and terminology of the library's catalog, website, and other information access tools. ^A3: Know: Basic characteristics of systems supporting circulation and interlibrary loan. ^CC1 and ^CM1: Know: The functionality

	<p>of integrated library systems.</p> <p>^CC7: Be able to: Use bibliographic utilities.</p> <p>^CC8: Be able to: Use the cataloging functions of integrated library systems.</p>
4B. Information, communication, assistive, and related technology and tools consistent with professional ethics and prevailing service norms and applications.	<p>T6: Know: Basic data security principles and best practices to ensure the integrity of data and the confidentiality of user activities.</p> <p>T7: Know: Concepts and issues concerning the appropriate use of technology by different user groups.</p> <p>T13: Be able to: Access and use basic assistive technologies, where appropriate, to ensure that all users have equitable access to technology.</p> <p>^Y4: Know: Appropriate internet sites, rules for safe navigation, and use of online search tools and other technological applications for youth.</p>
4C. The methods of assessing and evaluating the specifications, efficacy, and cost efficiency of technology-based products and services.	
4D. The principles and techniques necessary to identify and analyze emerging technologies and innovations in order to recognize and implement relevant technological improvements.	<p>T1: Know: General trends and developments of appropriate technology in all library functions and services, whether offered in the library or through remote access.</p> <p>T3: Know: The role and responsibilities of libraries for introducing relevant applications of technology to the public, including assistive technology, software, and productivity tools.</p> <p>T8: Be able to: Adapt to changes in technology.</p> <p>T9: Be able to: Transfer information gained in training into the work place.</p>

<b>5. Reference and User Services</b>	<b>LSS competencies</b>
5A. The concepts, principles, and techniques of reference and user services that provide access to relevant and accurate recorded knowledge and information to individuals of all ages and groups.	<p>F5a: Know: Basic principles of: reference and information services.</p> <p>^R9: Be able to: Use basic searching skills to find information in print, non-print, and digital resources.</p> <p>^R10: Be able to: Use locally developed tools such as subject guides, FAQs, and</p>

	<p>other resources that provide guidance to answer information requests.</p> <p>^R12: Be able to: Identify and locate information in all formats, and assist users in retrieving materials, including those not held locally.</p> <p>^R7: Be able to: Judge when referrals are necessary, and use appropriate referral procedures.</p> <p>F3: Be able to: Recognize and respond to diversity in user needs and preferences for resources and services.</p> <p>^Y12: Be able to: Conduct effective reference and readers advisory interviews for youth and their parents and other caregivers, and refer to a librarian when appropriate.</p>
<p><i>Having a knowledge of various specific categories of materials</i></p>	<p>^R1: Know: The general scope of the library's collection, including areas of strength and specialized collections.</p> <p>^R3: Know: Basic reference, information, and community resources.</p> <p>^R-A1: Know: The library's collection and where to locate materials by type and genre.</p> <p>^R-A2: Know: A general familiarity with popular and classic fiction, including a knowledge of authors, various fiction genres, and popular, current non-fiction.</p> <p>^R-A3: Know: A general familiarity with popular and classical music, including a general knowledge of performers and composers.</p> <p>^R-A4: Know: A general familiarity with variety of films, including a general knowledge of directors and actors in different film and media genres.</p> <p>^R-A5: Know: Online and print readers' advisory tools and reviewing sources.</p> <p>^R-A6: Know: Formats appropriate for persons with disabilities affecting vision, hearing, or understanding.</p> <p>^R-A7: Be able to: Use online and print readers' advisory tools and reviewing sources.</p> <p>^Y2: Know: Resources for youth in different formats, including award-winners, classic titles, and age-</p>

	appropriate materials.
5B. Techniques used to retrieve, evaluate, and synthesize information from diverse sources for use by individuals of all ages and groups.	<p>T11: Be able to: Use information discovery tools including the library's catalog, core library databases, and internet search engines.</p> <p>^R-A8: Be able to: Briefly and succinctly describe the plot of a book, film, or other media and its appeal.</p> <p>^R-A9: Be able to: Identify materials in response to users' inquiries to meet their interests or their interests for works similar to the ones they have already read, listened to, or read.</p> <p>^R-A11: Be able to: Assist users with finding specific titles in their preferred format.</p>
5C. The methods used to interact successfully with individuals of all ages and groups to provide consultation, mediation, and guidance in their use of recorded knowledge and information.	<p>^R6: Be able to: Conduct effective reference interviews, helping users define their information needs.</p> <p>^R8: Be able to: Instruct users in basic research procedures, including use of the library's catalog, general database, and web searching, and locating materials in the library.</p> <p>^R11: Be able to: Help users select the most appropriate information resource to meet their needs, and evaluate the quality, currency, and authority of information retrieved.</p> <p>^Y3: Know: How to select appropriate materials for a particular youth, based on such factors as reading level, interest, and level of maturity.</p> <p>^Y6: Be able to: Establish a welcoming atmosphere and actively encourage youth participation in library programs and in the use of resources.</p> <p>^Y9: Be able to: Assist with planning, presenting, and evaluating library programs that will attract youth.</p>
<i>Customer service</i>	<p>F9: Be able to: Practice quality customer service.</p> <p>CT1: Know: Basic concepts of interpersonal relations, customer services and communication.</p> <p>CT10: Be able to: Use approachable and</p>

