

**ACCREDITATION:
A BLUEPRINT FOR YOUR LIBRARY'S FUTURE**

*Accreditation Committee of the
Association of Jewish Libraries -- Synagogue, School, and Center Division*

*Committee Chair: Helene Tuchman
Committee Members: Etta D. Gold, Anne Dublin, Rita C. Frischer*

Description: The Accreditation process provides an opportunity for you to define library's mission, establish new policies and codify other policies you have been following informally. Working your way through the process guides you in identifying strengths and weaknesses, allowing you to summarize the progress your library has made in previous years. Hear about the experiences of applicants before, during, and after, the application process. Pick up handouts including examples of Mission Statements, Collection Development, Book Selection, and Gifts policies, Job Descriptions for professional and volunteer staff. See successful applications from previous years. Learn how to enhance the library's image, polish the information you provide your institution and impress your sources for library funding.

Four presentations will address this topic:

1. Helene Tuchman: *Philosophical and Professional Principles Used in Reviewing the Applications*
 2. Etta D. Gold: *Review of the Documentation: Mission Statements, Collection Development, Job Descriptions, etc.*
 3. Anne Dublin: *The Application Process (From the Point of View of Applicant)*
 4. Rita C. Frischer: *How It All Began..... [History of Judaica Library Accreditation]*
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PHILOSOPHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES USED IN REVIEWING THE APPLICATIONS

Helene Tuchman

Helene Tuchman has been Librarian at the Rabbi Marshall R. Lifson Library of Temple Emanuel, Newton, Massachusetts, since 1993. She retired as Director of the Watertown Free Public Library in 1992 after working in public and academic libraries for more than 30 years. She was an officer of the Executive Board that established the Minuteman Library Network, a multi-type library consortium in metropolitan Boston. In the 1970's she served as President of the Greater Boston Chapter of The Association of Jewish Libraries. Her publications include *The Bibliography of Negro-Jewish Relations* published by The Association of Jewish Libraries; *Large-Print Books of Jewish Interest* published by the Welfare Board and was contributor to *Jewish Women in America, an historical encyclopedia*. In 1995 she became a member of the Accreditation Committee and in 1999 its Chairperson.

Introduction

The Accreditation committee in its latest incarnation began awarding accreditation in 1999. Since then 34 libraries in 4 countries have been accredited. In the past few years, especially before the application forms went onto the AJL website, we received twice as many requests for forms than were completed and returned for review. This and various inquiries we receive about the application process has led us to present this workshop. We'd like to take the opportunity to explain to those of you who are considering going through the accreditation process, what we are thinking, and looking for when we both designed the questionnaires and then began to review the completed application forms.

Hallmarks of a Good Library

We started with the concept that all good libraries have certain hallmarks:

A person responsible for administering the library

Regular hours of availability

A cataloging and classification system that lists all the materials you have, and permits you to find them easily

A collection of materials that reflects deliberate choice in selection and fits the purposes of the library and the institution with which it is associated.

A defined space in which library services are conducted

When we say a person responsible, we are not specifying professional librarian. We know many of you are volunteers who have learned on the job. Your very presence here today, and as members of AJL reflects your knowledge and interest and intuition about good library service. What we are looking for is evidence that someone interested in library services is in charge and has taken responsibility for the library.

Regular hours indicates that the library is being nurtured and so are the patrons. A cataloging and classification system indicates someone has made it possible to find what you have amassed.

The list of Judaica categories in the Basic accreditation application solicits the information that the collection is attempting to provide at least a elementary introduction to all facets of the Judaica experience.

A defined space, even if you share it with others, such as in a chapel, gives a physical focus to the services that you are providing, gives the materials a measure of security by defining them as a library, and provides a place at the very least of finding you, when a person seeks service.

Summation

So are we asking too much from you, or too little? That depends. One size does not fit all. When I review an application for Basic Accreditation I am trying to determine if you have a clear sense of purpose, and have organized your efforts to achieve that purpose. A library in a synagogue that serves primarily senior citizens and has no school will not be the same as a library in a synagogue with many young families. Your mission and goals and objectives will be different, but the hallmarks of a good library program will be the same. When you attach your columns from your institution's newsletter, or your flyers indicating book groups, speakers, reading clubs for children, it becomes clear to the reviewer if you are realizing your library goals.

