QUALITY SERVICES in ACADEMIC LIBRARIES



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(2005-2015)

Edited By

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Policies and Procedures in Nigerian University Libraries and Information Centres

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Abstract

Several benefits are accruable to the entire stakeholders when the management of an academic library has policies and procedures that are made available to all concerned. These benefits include improvement of quality of work through reducing errors, standardising process, creating consistent ways of doing things and by so doing increase efficiency and production, However, it has been revealed that many academic libraries in Nigeria do not have such policy manuals and where they exist they are not made available to the user community nor the staff. This paper submits that the formulation and documentation of library policies and procedures should be the norm and not the exception in every academic library in Nigeria. A summary of how to approach the writing of such a document, and the benefits accruable have also been stated. It is therefore recommended that those academic Libraries that do not have policy documents commence work immediately and that not only will all they ensure that at the completion all the stake holders have a copy but that it is also hosted in their websites, as it is the practice among their counterparts in the developed nations.

Introduction

part from the librarians, there are a large number of people and organizations that are involved in determining how information are created, used, stored, accessed and disseminated. These groups are guided by widely conflicting goals, world views and professional principles. These different views are governed by the information policies of these organizations. According to King County Library (2015), information policy is a public law, regulation or policy that promotes, discourages, or standardizes the creation, use, storage, access and communication and dissemination of information. A workplace policy is a set of rules and principles that aims to guide managers and workers on how to behave in the workplace. These guidelines ensure that patrons and the general public receive best possible service without going against moral guiding principle on the unlawful practices outlined by the code of ethics as outlined by the national and international Library bodies

Academic librarians are involved in the formulation of information policies and usually feel the impact of these policies. This chapter will outline most of these policies and procedures that are of import to the academic library community. After reading this chapter, the reader should be acquainted with the following Learning Outcomes:

- What Academic libraries are
- · .What are policies and procedures
- Qualifications of an academic librarian
- Types of academic library polices
- How to develop and write library policy and procedures

- Different types of academic library policies and their aims and objectives
- · Advantages of have written policies and procedures

Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are information centres that are attached to higher education institutions which serve two complementary purposes to support the curriculum, and the research of the university faculty and students. There is no record of how many academic libraries there are internationally. In Nigeria, all tertiary institutions owned by the federal, states and private individuals have academic libraries of varying sizes. There is a great deal of differences among academic libraries based on their magnitude, resources, collections services and the type of academics they serve.

Qualifications of Academic Librarians

In Nigeria, academic librarians are expected to hold at least a Bachelor of Library Science degree (BLS) or its equivalent, as well as being chartered by the librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN). Of recent, the prerequisite qualification for an academic librarian as from the senior librarian cadre has become a possession of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in library and information science or related field in addition to possessing the necessary publications. Having unveiled who an academic librarian is the next section focuses on the types of academic libraries available in Nigeria by examining the environment they work.

Work environment of Academic Librarians

Academic librarians are employed in institutions including:

- Colleges, e.g. Colleges of Education Technical, Akoka and Yaba Collgeof Technology, Lagos
- Specialized schools like degree awarding seminaries. An example is the Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Abia State
- research universities e.g., National Institute for Strategic Studies, Kuru
- monotechnics e.g. Colleges of agriculture, Isi -Agwu
- polytechnics e.g. Federal Polytechnic, Oko
- Special universities e.g., Federal University of Petroleum, and Nigerian Defence Academy.
- Federal universities, e.g. University of Uyo and University of Lagos
- State universities, e.g. Imo State University and,
- privately owned universities, like: Madonna University, Okija

The librarians in these institutions spend their time in academic departments and other places where they can give professional information services to the undergraduate and graduate students as well as the faculty and other research staff. They may also work in archives and special collections that are part of the academic library. The responsibilities of academic librarians vary from the traditional to the more recent duties which they perform.

