



# The Value of Advanced Subject Degrees in Addition to an MLS: An Updated Study

Lance Day and Jaroslaw Szurek

**abstract:** This article builds on a 2018 study and reports on a survey conducted in 2022 to examine the value of advanced subject degrees in addition to the Master of Library Science for academic librarians. This study explores the impact of advanced subject degrees on scholarly contributions, compensation, teaching roles, and tenure status in academic librarianship. Research findings offer insights into compensation, perceptions of preparedness for research and publication, tenure status, and teaching credit-bearing courses among academic librarians with and without an additional advanced subject degree.

## Introduction

The library science profession is comprised of diverse individuals who typically share the same terminal Master of Library Science (MLS) degree. Some librarians also hold an additional advanced degree in another subject. In the authors' previous study published in 2018, 424 of the 795 survey participants reported having an additional master's degree.<sup>1</sup> This follow-up study, conducted in 2022, also asked participants to indicate their degree status. In response to this question, 130 of the 278 survey participants noted possessing an additional master's degree. Results from each study indicate that many of the academic librarians surveyed hold an advanced subject degree in addition to their terminal library science degree.

In the original study, the authors assessed the value of additional advanced subject degrees held by academic library liaisons. Questions and future research ideas that arose from that study included the following:

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- Are librarians with an additional advanced degree compensated at higher levels than those without an additional degree, with evaluation specifying between doctoral and Master's credentials?
- Do advanced degree holders introduce bias to the study because they desire their degree to have value?
- Do MLS programs prepare librarians to research and publish in the academic environment?

This updated survey aims to address some of the questions and research ideas that arose from the initial study, specifically in terms of scholarly contributions, compensation, teaching roles, and tenure status in academic librarianship. The questions of whether the second advanced degree is required for the librarian position, whether it was obtained before or after the MLS degree, and how it might have affected the respondents' academic status and their rapport with faculty and students outside the library were not included in the current survey (see Appendix for full survey) because they were already discussed in the 2018 study. A PhD is not the central focus of this study but was included in response to feedback from survey participants in the previous survey, who noted that the degree was not included and might reveal useful information.

### Literature Review

Over three decades ago, most librarians surveyed by Mary Grosch and Terry L. Weech considered their second advanced degree important to their career advancement, but noted that it did not result in a higher salary.<sup>2</sup> A 2018 study confirmed these observations, the results of which were published in the researchers' previous article.<sup>3</sup> This study expands upon the value of additional, advanced formal education beyond the Master of Library Science (MLS) degree and includes quantitative data about academic librarians' publications, credit-bearing teaching, and compensation. Respondents to the 2018 survey who had an additional advanced degree were more likely to be employed in tenure-track positions (62 percent) than those without it (38 percent). Participants also indicated a faculty status at their institutions more often (59 percent) than MLS-only participants (41 percent). The 2018 study provided some preliminary data on librarians' perception of the value of an advanced subject degree in library instruction. Seventy-four percent of respondents who held such a degree claimed that it enhanced their abilities to teach instruction sessions and gave them a better understanding of pedagogy, learning styles, educational psychology, and instructional technology. However, additional formal education held much more questionable value when it came to compensation. Eighteen percent of survey participants thought the cost associated with obtaining a second master's degree outweighed its potential benefit, as "additional credentials of academic librarians are often ignored by library administration and have no clear impact on a librarian's salary and promotion prospects."<sup>4</sup>

In 1951, the American Library Association changed the educational standard for librarian practitioners from a bachelor's to a master's degree. A master's degree in library science was confirmed as the appropriate terminal degree for academic librarians in the 1975 Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) statement. However,

an additional advanced degree has been mentioned in recent job announcements for academic librarians. Thirty-three percent of ALA JobLIST postings surveyed in 2014 and 2015 listed a second advanced degree or advanced subject knowledge as required or preferred.<sup>5</sup> This trend has grown gradually over time. For example, a second advanced degree was a requirement or preference in 56 percent of position announcements for librarians for Latin American and Caribbean studies posted in the United States between 1970 and 1989. That number rose to 71.4 percent for positions announced in 1990-1999.<sup>6</sup> Many academic library administrators still do not view the MLS degree as sufficient for subject specialists and liaison librarians. Indeed, specialized courses such as health librarianship that liaison librarians have found most useful in retrospect are usually not part of the standard curriculum offered at most library schools.<sup>7</sup>