An *Advanced* application of course, requires much more information and demonstration of excellence. Just the physical act of filling out the form, and answering the questions and attaching the required documentation, whether it be your annual Goals and objectives statement, Gifts policy, instructions for volunteers or how to process books and videotapes, indicates you are putting great thought into an ongoing program which your successor can follow. This too becomes apparent to the reviewer. Again, one size does not fit all, but if you are doing what it takes to run a library that fulfills the mission you have created, then it is enough.

***REVIEW OF THE DOCUMENTATION:
MISSION STATEMENTS, COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT, JOB DESCRIPTIONS, ETC.***

Etta D. Gold

<p>Etta D. Gold has been the head librarian at Temple Beth Am Library in Miami since 1996. Previously, she was Manager of the Children's Department at the Coral Gables Branch of the Miami-Dade Public Library System, having earned her MLS in 1991. She has worked for many years in Jewish education as teacher and administrator, holding a RJE. Currently she serves on several national committees, including Accreditation and the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee.</p>

Mission Statements

A written statement of purpose outlining the goals and activities, the vision and values of the library is essential in establishing its character and makeup. It also ensures that everyone- staff, patrons, sponsors- all know exactly what the intentions and aspirations of the library are.

Some Samples

The mission of the *Temple Beth Am Library* is to provide materials of education, entertainment, and enrichment for our schools, congregation, and community. The Library staff shall coordinate programs to supplement and enhance the variety of educational, social, and spiritual activities and events that take place at Temple Beth Am. The Library staff is committed to excellence and service that brings about a positive experience for every library user.

The mission of the *Temple Israel Libraries* is to enable our congregation to experience the immense range of joy, spirituality, and community through the use of an exciting, comfortable, friendly, and relevant Judaic library. The library collection will be designed to meet the Judaic needs of our Nursery, Religious, and Hebrew schools, and the congregational community, and will strive to provide a wide variety of print and multi-media materials that will help our members live and experience Jewish life in a creative and personal way. Programs will be coordinated to supplement and enhance the vast array of educational and social activities and events offered at Temple Israel, as well as with the Nursery, Hebrew, Religious School, and Adult Education curriculums. The libraries will be available for congregants, students, teachers, clergy, and staff members to read, browse, relax, question, learn, and explore the library resources with the assistance of a librarian, volunteer, or each other. Further, it is the mission of the Temple Israel libraries to provide intellectual and social stimulation through a positive library experience that will further enhance each individual's identification with Judaism.

The Samuel and Rebecca Astor Judaica Library is dedicated to serving the San Diego community at large as a central source of Jewish knowledge by providing access to information in support of the mission of the San Diego Center for Jewish Culture: to promote Jewish culture, heritage and creativity in the arts. Special attention is given to materials that supplement the programming of the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, Jacobs Family Campus.

Jewish Community Center and the San Diego Center for Jewish Culture. The SRAJL also maintains extensive special collections on both the Nazi Holocaust and Israel. Our vision statement: The SRAJL will be a central and vital part of the San Diego Jewish community by providing access to information in all formats in the areas of Jewish heritage and culture. It will provide for all of the information needs of its patrons and will be a central reference source for Judaic information not contained within its own physical facility.

The following is a further sampling of public library mission statements. These are published on the web at <http://www.shylibrarian.com/missionstatements.htm>

The Shy Librarian

The mission of the Library is to serve as a cathedral of human knowledgeC an accessible database of knowledge that serves as the community's memoryCand as an information and knowledge safety net, while providing materials, programs, and services to the people of the community.

We open our doors to assist all to:

- L** Lifelong Learning
- E** Enjoyment, enhancement, and enrichment
- A** Access to diverse information
- R** Responsive customer service
- N** Navigate worlds of information

So that enlightenment and literacy may flourish in our community, the Library dedicates itself to collecting and distributing an array of information and ideas that is diverse in material, varied in

formats, and rich in viewpoint, reflecting the multicultural character of the community and world it serves. The Library provides free, equal, and confidential access to its resources and services. Essential to this mission is the active promotion of library services, collections, and programs. The purpose of the Library is to advance human knowledge and understanding by providing access to high-quality information, literature, and the arts relevant to the community it serves. The Library will provide the community with courteous, efficient service and will encourage an interest in reading and learning. The mission of the Library is to serve and promote the informational, cultural, educational, and recreational needs of all the residents, providing access to the universe of information. The Library places special emphasis on prompt, accurate answers to questions and on the provision of a wide range of popular materials for personal use. The Library also supports students at the elementary and secondary level with appropriate materials and services. Further, the Library welcomes young children and seeks to meet the unique needs of those children and their parents. The mission of the Library is to open doors to a world of information, education and recreation, thereby enhancing the economic, social and cultural vitality of our community.