Responsibilities of Academic Librarians

Academic librarians often have specialist responsibility for an academic subject or function, even at basic-level posts. Other librarian roles include research, electronic, resources, systems, and other

professional posts within the fields of acquisitions and cataloguing. The following tasks are typically undertaken within the role:

Traditional areas of work include:

- Reference
- Collection Development And Management
- Acquisitions
- Cataloguing and Classification
- Circullations
- Orientation
- Exhibitions

The field is changing, maybe in response to one of the laws of Librarianship that states that the library is growing organism. In recent times, according to (Graduate Prospects, 2015) academic librarians may be expected to perform duties including those stated below:

- developing and managing collections of books and journals (both paper and electronic), as well as websites;
- managing buildings, furniture and equipment;
- carrying out staff management, which may involve recruitment and selection, appraisals, support and development, disciplinary action, staff rosters and training, as well as allocating daily tasks;
- dealing with budgets and, in some cases, purchasing resources;
- maintaining relationships with external bodies, such as suppliers;
- contributing to academic course development and liaising with academic departments;
- managing and supporting the provision of reading lists and allocating length of loans;
- creating, updating and managing information resources, both electronic and printed;
- selecting, acquiring and cataloguing information using library and information software;
- assisting researchers with literature searches using databases, printed resources and the internet;
- delivering information and learning skills courses for students and staff;
- dealing with user enquiries, which may involve one-on-one advice sessions;
- keeping up to date with relevant professional developments in the library sector;
- participating in professional groups or networks.

Some senior librarians may be involved in additional activities such as:

- managing and motivating a team of staff who could be working in several libraries;
- overseeing the building of new libraries or the refurbishment of existing libraries

Recent developments in Academic Librarianship

According to Academic and Research Libraries Committee Report (2010), the emerging trends in academic libraries include "expanding the library's virtual presence through involvement in course management systems and online social networking sites, the creation of online tutorials and other instruction aids, and more vibrant and interactive Web sites." This new duties, according to this committee, has posed the new challenges that include working to "convey the value of the

complementary nature of the physical and online services to support the teaching and instruction mission of the university to campus administrators. For the academic library to function without hitches it must have a clear cut policies and procedures which is known and understood by all stakeholder. This according to Kansas University Library (2015) has resulted in the need for production of guidelines for decision making in the academic libraries. These guidelines include policies that allow for consistent implementation of daily library operations. These Policies they posit should be approved by the library's governing authority, whether that is a board of trustees or town select board. They also recommend that Procedures and rules as a means of implementing policies and ensuring that library services are equally accessible to all patrons be put in place alongside with the policies. Kansas University Library(2015) further counsel that since polices are not easily changed, the procedures documents are where fines, fees and other payment structures should be located since these might need to be updated periodically. Before we discuss about the substance of policies and procedures of an academic library, we will attempt to define *policy* and *procedure*.

Policy and Procedure

Policy is a noun for a course of action or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organisation or individual (dictionarycambridge.com, 2015). Procedure on the other hand is also a noun for a series of actions that are done in a certain way or order. That is, a set of protocols, instructions, traditional or established ways of doing things. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2015) reports that the word is French in origin.

Policy and Procedures Development and Writing for Academic Library

Policies and policies are working documents for any organisation. By implication, an academic Library will not operate properly without policies and procedures. Writing policies and procedures is a challenge that needs time and effort on the part of the academic librarian and his or her staff. However, it is essential for any organisation worth its name.

Policies and procedures are sometimes used interchangeably. This notwithstanding, policy deals with what is the work or function of the organisation, while the procedure deals with how policy relates the rules. Procedure therefore determines how an establishment will implement the rules, while policies are stable and long term. Procedures change with the environment and possibly the times, while policies represent consistent, logical framework for action in the academic library. Procedures evolve to reflect changes in managerial philosophy, personnel equipment technology and environment, among others. A good example of this is the rule that most libraries have of working from 8am - 10pm and also working on Saturdays and Sundays. A cursor look at most Nigerian Academic Libraries in the eastern and southern Nigeria will reveal that most academic libraries in these regions do not operate until late into the night nor do they open on Sundays. The reason being the precarious security situation, especially at night and their religious inclinations. These religious and political situations make it difficult for all the academic library staff to work late into the night and on Saturdays and Sundays which are considered days of worship. The same however, is not the case in the academic libraries in the western part of Nigeria where it can be taken for granted that the library will be opened until late into the night and sometimes for 24 hours, thereby making it possible for tertiary institution staff, like the principal officers and the deans who may not have sufficient time to seek for information in the library during the weekdays due to their heavy workload, to visit the university library to seek information that will assist them take informed decisions in their various fields of expertise. It is pertinent at this point to state the protocol involved in the production of a library policy and procedures.

