

Tufts University Librarians' Guide (revised 2026)

I. Tufts University Libraries

Tufts libraries support the teaching, learning, research, and scholarship needs of students, faculty and staff at their respective schools; contribute to the stewardship of the scholarly record on behalf of members of the University community and beyond; and preserve the institutional records and scholarship of Tufts.

The purpose of the Tufts Libraries Council is to strengthen the capacity of each library to meet the needs of the schools through collective planning and shared services, and to ensure that, as a collective, the libraries of Tufts University effectively meet institutional academic needs. The TLC serves as a governing body for the shared infrastructure and shared strategic priorities of the decentralized Tufts University Libraries.

II. Professional Development

All librarians at Tufts are encouraged and expected to participate in professional activities to continue their own development, to advance the profession, and to enhance service to the library. Participation in continuing education, both formal and informal, is expected of all Tufts librarians.

Each library will establish a process to approve support for librarians attending local, regional and national conferences.

Librarians contemplating a research project for which some form of institutional support of either time or money may be needed should discuss the project in advance with their supervisor and their director.

Involvement in university life also offers opportunities for librarians to grow and contribute as academic professionals.

The Tufts libraries support these activities in several ways. Librarians may request time and library-supported travel; the director of an individual's library may grant requests depending on the budget and library priorities.

III. Appointments and Rank Promotion

Rationale for Ranking

In an academic institution, librarians support the scholarly and educational needs of both the university and the broader community. The ranking system recognizes these contributions by formally acknowledging a librarian's knowledge, experience, professional growth, and excellence in performance. At Tufts University Libraries, ranking serves as the internal framework for recognizing professional development and service to the University and the library profession.

Definition of Ranks

Librarians in school-based libraries except directors shall be appointed to one of the ranks described below and are required to hold a Master's degree in Library/Information Science from an ALA-accredited program or international equivalent, and/or another relevant master's degree, as defined by the specific job requirements. A list of participating librarians can be found on [LibStaff – General: Librarians By Rank](#). Job titles, responsibilities, and degree requirements as determined by the home library and Human Resources are independent of rank.

AFFILIATE LIBRARIAN: This entry level rank is assigned to an individual with less than 2 years professional experience.

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN: An individual qualifies for this rank after a minimum of 2 years as an affiliate at Tufts OR 2 years professional experience, and demonstration of strong job performance and participation in professional activities.

ASSOCIATE LIBRARIAN: This third level is a senior rank. An individual qualifies for this rank after a minimum of 3 years as Assistant at Tufts OR at least 5 years of professional experience, and demonstration of excellent job performance, contributions to the profession and service to the Tufts' libraries and the university community.

SENIOR LIBRARIAN: This is the highest rank within the system. An individual qualifies for this rank after a minimum of 6 years as Associate at Tufts OR a minimum of 11 years of professional experience, and must demonstrate consistent outstanding achievements in job performance, in contributions to the profession and in service to the Tufts' libraries and the university community. This is a rank of special distinction that recognizes significant career achievement and contribution to the library profession.

“Years” shall be defined as years working in a professional capacity for 17.5 or more hours per week, or that equivalency, at Tufts or elsewhere. “Professional capacity” means a position requiring the MLIS or equivalent degree. Applicants for rank promotion must have achieved the required number of years by June 30 of a given year to be eligible for that year's promotions process.

Rank Promotions

1. The Rank Promotions Team

The Rank Promotions Team is responsible for guiding the process of recommending librarians for rank promotion. The team consists of three members and an alternate. The alternate may serve in any case of conflict of interest, such as a direct supervising relationship, or if a member of the team feels that they cannot be fair and objective. If there is a candidate for promotion to the rank of Senior Librarian and there is not a member of the Rank Promotions Team with that rank, the Team will seek a member of that rank to join the team for review of the candidate applying for rank of Senior Librarian.

The team shall be comprised of at least one member each from Tisch Library and the Hirsh Health Sciences Library, and as available a member from the Ginn Library or Webster Veterinary Library. Terms shall be for three years. At least one new member shall be added each year. Typically, the member in their third year will serve as team chair and the outgoing member who has just completed their third year will serve as alternate. If there is an appeal process, a representative of the Human

Resources (HR) Department serves as an ad hoc member of the team. TLC chairs will facilitate adding the HR representative.

The primary responsibility of the Rank Promotions Team is to assess colleagues' contributions to the Library, the University, and the profession of librarianship. The Rank Promotions Team does not make recommendations for salary increases, as responsibility for determining salary changes due to promotion sits with individual library directors. While evaluation for rank promotion is independent of the annual Performance Planning & Review process, satisfactory job performance is required for promotion.

The Rank Promotions Team makes its recommendation to the group of directors of the libraries participating in the promotion process: Director of Tisch Library, Director of Hirsh Library, Director of Ginn Library, and Manager of Webster Family Library.