While Robert Perret and Nancy J. Young reported in 2008 that the mean salary of academic librarians fell approximately 32 percent behind that of teaching faculty (\$66,551 and \$98,792, respectively), with the salary gap increasing between 1983 and 2009, especially in the Southern United States, more recent figures about specific groups of subject librarians seem to suggest a different ratio.<sup>8</sup> In 2016, most Music Library Association members earned between \$60,000 and \$80,000, only slightly less than the salary range for music teaching faculty in the ranks of associate (mean: \$68,978) and full (mean: \$87,000) professors for that year. About half of the academic librarians belonging to that organization had faculty status, in most cases in either tenured or tenure-track positions.<sup>9</sup> Catherine Sassen and Diane Wahl suggested in their 2014 study an increase in the number of institutions that grant faculty status to librarians and a related increase in publication requirements for librarians' tenure, promotion, or continued employment.<sup>10</sup> Quinn Galbraith et al. observed that librarians "with faculty status and tenure-track appointments represent the largest group of academic librarians published in the top [library science] journals, far exceeding any other group at 64%."<sup>11</sup>

Library and information science programs have been criticized for not providing enough practical research experience. Such experience could encourage graduates to participate actively in the processes of scholarly communication and publication when they find employment at academic

institutions. Marie R. Kennedy and Kristine R. Brancolini found in their 2015 survey that only 17 percent of librarians felt the MLS degree helped them to conduct research.<sup>12</sup> In another study conducted by Camielle Crampsie, Tina Neville, and Deborah Henry, 18 percent of the respondents reported conducting original research during their MLS graduate study while one of the survey participants noted, "Librarians who have taken research methods course(s) are far more comfortable working toward tenure and get off to a more successful start."<sup>13</sup> However, only slightly more than half of MLS programs

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required a research methods course in 2015 and the available courses, with few notable exceptions such as the University of Rhode Island's UnClassroom project, were designed as introductory overview courses offering insufficient exposure to statistical analysis and no hands-on research components.<sup>14</sup> The relationship between conducting research and the completion of an additional advanced degree, especially one that required a thesis or dissertation, appeared to be significant in some studies.<sup>15</sup>

Although Jane E. Klobas and Laurel A. Clyde reported in 2010 that 54 percent of librarian practitioners felt their institutions neither expected nor encouraged them to publish, publishing in peer-reviewed journals seems to have become the established norm for scholarly communication and promotion or tenure across the United States.<sup>16</sup> During the period between 1980 and 2011, for example, there was a significant increase in the number of Association of Research Libraries (ARL) members requiring publication for both promotion (45.5 percent) and continuing appointment (34.7 percent).<sup>17</sup> Approximately 54 percent of participants in a 2012 survey stated they had published in peer-reviewed journals. However, more respondents (65.9 percent) used conference papers, posters, and presentations than refereed journals to communicate the results of their research. Non-tenure librarians were also more likely than those in tenure-track positions to turn to blogs and other types of social media for that purpose.<sup>18</sup>

Liaison and subject librarians can benefit from closer professional relationships with the teaching faculty with whom they share research interests, leading to collaborative projects. It is a valuable experience for both parties. Librarians become more knowledgeable about the scholarly research lifecycle and later provide better research support services. Teaching faculty benefit from librarians' interdisciplinary perspectives and expertise in content discovery or data management and appreciate their library colleagues' research contributions. Other benefits realized through research collaboration and co-authorship between librarians and teaching faculty that were noted in the literature include greater contribution to the institutional mission, increased sense of personal and professional fulfillment, advancing the status of librarians among faculty members, and raising the profile of the library on campus.<sup>19</sup> The publishing output of academic librarians in non-MLS journals nearly doubled between 2006 and 2015, in contrast to the decline in the number of their submissions to MLS journals.<sup>20</sup>

Although librarians still tend to collaborate more with other librarians on topics related to library practice, articles co-authored by librarians and non-librarians were reported to be cited twice as frequently as articles by only librarians.<sup>21</sup> Studies discussing the so-called impostor phenomenon (referring to librarians' self-perception as less qualified and less competent than teaching and research faculty) observed that those feelings were less common among librarians who had more scholarly publications or an educational background in the subject area for which they served as liaisons.<sup>22</sup>