Developing Policies for an Academic library

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In view of the fact that a policy establishes the framework for what will or will not be done in an establishment, several basic steps are usually taken when preparing policies. These, according to Campbell (1986) and Henson(2015), include the following:

- 1. estimation of the need for a new policy.-
 - In assessing the need for a new policy the following questions must be answered:
 - a. Review already existing policy to discover whether any cover the new situation.
 - b. Investigate if the matter can be handled without necessarily coming up with a policy. A good example of this will be a situation where the hours of opening a library is reduced because of a bad security situation like kidnapping that was rampant in south –south and south-eastern states in Nigeria. Since this is usually a function of the type of government in place at the time, a written policy may not be necessary as it is a temporary situation
 - c. The existence of competent staff within the library organisation to develop the policy is also an issue that should be considered seriously. Where there is no such 'expert', a committee of line officers of such library should be set to tackle such issues.
- 2. It is important to find out the existing practice in the library in other climes, this way the wheel is not being reinvented. This can be achieved by literature search, especially browsing the internet using the relevant search engines and databases.
- 3. Draw up a rough copy of the policy using the competent staff or the committee that can include the divisional heads and possibly the college librarians.
- 4. Re-evaluate the rough copy with the stakeholders. This will involve getting input from those the rules are likely to affect, the library committee, library users, the academic and non academic members of the community. Questionnaire may be used to gather necessary data. A good example of this will be the review of the fees paid for the internet services in the university library. When the users have input in the amount of fees charged for library services they are not likely to protest after the new fees have been introduced.
- 5. Receiving approval from the appropriate management. For many universities in Nigeria this will be the Senate Library Committee (SLC). At other time it may be the University Management Committee (UMC) lead by the Vice—Chancellor. Occasionally it may need the University Governing Council's approval. It is important that this is done so that the issue of insubordination will never arise.
- 6. Issuance of the policy by giving copies of it to the appropriate offices and persons. In recent times a copy of library polices are usually posted in the library's web site where they exist or on their WebPages within the universities website.
- 7. Train the affected staff on how to enforce the policy. This may involve equipping the staff to enforce the policy with all he or she will need to do a good job of enforcement. An example that readily come to mind is equipping the officer who is charged with monitoring the Closed Circuit Television(CCTV) or the Metal Book Detector, with a camera with which to photograph the culprit at the point he or she is caught while living the library. This will

constitute evidence that will be needed when prosecuting the case. A security officer who can effect an arrest or even give the suspect a chase should the need arise, should also be posted at the entrance of the library with the necessary security gadget so that he is communicated before the suspect leaves the library, by so doing the suspect can be easily apprehended. The security personnel should also be detailed to take the suspect to the security post for prosecution.

8. Development of procedures along side with the policy: This will reduce any ambiguity that may arise as to how to enforce the policy. It should be clear to the staff of the academic library, whose duty it is to do what at any particular time. Borrowing from our previous example, the Porter is clear on the fact that he or she should take the picture that will be used as evidence, the security officer will affect the arrest, take statement and escort the suspect to the security post, While the Readers Service Librarian (Circulations and/or the Reference Librarian)will report the matter to the University librarian in writing with photocopies of the photograph and statement attached. With the establishment of what it takes to develop a policy the next section will discuss what the format of a policy should look like.

Layout of a Policy

The layout of a policy, according to Stephen (2015), should include the responsible officer, title, date, version number, purpose of statement, detailed policy statement, applicability definition, source of help, policy authority, related forms, policies and references, text of policy among many others.

Responsible Officer: borrowing from the example of library security, It should be clearly stated that it is the readers services librarian through the staff that are in his or her department that are expected to enforce the library security policy.

Title: the title should clearly reflect the policy content. This is exemplified in terming a policy that deals with ensuring that academic library users do not run fowl of the international copyright law, the Reprography and Copyright Policy.

Date: the effective date of enforcement of the policy should be clearly stated. A good example will be stating clearly when new registration fees that have just been introduced should take effect. Should it start with the freshmen, or library user from a particular period like the next academic session, or will take effect immediately.

Version Number: The version number refers to the number of times the policy may have been revised. This is usually true of revision of fees like registrations, overdue printing and photocopy fees, among others. It is advisable to start with version to avoid ambiguity.

Purpose of Statement: A clear-cut statement conveying the intent of the policy should be written so that no one is left in the dark about what the policy is intended to accomplish.