Collection Development Policies

A formal written statement of the principles guiding a library's selection of new books and materials, including the authority and criteria used in selection and weeding can be very helpful, even indispensable, to a smooth operation. The policy should include a carefully considered written >selections policy' that covers gifts and other donations. This, along with regularly scheduled evaluations and inventories serves to document the current collection, pursue lost books and "holes," discard out-of-date and tattered books, while establishing a framework for future acquisitions.

Some Samples

Collection Development policies are generally lengthy, as they include a detailed description of the institution's needs and focus. Most policies also list acceptable references for reviews of material (e.g. School Library Journal, Booklist, etc.). A variety of policies can be found at the following web sites:

Directory of Collection Development Policies on the Web
http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/acqweb/cd_policy.html

The Internet Library for Librarians
http://www.itcompany.com/inforetriever/acq_dept.htm

American Association of School Librarian's Position Statements
<http://www.ala.org/aasl/positions/index.html>

Job Descriptions

A written, detailed description of the duties and responsibilities associated with a specific position in the library is ideally utilized in performance evaluation, training, and the allocation of work load. The description is usually illustrative of tasks and chores, but not necessarily all-inclusive of every task.

Some Samples

Director, Libraries & Media Center

The Director is a permanent, full-time position. The Director is a member of the Professional Staff of Temple Israel and will report to the Executive Director.

Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Select and catalog all print, audio-visual, and electronic materials

Create monthly newsletters, bibliographies, and promotional materials

Perform reference interviews and assist patrons with library resources

Collaborate with clergy, staff, and faculty to support curriculum and programs

Oversee computer curriculum for pre-school through high school students

Develop outreach programming for patrons of all ages

Prepare annual budget

Plan annual Book Fair and other fundraising projects

Supervise one para-professional and numerous library volunteers

Work with volunteer committee to write and evaluate collection development and circulation policies

Library Assistant

The Library Assistant position is a permanent, part-time position.

The Library Assistant will provide administrative support to the Director of the Libraries & Media Center and will assist with the organizing and staffing of the Libraries. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Assist with the completion of the automation project in the Weinberg Family Library

Staff the circulation desk in the Weinberg Family Library: check-in, check-out, renew, reserve and re-shelve materials

Process monthly overdue notices for both libraries

Maintain mailing lists for book clubs, Library committee, Book Fair

Committee, and Story time events

Create reminder postcards and mailings as needed

Assist with the creation of publicity for the mid-month mailing and the Messenger

Manage and process periodical subscriptions

Answer phone, e-mail, and walk-in reference questions

Supervise volunteers

More examples of library job descriptions can be found at the Connecticut Library's website:

<http://www.cslib.org/jobdescript/index.htm>

General Library Policies Bibliography

Collection Development in the Small Library by Marianne K. Cassell and Grace W. Greene. Number 17 in the ALA Small Libraries Publications Series, 1991.

How To Organize A Jewish Library by Margot S. Berman, an AJL Publication.

Library Acquisition Policies and Procedures edited by Elizabeth Futas, Oryx press, 1977.

Library Land: index to resources for librarians

<http://sunsite.Berkeley.edu/LibraryLand/>

Library Spot: a free virtual library resource center for librarians and their patrons
<http://www.libraryspot.com/libshelf/>
Massachusetts Regional Library Systems Policy Collection
<http://www.cmrls.org/policies/>

THE APPLICATION PROCESS (FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF APPLICANT)

Anne Dublin

Anne Dublin is librarian at Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto. She holds a BFA from University of Wisconsin and School Library Diploma from the University of Manitoba. She has been an elementary school teacher since 1972, with specialties in English, French, and library. In addition to teaching and library work, she is the editor of AJL-Ontario newsletter and author of a number of children's and young adult novels.

I. What needs to be done:

1. Persuade people re. importance of gaining accreditation
chair and members of library committee
executive director of organization
director of education, or whoever has final responsibility for the library (beyond the librarian)

2. How?

Give examples of accreditation in other professions e.g. hospitals
Explain importance in organization? Gives pride to members about the fact they've reached a high standard.
Emphasize significance in larger Jewish community ? Accreditation publicizes not only your library but also your organization.