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At the turn of the 20th century, many librarians were members of the teaching faculty and routinely provided instruction in their subject discipline. For example, Otto Kinkeldey, the first professor of musicology in the United States, was a music librarian

and head of the music division at the New York Public Library.<sup>23</sup> According to Michael Lorenzen, some academic librarians lectured in the classroom as early as the 1880s, and the first college for-credit course in bibliography was offered at the University of Michigan during that time.<sup>24</sup> The introduction of a system of formal education for librarians with its corresponding new model of librarianship shifted focus to other activities and areas of service, but teaching is still an important part of the profession. Unfortunately, most MLS degree programs are lacking in pedagogy and teaching methods, drawing criticism like the comments regarding the treatment of research methodology in MLS curricula that were mentioned previously.<sup>25</sup> As pointed out in a 2016 study based on a survey of recent library and information science graduates, “while most MLS programs still do not require students to take instruction courses, and some do not even offer such courses, potential employers greatly value new employees with teaching skills and training.”<sup>26</sup> In H. Palmer Hall and Caroline Byrd’s view, academic librarians interested in teaching would be well advised to obtain a second master’s degree or PhD to satisfy the basic requirement for instruction at the college level and to be fully accepted as peers (*de facto*, rather than *de jure*) of the teaching faculty.<sup>27</sup> The question arises as to whether other Master’s or PhD curricula currently offer better pedagogical preparation than MLS programs. But a second advanced degree certainly provides enough disciplinary knowledge to help with subject-specific instruction in the librarian’s liaison area. Leaving the controversial issue of librarians’ academic status aside, teaching offers other advantages, such as interaction with students over extended periods, a better understanding of faculty workloads and student needs, and promotion of the library’s value to the campus community.<sup>28</sup> An additional advanced degree may expand teaching opportunities for librarians and is preferred in many subject specialist positions.<sup>29</sup>

Instruction may either fall within the responsibilities of a librarian’s position or be an additional assignment. If teaching a credit-bearing course is not included in a work contract, it is often viewed as a service to another department. In cases when librarians are compensated separately by their liaison department, class preparation and grading are expected to take place outside of their regular work schedule.<sup>30</sup> Sixty percent of respondents to a survey connected with a 2018 study received compensation for teaching a for-credit course and were not offered release time from their library responsibilities to teach.<sup>31</sup> About half of the survey participants taught three-credit courses, in most cases either once per semester or once per academic year, providing an indication of the degree to which subject librarians support disciplinary instruction at academic institutions.

Previous studies have shown a varying degree of librarian involvement in teaching subject-specific information skills or credit-bearing courses across disciplines. According to survey results reported in a 2020 study, teaching faculty in humanities and education tend to collaborate with librarians to integrate information literacy instruction into their courses more often than STEM or fine arts faculty do.<sup>32</sup> STEM disciplines also are represented less frequently than other subject areas among credit-bearing courses taught by librarians who hold an additional graduate degree.<sup>33</sup>



## Research Questions

The following research questions were developed after analyzing the 2018 study and evaluating related academic literature. The intent is to further the previous research and better understand the value of an additional advanced subject degree for academic librarians with an MLS.

1. Do librarians with an advanced subject degree in addition to an MLS publish in peer-reviewed journals more often than librarians without an additional advanced subject degree?
2. Do librarians who hold an MLS perceive the degree as having prepared them to conduct research and publish?
3. Are librarians with an advanced subject degree in addition to an MLS compensated at higher rates than librarians without an additional advanced subject degree?
4. Do librarians with an advanced subject degree in addition to an MLS teach credit-bearing courses more often than librarians without an additional advanced subject degree?
5. Are librarians with an advanced subject degree in addition to an MLS tenured more often than librarians without an additional advanced subject degree?

## Methodology

The researchers designed a mixed method survey to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the value of an advanced subject degree in addition to the MLS in the academic library workplace. While a mixed method approach was deemed best for the study, a larger portion of the survey questions were quantitative to alleviate potential bias that arose from qualitative questions in the previous survey. The survey's twelve questions evaluated academic librarians who had obtained either a Master of Library Science or equivalent, Master of Library Science and a second master's degree, or a PhD. The questions were open-ended, multiple-choice, closed-ended, and demographic.