	welcoming behavior with all users.
5D. Information literacy/ information competence techniques and methods.	T10: Be able to: Assist and train users to operate public equipment, connect to the internet, utilize library software applications, and access library services from remote locations.  ^Y1: Know: A general understanding of the stages of childhood and adolescent development, and factors contributing to the development of early literacy skills. ^Y14: Be able to: Instruct youth in the use of library materials, resources, and equipment.
5E. The principles and methods of advocacy used to reach specific audiences to promote and explain concepts and services.	^Y10: Be able to: Assist with advocating for and publicizing youth services. ^Y13: Be able to: Assist with developing and marketing services for youth and their parents and other caregivers.

<b>6. Research</b>	
6A. The fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research methods.	
6B. The central research findings and research literature of the field.	
6C. The principles and methods used to assess the actual and potential value of new research.	CT11: Be able to: Anticipate and maintain awareness of users' needs and wants in order to provide or improve services.

<b>7. Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning</b>	
7A. The necessity of continuing professional development of practitioners in libraries and other information agencies.	F8. The value of participating in professional development opportunities including certification, continuing education, staff development, and professional associations.  ^S6: Be able to: Plan, implement, and encourage participation in staff development activities.
7B. The role of the library in the lifelong learning of patrons, including an understanding of lifelong learning in the provision of quality service and the use of lifelong learning in the promotion of library services.	^R-A12: Be able to: Assist in developing, promoting, and implementing programs based on the library collections, such as book discussions, summer reading

	programs, film, and media programs.
7C. Learning theories, instructional methods, and achievement measures; and their application in libraries and other information agencies.	
7D. The principles related to the teaching and learning of concepts, processes and skills used in seeking, evaluating, and using recorded knowledge and information.	

<b>8. Administration and Management</b>	<b>LSS competencies</b>
8A. The principles of planning and budgeting in libraries and other information agencies.	<p>^S8: Know: The basic purposes and concepts of budgeting, grant writing, and fundraising.</p> <p>^S12: Be able to: Develop realistic goals and measurable objectives after careful consideration of benefits, risks, and impact on library current and future needs.</p>
8B. The principles of effective personnel practices and human resource development.	<p><i>See also: Customer service section in Reference and user services.</i></p> <p>CT3: Know: Tools for resolving conflict.</p> <p>CT4: Be able to: Treat others with respect, fairness, and consistency.</p> <p>CT5: Be able to: Seek, give, and accept constructive feedback from coworkers, supervisors, and users.</p> <p>CT6: Be able to: Resolve conflict in a positive and productive manner, and judge when situations should be referred to a supervisor.</p> <p>CT12: Know: Basic concepts of team work.</p> <p>CT14: Be able to: Participate effectively on teams, commit to meeting agree-upon goals and objectives, and support team decisions.</p> <p>^S2: Know: Principles of staff management, supervision, and discipline.</p> <p>^S3: Be able to: Participate in recruiting, hiring, training, evaluating, and promoting library staff.</p> <p>^S4: Be able to: Set clear performance</p>

	<p>expectations linked to the library's strategies and priorities.</p> <p>^S5: Be able to: Demonstrate leadership in a team environment.</p>
<p>8C. The concepts behind, and methods for, assessment and evaluation of library services and their outcomes.</p>	<p>CT17: Be able to: Provide timely, accurate, and candid information to supervisors, peers, and team members to facilitate decision-making.</p> <p>CT18: Be able to: Gather the best information to support decisions.</p> <p>^S9: Know: The value of planning library services based on community demographics and needs and evaluating these services.</p> <p>^S13: Be able to: Develop, implement, and evaluate recommendations for new services and programs based on analysis and interpretation of data about various aspects of library operations.</p>
<p>8D. The concepts behind, and methods for, developing partnerships, collaborations, networks, and other structures with all stakeholders and within communities served.</p>	<p>F7. Know: The value of cooperating with other libraries to enhance services.</p> <p>^A6: Know: Policies and procedures for resource sharing among libraries.</p> <p>^CC6 and CM6: Know: The value of cooperating with other libraries to enhance services.</p> <p>^S10: Know: Principles and the value of cooperation and collaborating with other libraries, agencies, and organizations.</p> <p>^Y11: Be able to: Work cooperatively with personnel in schools and other community agencies serving youth.</p>