II. Process:

1. Librarian was responsible for coordination of all parts of application. In addition, the librarian prepared the following:
statistical supplement e.g. number of books in each category, number of patrons served, patron types, etc.
library procedure manual for volunteers
policies re. reviewing books, inventory, weeding, complaints, gifts
policy re. selection and acquisition of materials
job description of librarian
preparation of copies of photos, flyers, publicity, news articles, etc.
2. Our library committee chose a sub-committee of four people to be responsible for separate parts of the application:
Mission statement: One person examined older mission statements of our library, as well as those in other libraries. Created a new one that reflects our present goals.
Personnel policy: One person looked at the personnel policies as related to our organizational staff in general, and to the librarian in particular. Issues that were examined were: hiring and firing; contracts; employee benefits; salary; hours; vacation time.

Budget: The library budget was examined within the context of the organizational budget as a whole. Budget lines were looked at e.g. books, supplies & services, programs, professional development.

Library Committee: Factors examined were: number, structure, duties

Administration: How are decisions made in the organization?

III. Benefits of working through the process:

Re-examination of procedures and policies i.e. "new broom sweeps clean"

Members of library committee developed a better idea of the library's place in the organization in particular, and the workings of our organization in general

Pride in our achievements to date

Clarification of future goals

HOW IT ALL BEGAN.....

Rita C. Frischer

Rita Berman Frischer retired last year after 29 years as Director of Library Services at Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library in West Los Angeles. She has written extensively on children's literature for the Anglo-Jewish press, including the *L.A. Jewish Journal*; *Ariel*, *Review of Arts and Letters in Israel*; *Moment Magazine*; *Your Child*; *Reform Judaism*; etc., and for such works as the *Schocken Guide to Jewish Books*. She has given workshops on literary and library topics for AJL, for HUC-JIR, for CAJE and other organizations.

The history of Judaica Library Accreditation began not with the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) but with the JWB-Jewish Book Council (JBC). JBC had instituted an incentive program for synagogues to receive recognition for their libraries, complete with application form and certificates, but with several problems undermining this recognition.

Credibility

First, although the Book Council was headed at times by people savvy in library standards, it more often was not; therefore the applications weren't necessarily being judged by people who could accurately evaluate the libraries in question. Even more importantly, accreditation certificates were issued ad infinitum, with no dates indicated. A synagogue could withdraw support and a library could stagnate for years but still display a seemingly current framed JBC recognition of its merit.

AJL raised these problems with JBC which, faced with shrinking resources, was happy to recognize AJL as far better qualified to judge and set standards for libraries. Therefore, the two organizations combined to sponsor accreditation, using the JBC forms and creating an AJL Accreditation chairmanship to handle applications and evaluations. At this point, it was difficult to extend the process to a full committee and for years the chair of this committee had primary, secondary and tertiary responsibility...soliciting applications, corresponding with applicants and the JBC, evaluating, encouraging, and recognizing. The JBC's involvement lessened and when its sponsoring body, the Jewish Welfare Board, foundered, JBC, underfunded and overextended, was content to have AJL take over the entire responsibility for promoting quality Jewish libraries.

In 1992 the last really active evaluations and acknowledgments took place. AJL chairs for the next five years had no real format to help them cope with encouraging participation, sending out and receiving forms, evaluating and mentoring. Though each of them worked conscientiously, it became obvious that we needed a way to relieve their burden and make this process workable.

In 1997, I accepted the position of Chair of the Accreditation Committee with a tacit mandate (as well as a self-imposed one) to revise and reactivate. My best move was selection of absolutely great committee members and the decision to establish a regional approach to mentoring and outreach. The committee, met during the 1997 convention to set goals and priorities. We worked together during the year through e-mail and phone calls, taking a year to evaluate and revise forms and establish a two-level application process for Basic and Advanced. We took another year to establish and fine tune guidelines for committee members to use when evaluating. Our outreach and localized support worked and the number of applicants increased, including both first-timers and those updating their earlier accreditations.

In 1999, I turned over chairmanship to Helene Tuchman, who had been our woman in the Boston area and under her capable leadership the committee has continued broadening outreach and visibility. AJL and this committee has taken great pride in the number of libraries we've encouraged to go through this important process, a process which brings not only recognition but self knowledge, a valuable tool in planning future growth and improvement.