Electronic mailing lists were used to distribute the survey to academic librarians across a broad scope of library foci that included listservs for acquisitions, reference services, bibliographic instruction, and scholarly communication. The survey was active from February 1, 2022, until April 19, 2022. Numerous listservs previously used to distribute surveys have been migrated to message boards, which made it necessary to invite survey participants to participate via American Library Association-hosted message boards. The same distribution method was used in the researchers' previous study before the partial transition from listservs to message boards and yielded 497 (65 percent) more usable participant responses. The use of listservs and message boards as a means of distribution resulted in a non-probability sample that provides a possible representation of academic librarians operating in the United States. A chi-square analysis was conducted to determine whether the relationship between independent and dependent variables was statistically significant. In addition, Cramér's V was conducted as an effect size measurement test for the chi-square test to determine how strongly the two categorical fields were associated. All statistical analysis was conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics version 29.





## Profile of participants

Demographic questions that best describe survey participants for the study included degree status, current position, type of library, and job duties. The responses to the degree status question provided the following percentages:

- Library Science or equivalent (38 percent),
- Master of Library Science and second master's degree (47 percent), and
- PhD (15 percent).

When participants were asked to indicate an option that best described their current position, the outcome was 56 percent faculty, 22 percent staff, and 18 percent academic professional, while "Other" was selected by 4 percent. Table 1 displays the type of library the participants reportedly worked in, with the "Main Library" receiving the highest response rate of 64 percent. Participants were asked to select all job duties that applied to their current position. This question resulted in the following percentages:

- 30 percent administration,
- 19 percent acquisitions,
- 15 percent cataloging,
- 58 percent collection development,
- 61 percent instruction,
- 10 percent circulation services,
- 67 percent reference,
- 18 percent scholarly communication,
- 10 percent serials, and
- 13 percent special collections.

## Results

Three hundred and twenty participants initiated the survey. Of the 320 responses submitted, 42 were incomplete, leaving 278 surveys for analysis. Evaluation of GeoIP estimation data indicated that participants were located in 42 of the United States and the District of Columbia.

Five research questions were asked to determine the value of an advanced subject degree in addition to an MLS. The aim of the first research question was to determine whether an advanced subject degree enhances a librarian's likelihood of publishing peer-reviewed articles. To evaluate this question, participants were asked to indicate how many articles they had published in a peer-reviewed journal (Q9). Analysis was conducted with degree status being the independent variable while the number of published peer-reviewed articles was the dependent variable. After reviewing the data, it was determined that recoding the dependent variable to condensed categories would increase the expected count in three cells with low counts to conduct a chi-square test more efficiently. Table 2 illustrates the outcomes of this question. As indicated by the results of the chi-square test ( $X^2 = 23.97$ ,  $p = .001$ ), the alpha score is statistically significant. As a result, one can infer that the variables degree status and number of articles published are related. To determine how closely the variables are associated, Cramér's



**Table 1.**  
Type of library participants' worked in

	Frequency	Percent
Main Library	178	64.0%
Science Library	6	2.2%
Law Library	1	0.4%
Medical Library	27	9.7%
Education Library	5	1.8%
Music Library	44	15.8%
Other Subject-Specific Library	10	3.6%
Not Academic Library	7	2.5%
Total	278	100.0%

V was conducted in addition to chi-Square. The results of Cramér's V (.207) indicated a moderate association between the two variables. The results suggest that the largest percentage (46 percent) of survey participants indicated they had 0-1 peer-reviewed publications. The next response option was 2-7 peer-reviewed publications which was selected by 39 percent of all participants. A larger percentage (42 percent) of the participants who indicated 2-7 publications held an advanced subject degree in addition to the MLS. Among those who reported eight or more peer-reviewed publications, participants with an MLS and no additional advanced degree comprised 14 percent, those with an MLS and an advanced degree group represented 9 percent, and the number with a PhD exceeded the other groups at 34.9 percent.

Whether or not librarians who hold an MLS perceive the degree as having prepared them to conduct research and publish was evaluated with a question that asked participants to indicate whether their MLS program properly prepared them to conduct research and publish (Q8). Respondents who selected "No" represented the following degree levels: MLS (67 percent), MLS with an advanced subject degree (68 percent), and PhD (74 percent). Across all three groups, there is the perception that the MLS failed to prepare them to research and publish. Results for the question "Did your MLS prepare you to research and publish" were used as the independent variable, while the number of peer-reviewed article publications (Q9) was used as the dependent variable for a chi-square test. This analysis was conducted to gain insight into participants' perceptions of the value of their MLS degree programs for preparation for publishing in relation to their actual publications. Table 3 shows that among those who indicated 2-7 or over eight publications, the participants who indicated that the MLS did not prepare them reported publishing at higher rates than those who reported that the MLS did prepare them for publishing. The chi-square results ( $X^2 = .699$ ,  $p = .705$ ) did not specify a significant relationship between the variables. Participants were also asked to elaborate on why their MLS program either did or did not prepare them to research and publish.





