



BERKELEY DIVISION

DATE: August 14, 2020
TO: Naomi Shiraishi, Chair
Librarians Association of the University of California Berkeley
FROM: Elliott Smith, Chair
Committee on Appointment, Promotion and Advancement
RE: CAPA statement on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on librarian reviews

I. General principles

The current COVID-19 pandemic presents a range of challenges to librarians as we seek to fulfill our professional responsibilities. In accordance with the provisions of APM 210-4-e-(3) and APM 360-80-h, CAPA and ad hoc committees will take into account the impacts of the pandemic on the fulfillment of a librarian's primary responsibilities, professional activity outside the library, university and public service, and research and creative activity and adjust expectations accordingly for reviews covering time periods affected by the pandemic. Librarians still have the option to request a review deferral, but should not consider a deferral as an expected action in response to our collective crisis.

Although in their self-evaluations librarians may wish to articulate specific impacts of the shutdown on their professional activities, they are never expected to reveal personally sensitive information, such as that relating to their own health or that of others.

To aid librarians and reviewers in addressing the impacts of the pandemic during the librarian review process, CAPA highlights the following ways in which the pandemic may impact librarian performance. This document strives to draw attention to the key areas in which work may be affected; it is not a comprehensive list of all impacts that may be exhibited in a dossier.

II. Potential impacts

A. Primary responsibilities

Primary responsibilities may change due to shifts in library services and to remote work mandates.

Collection development & management

- Shift to e-books: not everything is available to libraries in e-formats, and many significant resources are only available in print
- Periods of prohibition on developing print collections
- Added difficulties in meeting spending targets
- Travel is currently prohibited
- Difficulty of collection reviews and processing/cataloging when physical volumes are not accessible

- Difficulty cataloging and processing new material without physical access
- Inability to store physical volumes in NRLF
- Inability to meet with booksellers and donors of rare materials.

Instruction and reference

- Shift to online instruction may result in fewer teaching opportunities and increased workloads as in-person instruction sessions are re-designed for remote delivery
- Promotion of online topical workshops is made more difficult
- Many reference materials and serials only available in print
- Remote classes affect the ability to provide reference and instruction using materials only available in secure reading rooms.

Outreach

- Lack of face-to-face meetings and canceled departmental events may restrict outreach opportunities
- Faculty and students overwhelmed by requirements of remote teaching and learning may be less able to respond to librarian outreach

B. Professional activity outside the library

Conference participation

- Many 2020 conferences cancelled or postponed; cancelled presentations should be included in CVs with the designation “(cancelled)”
- Virtual conferences less effective for professional networking
- Fewer opportunities to present posters, panels and presentations (virtual conferences can be smaller)

C. University and public service

Exhibits

- Fewer opportunities to curate, design and mount physical exhibits
- Online exhibits may require additional time and resources to digitize materials

Public programs

- Restrictions on gathering and social distancing requirements eliminated all campus programming (book talks, lectures, exhibition events, films, etc.)
- Inability to digitize material during crisis made virtual exhibits difficult as well.

D. Research and creative activity

- Opportunities for research, particularly if the research requires access to print materials, on-campus locations or populations, or travel, may be fewer
- Publishing on professional issues more difficult due to less frequent publishing opportunities/venues
- Time and space to write up research results affected by working from home, child-, spousal or parental care, affecting women disproportionately.

III. Parity and equity issues:

- Some librarians without familial care responsibilities describe this as “the most productive time,” disadvantaging librarians with family obligations.
- Unequal access to equipment needed to work from home efficiently (printer/scanner, two monitors, reliable internet)
- Unergonomic workspaces, leading to or exacerbating chronic pain or disability issues
- Those working on less high-profile functions are provided fewer opportunities to participate in high-impact projects
- Effect of providing full-time care, or homeschooling children; this burden falls more heavily on women, even if both parents are working
- Effect of experiencing trauma, anxiety, and/or grief
- Impacts may be greater for Assistant and Associate Librarians due to shorter review period
- Applying uniform expectations in comparing the cases of librarians at similar levels may introduce unfairness due to disparities in the effects of the pandemic