2. Criteria for Rank Promotion

a. Librarianship

Academic librarians further the University goals and participate in educational and research programs at Tufts by understanding the research and learning needs of the Tufts community. They provide students with the knowledge and skills for them to grow as intellectually curious and critically involved members of society and support and partner with faculty in their research and teaching. Librarians collaborate with colleagues and peers within Tufts Libraries, the university, and at other institutions to provide high quality resources and services to users and assess and respond to users' changing needs by realigning services to better meet those needs.

Librarianship encompasses a broad and expanding set of roles and responsibilities in support of research and learning, enabling the discovery, creation, and sharing of knowledge and information, and contributing to the stewardship of the scholarly record. It is manifest in the creation of new tools, services, workflows, and pedagogies to further these aims.

To continually grow their skills and expertise, librarians also participate in professional development and continuing education activities.

b. Service

Service includes contributions in three areas:

- Library Service – active participation in Tufts libraries' committees, projects, or initiatives.
- University Service – engagement in Tufts-wide governance, committees, or initiatives that support the university's mission.
- Professional and Community Service – involvement in library, information, or education-related organizations or activities in the broader community. These activities must be connected to the mission and goals of Tufts University, its libraries, or the library profession.

c. Scholarship

Scholarship in librarianship expands the knowledge bases of library and information science. Relevant subject area research contributes to the knowledge base of University programs. The libraries

recognize the importance of research contributions as a means of advancement and a condition of advancement to the highest rank. Forms of scholarship listed below are neither exhaustive nor meant to be prescriptive. Librarians should also include other examples of relevant, impactful professional scholarship in their application.

Examples of scholarship include, but are not limited to:

- Publishing articles, books, and book chapters in the professional literature
- Presenting papers, talks, and posters at professional conferences
- Publishing research findings
- Contributing to professional networks, including blogs, discussion lists, and social media & networking sites
- Sharing code
- Contributing to regional & national-scale documentation and white papers
- Sharing educational and pedagogical materials, including lesson plans, course materials, and programming
- Contributing to digital scholarship projects, websites, information portals, or building digital tools
- Curating exhibits (physical or digital)
- Performing peer review
- Serving on an editorial board
- Participating in grant-related activity

3. Requirements by Rank

The Rank Promotions Team recognizes that activities and contributions in librarianship, service, and scholarship will vary by position, and opportunities to be active in a given area may change at times during a librarian's career. These requirements are meant to be broad and flexible in order to accommodate and recognize the experience of different positions and career paths, and to encompass a range of professional activities and contributions.

See following page

	Affiliate Librarian	Assistant Librarian	Associate Librarian	Senior Librarian
Eligibility	Less than 2 years professional experience	Minimum of 2 years as Affiliate at Tufts or 2 years of professional experience	Minimum of 3 years as Assistant at Tufts or at least 5 years of professional experience	Minimum of 6 years as Associate at Tufts or at least 11 years of professional experience
Librarianship	Solid performance in many core areas; attends relevant continuing education to build professional skills and develop expertise in job-related areas	Commendable performance in core areas, and competence or demonstrated promise in other areas of responsibility; and engages in continuing education activities inside and outside of university to build professional skills and develop expertise in job related areas; and engages in proactive contributions to the library and University that support the library mission.	Excellence in core areas; and evidence of initiative beyond basic assignments; and further develops expertise by engaging in continuing education activities inside and outside of university, may begin to organize continuing education activities for others; as well as consistent, significant contributions to the library and the University that support the library mission.	Mastery of core areas; as well as expertise or distinction in librarianship; and innovations with significant or long-lasting influence; and positive impact on university's mission; may design and organize continuing education activities for others. May mentor librarians and serve as a mentor for library school students; may teach information skills in a GSLIS; shares knowledge and expertise with Tufts
Service	Serves on library or university teams in a member capacity.	Serves on committees and teams, assuming increased contributions, responsibility, and productivity. Service may expand to membership on university-wide committees and teams. Involved in local or regional professional associations and organizations.	Serves on committees and teams, assuming leadership roles, may chair; service is both within the university and in non-university organizations. Active at national, regional, or local levels, serving on task forces, teams, programs, or committees with significant responsibilities.	Leadership role or chair of committees and teams; service is both within the university and in non-university organizations. Demonstrates substantial activity at national, regional, or local levels. May serve in an elected position, on task forces, teams, programs, or committees with significant responsibilities.
Scholarship	Keeps up with professional knowledge by following relevant, professional literature, discussion lists, blogs, and social media & networking sites.	Expands professional knowledge by contributing to relevant professional networks, including discussion lists, blogs, social media & networking sites, consortia (e.g. BLC) or Tufts publications.	Demonstrates scholarly activity by publishing or sharing scholarship, including articles, digital scholarship projects, code, teaching materials, etc. or presents at professional conferences.	Demonstrates significant knowledge and expertise in contributing scholarship to the profession. May present at professional organizations and associations, author journal articles, books, book chapters, or pedagogical materials, publish research findings, make significant contributions to an open source or digital scholarship project, serve as a peer reviewer or on an editorial board

4. Rank Promotion Procedure and Documentation

Rank promotion signifies recognition of a librarian's accomplishments and professional growth by their peers. Participation in the rank promotion system is voluntary and the librarian may decline or defer consideration for promotion.