## Table 2.

Peer-reviewed publications by participant level of degree attained

Number of Peer-Reviewed Publications	MLS	MLS and Subject Degree	PhD	Total
0-1	55 52.4%	64 49.2%	9 20.9%	128 46.0%
2-7	35 33.3%	55 42.3%	19 44.2%	109 39.2%
8 +	15 14.3%	11 8.5%	15 34.9%	41 14.7%
Total	105 100%	130 100%	43 100%	278

## Table 3.

Participants number of peer-reviewed publications versus their perceived preparedness to research and publish.

Number of Peer-Reviewed Publications	No, not prepared by MLS	Yes, prepared by MLS	Total
0-1	84 44.4%	43 49.4%	127 46.0%
2-7	76 40.2%	33 37.9%	109 39.5%
8 +	29 15.3%	11 12.6%	40 14.5%
Total	189 100%	87 100%	276 100%



These open-ended text responses suggested that MLS degree programs, in some cases, lacked a formal research course; failed to deliver an adequate research methods course; or that participants learned the skills required to research and publish from workplace colleagues.

An additional question asked all participants to indicate the number of publications authored with a breakdown of literature reviews, research articles, and case studies (Q10). PhD respondent results were omitted from the following tabulations to compare librarians with an MLS-only and MLS with an additional degree. Results for librarians with an MLS are literature reviews (90), research articles (133), and case studies (43) while results for librarians with an advanced subject degree in addition to the MLS are literature reviews (54), research articles (157), and case studies (91). These results indicate that librarians with an MLS reported that 50 percent of their peer-reviewed publications were research articles while MLS-holders with an advanced subject degree specified 52 percent of their publications were research articles.

The 2018 survey did not collect salary data, which resulted in survey participants' comments regarding the need for salary to be included when assessing the value of an advanced subject degree in addition to an MLS. A salary question was included in this survey (Q5). The survey question included 13 categories. After reviewing the data, category one (below \$19,000) was removed due to zero responses. In addition, category 13 (prefer not to say) was excluded from the data analysis process. When recoding data, the remaining 11 ranges were combined into four broader categories. These four categories are listed in Table 4. The majority (53 percent) of participants fall in the annual salary range of \$60,000 to \$89,000, with participants with an advanced subject degree representing the highest proportion (58 percent) versus those with only an MLS (52 percent). Likewise, advanced subject degree holders (18 percent) appear more often than MLS participants (14 percent) in the next category \$90,000 to \$119,000. The chi-square results ( $X^2 = 19.97$ ,  $p = .003$ ), indicated statistical significance. When Cramér's V was conducted, the outcome (.193) revealed that while chi-square indicated a significant relationship, Cramér's V suggested a weak association between degree status and salary.

Participants were also asked whether they taught credit-bearing courses. The underlying premise behind this question was that an advanced subject degree enhanced the likelihood of librarians teaching credit-bearing courses due to their additional discipline-specific skills. The percentage of participants who had and had not taught credit-bearing courses was evenly distributed, with 50 percent having done so and 50 percent not (see Table 5). Of the 50 percent who had taught credit-bearing courses, the breakdown was 15 percent higher for participants reporting having an advanced subject degree (52 percent) compared to those without an advanced degree (37 percent). Statistical analysis was significant, with results equal to ( $X^2 = 18.06$ ,  $p = .001$ ) for chi-square. Cramér's V had a moderate association value of .255. When evaluating the text portion of this survey question, which asked participants to indicate the type of credit-bearing course(s) they had taught, it was determined that PhD respondents would be omitted to facilitate a comparison between the MLS group and that with an additional advanced degree. The number of MLS respondents who provided a text response was 38 and the number who indicated an additional advanced degree was 62. After filtering out responses such as "numerous" and other replies that the authors were unable to evaluate