Detailed Policy Statement: this a complete and yet precede text of the policy so that those who care to have a closer look will not be in doubt about the origin of such policy and what it set out achieve.

Applicability: A statement is made to indicate who it applies to and the consequence of non compliance. A lending policy can state as follows:

Undergraduate students are allowed to borrow 4 books at a go for 28 days.

Postgraduate students are allowed to take 6 books for a period of 28 days, while the lecturers can borrow 8books at a time for a period of 28days. Failure to return or renew these books after the expiration date will attract fees of 50 naira a day and where it cumulates for more than three months the bursar will be advice to deduct the price of the book as well as the overdue fines from the salary of the affected staff while those of the students will result in non clearance with the effect that degree certificates will not be issued to them at the end of their studies in the institution.

Similarly, applicability of a policy for staff resumption to duty can state as follows:

Any staff who resumes work 30 minutes after a particular hour is regarded as being late to work and five consecutive times of arriving late to work will attract query in the first instance while ten times of late coming within a year will attract a memo to the finance department to deduct money of hours not at work. This is for all staff of the library irrespective of level or status.

Definition: meanings are listed and explained. This is especially true if a policy uses an unusual or specialised language or jargon. This can be demonstrated with the

Example stated below:

A policy for the use of online and licensed databases like HINARI, AGORA, OARE:

The protocols for the use of these licensed databases require that the user downloads a copy of the form with the terms of agreement from the library webpage, after keying in his library identity and password. The library user must sign the policy form at the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) library after carefully reading the terms of agreement. Defaulters will be prosecuted and sanctioned based on the rules and regulation of the Library.

Operational definition of terms:

- Webpage: this is the page on the university website where information on the university can be garnered
- Protocol: refers etiquette, procedure, modality governing the use of the library human and material resources.
- User's Identity (UID): refers to the recognised method of identifying the library users. In the library database.
- Password: the unique secret code, word or number used by the library client to enter the university library webpage.

Source of Help: the name of the office and specific position of the officer that can give interpretation and resolution of problems or give permission in special situations.

Library policies on external users

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External users in the fields related to the collections of the university library shall be allowed to use the library on a reference bases. However, this is subject to the available spaces in the reading halls and that the candidate has a letter of introduction from his organisation and must have been duly registered by the circulation department and the library. If you have any queries please seek audience with the circulations librarian or call the following numbers 08012345678 or email us at "universitylibrarymoau.edu.ng".

Policy Authority: If the policy has been issued based on outside authority, cite the authority. A good example of this is

Journal Downloading Policy: users are reminded that they cannot download more than 25% of any journal content this is incompliance with the international copyright law of which Nigeria is a signatory and by implication the MOUAU University library

Related Forms: Policies of references should be included. An example could be

Please adhere to the following procedures for the collection of the institutional users ID and password for the online databases;

Download Form M from the library web page and fill scan and email to the reference librarian at mouaulibrary.edu.ng. Your speedy processing will allow the library assign you password for the HINOGOA databases

Text of Policy: as much as possible the text of the policy statement should be simple, straight forward and easy to understand; the format should be simple and straightforward with the use of bullets, numbers and short lists. All this is meant to ensure the user understands what h/she is reading. It can be published as a book, pamphlet or posted on the website or webpage of the library. The next section will discuss the types of policies that are usually needed in an academic library.

Types of Policies Available in an Academic Library

According to Kansas University Library (2015), the following template of the policies is a must have by all academic libraries:

- Blackboard Access
- Book Donations
- Cash Control
- - Checkout without Library Card
- Closing
- Collection Development
- Community Borrowers
- Computer Lab
- Computer Use
- · Conduct, Rules of
- Damaged Items
- Database Access
- Disability Access
- Display Cases
- Disruptive Students
- Email Access
- Faculty & Staff Checkouts and Fines
- Faculty Privileges
- Friends of the Library
- Holds
- Interlibrary Loan

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- Email Access
- Faculty & Staff Checkouts and Fines
- Faculty Privileges
- Friends of the Library
- Holds
- Interlibrary Loan

- Intra Library Loan
- Lost and Found
- Lost, Missing & Billed Items
- Overdue Billings
- Payment Procedures
- · Printing in the Library
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Reference Materials
- Refunds for Library Materials
- Reserve for Faculty
- Reserve for Students
- Scavenger Hunts
- Student Workers: Question Answering
- WebAdvisor Access
- Wireless Access