## Table 4.

Participants' reported salaries, sorted by degree status

Annual Salary	MLS	MLS and Subject Degree	PhD	Total
\$20,000 - \$59,000	31 30.7%	27 21.6%	4 9.8%	62 23.2%
\$60,000 - \$89,000	52 51.5%	71 56.8%	18 43.9%	141 52.8%
\$90,000 - \$119,000	14 13.9%	23 18.4%	13 31.7%	50 18.7%
Above \$120,000	4 4.0%	4 3.2%	6 14.6%	14 5.2%
Total	101 100%	125 100%	41 100%	267 100%

adequately, 29 responses from MLS-holding participants and 52 from individuals with an additional advanced degree were placed in these four categories: first-year seminar, academic research and information literacy, health sciences, and music. The breakdown for MLS-only was 24 percent for first-year seminar, 48 percent for academic research and information literacy, 21 percent for health sciences, and 7 percent for music. Among the 52 respondents with an additional advanced degree, 13 percent indicated first-year seminar, 65 percent academic research and information literacy, 4 percent health sciences, and 18 percent music.

## Table 5.

Participants' report of experience teaching credit-bearing courses, sorted by degree status

Participant has taught credit-bearing courses	MLS	MLS and Subject Degree	PhD	Total
No	66 63.5%	62 47.7%	11 25.6%	139 50.2%
Yes	38 36.5%	68 52.3%	32 74.4%	138 49.8%
Total	104 100%	130 100%	43 100%	277 100%



With tenure often viewed as an asset for academic librarians, the question of whether a librarian with an advanced subject degree is more often tenured than a librarian without an additional degree was asked to gauge whether librarians with advanced subject degrees were more likely to achieve tenure status (Q6). Table 6 shows that the percentage of tenured librarians who answered question six was 27 percent of the 278 respondents. Librarians with an advanced subject degree reported being tenured at a seven percent higher rate than those without an advanced subject degree. Statistical analysis indicated the association between degree status and tenure not to be statistically significant ( $X^2 = 1.78, p = .409$ ).

Table 6.  
Participants' reported tenure and degree status

Participant holds tenure	MLS	MLS and Subject Degree	PhD	Total
No	80 76.2%	90 69.2%	33 76.7%	203 73.0%
Yes	25 23.8%	40 30.8%	10 23.3%	75 27.0%
Total	105 100%	130 100%	43 100%	278 100%

Conclusion

The findings of this study offer insights into the value of an additional advanced subject degree, with notable implications for compensation, preparedness to conduct research and publish, and scholarly peer-reviewed article contributions. Study results signify the need for additional research to further evaluate the relationship between advanced subject degree holders and academic librarianship.

Survey data suggest that librarians with additional education are compensated at higher rates, with PhD-holding librarians compensated at the highest rate. The question of whether librarians who possess additional advanced subject degrees are compensated at higher rates than those who do not have an additional advanced subject degree is complicated by the cost of acquiring an additional degree, years of professional experience, type of liaison librarian, and institutional policy. Years of professional experience was intended to be a data point in this study, but the question was structured incorrectly and failed to collect reliable data which resulted in its omission. This is a significant shortcoming of this study. Future studies could benefit from collecting years of experience data concerning compensation and the participants' number of publications. In addition, future studies might explore employment posting descriptions to analyze degree requirements and starting salaries.



The question of whether MLS programs prepare students to conduct research and publish is not a new one. This study found similar outcomes to the 2018 Kennedy and Brancolini study and it continues to raise questions about the content and overall design of MLS programs, as well as the expectations placed on academic librarians in roles that require them to research and publish. Study participants' comments suggest that academic librarians who are required or wish to research and publish would benefit from more practical research experience during their MLS programs. Seventeen percent of participants who stated that their MLS program did not prepare them to research and publish noted that mentors or colleagues helped fill gaps in research skills. One question that could be valuable to the overall conversation is what percentage of academic librarians learn to research and publish from a mentor or colleague. In addition, comparing what rationale is provided by MLS degree programs that do not require a research methods course to obtain an accredited MLS to academic librarian promotion guidelines could offer insight into the conversation.