Apart from those stated, there are other policies that are common in most library and they include:

- Statement on the Appropriate use of Electronic Resources
- Borrowing Privileges policy
- Use and Content fees Policy
- Retention and withdrawals Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Reference Privacy Policy
- Facilities Access Policy
- Gift-in -kinds Policy
- Library copyright Policy
- Library copyright Statement
- Take-Down Policy
- Access and Use policy
- Borrowing Material Policy
- Students Library Record
- Returning Library | Materials
- Overdue Notice
- Overdue
- Academic Records Held
- Group Study Rooms
- Other Policies. e.g. Laptop Lending Policy

How to get a Policy Adopted or Changed

Operating Policies will be adopted or changed only as follows:

The proponent of the new policy or policy revision will bring the policy to the appropriate Vice President-level administrator for consideration after obtaining input from others with an interest in the policy. In the case of the Nigerian Public University, the permission will

- come from the head of a library unit or department to the university librarian after consulting with the stakeholders.
- The administrator will forward the proposal to the President or Administrative Council for review. When the proposal is approved by the President, it will be forwarded to the Office of General Counsel for inclusion into the policy library.
- In the Nigerian situation, the Library Committee, Senate Library Committee and in some cases the University Senate will approve the policy. This type of permission will be necessary for Policies such as those of the Institutional Repository (IR) of universities. This will not help create awareness, and also inform members of the university community of their expected role in sustaining the IR of the institution. Advantages of ensuring that policies and procedures are in place in an academic library will constitute the next subject for discussion.

Advantages of Having Workplace Policies

There are several benefits that are accruable to the entire stakeholder when library managers ensure that policies and procedures are in place and made available to all concerned in an academic library. These benefits include:

- Improvement of quality of work through reducing errors.
- Standardising process, creating consistent ways of doing things in the library and by so doing increase productivity
- Serves as guideline as well training aids for both new and employees as well as the older ones.
 This because written policies and procedures are superior to oral tradition.
- It serves as checklist for complicated or little used process
- A written policy and procedures will help the library organisation to be consistent over time
- It will provide the basis for improvement when the library decides to review its policies with a view to improving them.

Charles (2012), agreeing with the above views, also cogitates that every institution should have well-documented and comprehensive workplace policies and procedures. Having well-developed policies and procedures in place can provide the following benefits to the stakeholders' place of work:

- They help employees know what is expected of them with respect to standards of behaviour and performance.
- They set rules and guidelines for decision-making in routine situations so that employees and managers do not need to continually ask senior managers what to do.
- They help you to adopt a consistent and clear response across the company to continually refer to situations involving employee interaction.
- They allow you to demonstrate good faith that employees will be treated fairly and equally.
- They allow you to have an accepted method of dealing with complaints and misunderstandings in place to help avoid favouritism.
- They set a framework for delegation of decision making.
- They give you a means of communicating information to new employees.
- They offer you protection from breaches of employment legislation such as equal opportunity laws.

It is important to note that having workplace policies and procedures in place is only worth it if the library manager ensures they are properly implemented and monitored so that different issues such as bullying, harassment, internet use, health and safety and social media just to mention a few are taken care off.

Conclusions

This paper has discussed the objectives of having policies and procedures in an academic library. It also established what an academic library is, the qualifications needed to work there. The work environment and responsibilities of the librarian and recent developments in academic librarianship were discussed. Policies and Procedures were defined and format for writing the policy as well as different types of university library policies was discussed. Attempt was made to show how to get a policy adopted or changed and the advantages of having policies and procedures were also enumerated.

From the forgoing, there is no gainsaying that it is essential for every academic library to have a written and "public" policies and procedures governing every aspect of services offered to clients. The merits of having policies and procedures out weights the demerits of not preparing such working document for all stakeholder of the academic library.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that every academic library must have a written policy, a copy of which must be hosted in the university library website where it exits. The National Universities Commission can request for it during periods of accreditations or better still it can be the responsibility of the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) to enforce it. It is also recommended that an empirical study be carried out to establish the number of libraries in Nigeria which actually have written policies and procedures and the effect of these on the user community. Finally, it is recommended that the policies and procedures become an ongoing project of the academic library that is updated as new challenges are faced by academic libraries in Nigeria.

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