Academic librarians are, at times, expected to publish for promotion or tenure and publishing in peer-reviewed journals can be an important aspect of library liaison work. This study indicated a moderate Cramér's V association between degree status and the number of peer-reviewed publications, yet the data indicates that PhD librarians publish more peer-reviewed articles than librarians with just MLS or an advanced subject degree in addition to the MLS. The results for (Q10) suggested that librarians from both the MLS and MLS with advanced subject degree groups were publishing peer-reviewed research articles at significantly higher rates than literature reviews and case studies. These results engendered a curiosity about how academic librarians define library science research articles. Determining what percentage of librarians authored peer-reviewed articles that included data and statistical analysis and what percentage were case studies is an option for more granular data on what types of research librarians are conducting. More rigorously evaluating what type of research is being conducted paired with data on how well MLS programs are preparing MLS students to research and publish could provide valuable insights and potentially an argument for MLS programs to enhance research-based courses and thesis requirements for MLS students who plan to work as academic librarians. In addition to the type of research being conducted, evaluating the impact factor of library science journals might also offer insight into the quality of library science publications. There is little doubt that MLS students who are future academic librarians would benefit from learning to research and publish. Evaluating other factors such as publication requirements outlined in promotion guidelines could help determine expectations for, and understand reasons why, librarians publish certain types of research.

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The value of advanced subject degrees is multifaceted, and this study's findings contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between degree status and librarianship. Academic librarians must remain adaptable and responsive to the ever-changing demands of librarianship while being aware of the factors influencing compensation, competency of MLS programs, the importance of scholarly publications, and the overall value of academic degrees. Future endeavors should build on this study's insights by addressing the identified limitations and expanding the dynamic conversation about academic librarians, their qualifications, and the rapidly evolving landscape of librarianship.

*Lance Day is an associate librarian at Samford University, email: wday@samford.edu, ORCID: 0000-0002-2973-3430.*

*Jaroslav Szurek is a librarian at Samford University, email: jszurek@samford.edu, ORCID: 0000-0003-4178-1926.*

## Appendix

### Survey Instrument

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Lance Day and Jaroslav Szurek from Samford University.

The purpose of this study is to conduct follow-up research on a previous project. Both projects focus on librarians' views on the perceived value of an advanced subject degree in their discipline and identify why obtaining such a degree may or may not affect librarians' performance, status, and communication in their academic community. If you agree to participate in this research, please complete the online survey. As valuable insights are often derived from spontaneous comments, we appreciate your time spent on open-ended questions.

The survey is anonymous and personally identifiable data will not be collected. If respondents insert any identifying information, it will be removed before any publication. You are free not to participate or stop participating before submitting your answers.

This study has been approved by the Samford University Institutional Review Board. The researchers may be contacted at wday@samford.edu or jszurek@samford.edu. Approval number EXMT-O-23-S-1.

Q1 Please select the option that best describes your academic degree status.

- Master of Library Science OR Equivalent
- Master of Library Science AND Second Master's Degree
- PhD
- None of the above





Q2 What type of academic library do you currently work in?

- Main Library
- Science Library
- Law Library
- Medical Library
- Education Library
- Music Library
- Business Library
- Other Subject Specific Library
- I Don't Work in an Academic Library

Q3 Please select the option that best describes your current position.

- Faculty
- Staff
- Academic Professional
- Contract/Temporary Employee
- Other

Q4 Please select your primary job duties (select all that apply).

1. Administration
2. Acquisitions
3. Cataloging
4. Collection Development
5. Instruction
6. Interlibrary Loan
7. Circulation Services
8. Reference
9. Scholarly Communication
10. Serials
11. Special Collections

Q5 Please select your annual gross income.

- Less than \$19,999
- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$59,999



- \$60,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$109,999
- \$110,000 to \$119,999
- Above \$120,000
- Prefer not to say

Q6 Is your job a tenure track position?

- No
- Yes

Q7 Are you tenured?

- No
- Yes

Q8 Did your MLIS program properly prepare you to conduct research and publish?  
Please explain in the comment section.

- No \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Q9 How many articles have you published in a peer reviewed journal?

- 0-1
- 2-4
- 5-7
- 8-10
- Over 11

Q10 Please enter a digit in the field beside the types of publications to indicate the number of that type you have authored.

- Literature Review
- Research
- Case Study
- Book Chapter
- Other



Q11 Have you published a peer-reviewed article with a writing partner who is not a librarian? If yes, please indicate which department.

- No
- Yes

Q12 Have you taught any credit-bearing courses? If yes, indicate what class.

- no
- yes

## Notes

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