The candidate for rank promotion should provide the team with evidence of activities and contributions to the profession which are appropriate to the rank sought. The material provided should indicate productivity and engagement in the field. The activities and contributions will be reviewed in terms of quality or excellence, and in terms of their impact. At the higher ranks, the Rank Promotions Team looks for evidence of sustained productivity and independent thought especially in regard to professional association activity and scholarship. Innovation and originality of contributions are valued in all categories of assessment.

a. Confidentiality, Fairness, Objectivity, and Non-Discrimination

The Rank Promotions Team has an obligation to maintain absolute fairness, impartiality, and open-mindedness in deliberations and recommendations. Peer reviews shall be based on an objective appraisal of submitted documentation. Documentation is expected to provide sufficient detail to make a fair and objective appraisal possible¹. Applications for rank promotion will be assessed in adherence to [Tufts Non-Discrimination policy](#). If issues of accuracy or sufficiency of documentation arise, the team may ask candidates for additional information.

b. Applying for Rank Promotion

Librarians who wish to be considered for rank promotion must submit the completed application to the Rank Promotions Team (libpromo@elist.tufts.edu) by October 15.

Required – The application must include (see example application in 4.c):

- Application for Rank Promotion
- Short narrative (not to exceed 750 words) highlighting activities and accomplishments which demonstrate a positive impact and contribution to the profession. Place emphasis on activities/accomplishments occurring since last appointment. Prior accomplishments may be included if significant.
- List of accomplishments/activities grouped by Librarianship, Service, and Scholarship. Emphasis should be on activities occurring since last appointment.
- Current job description (older job descriptions may be included if relevant)
- 1 letter of recommendation from your supervisor is required; additional professional letters of recommendation from someone who can speak to your strengths as a librarian (colleague, faculty member, etc.) are optional. Applicants for rank of Senior Librarian should include a minimum of 2 letters of recommendation, one of which is from your supervisor. Letters of recommendation can be sent directly to Rank Promotions Team at libpromo@elist.tufts.edu OR it may be inserted here.
- Resume/CV

Optional - The packet may also include other relevant documentation which addresses the quality and impact of the activities presented in the application materials.

1 Language borrowed with permission from Emory's Librarian Series Handbook.

c. Example Application for Rank Promotion

Application for Rank Promotion {coversheet}

Name:

Library:

Current Rank:

Position Title:

Supervisor:

Rank for Which Application is Made:

Date of Hire:

Rank at Hire:

Date of Last Appointment (if applicable):

Accomplishments {start on new page}

Summary of Accomplishments

- insert short narrative (not to exceed 750 words) highlighting activities and accomplishments which demonstrate a positive impact and contribution to the profession. Place emphasis on activities/accomplishments occurring since last appointment. Prior accomplishments may be included if significant.

Librarianship

- insert accomplishments that meet this criterion. Emphasis should be on activities occurring since last appointment.

Service to library, libraries, university, professional and/or scholarly associations

- insert accomplishments that meet this criterion. Emphasis should be on activities occurring since last appointment.

Scholarship

- insert accomplishments that meet this criterion. Emphasis should be on activities occurring since last appointment.

Resume/Curriculum Vitae

- insert resume or CV here

Job Description

- insert current job description (older job descriptions may be included if relevant)

Letter(s) of Recommendation

- 1 letter of recommendation from your supervisor is required; additional professional letters of recommendation from someone who can speak to your strengths as a librarian (colleague, faculty member, etc.) are optional. Applicants for rank of Senior Librarian should include a minimum of 2 letters of recommendation, one of which is from your supervisor. Letters of recommendation can be sent directly to Rank Promotions Team at libpromo@elist.tufts.edu OR it may be inserted here.

d. Appeals Process

Candidates denied rank promotion may appeal the decision if the candidate evidences reviewers did not adhere to the criteria covered in 4.a. Candidates should send explanatory materials in support of the appeal to the Rank Promotions Team (libpromo@elist.tufts.edu), and in cases of suspected discrimination, directly to the [Office of Equal Opportunity, as outlined in the](#) section 4.e timeline. The Rank Promotions Team, along with an HR representative, will review the additional documentation, and provide a recommendation to TLC for a decision. Unsuccessful candidates may also optionally request a meeting with TLC to discuss their case directly as well.

e. Timeline

Please note that the Provost's Office is not always able to adhere to the timeline

May 1 (TLC)

TLC appoints members of Rank Promotions Team and membership is announced to staff.

June 1 (TLC)

Eligibility notices are sent to qualified librarians by the library directors/Head of LTS, copying the relevant supervisors.

June (Rank Promotions Team)

At least one Information Session for rank promotion is held (Could align with Staff Development Day events). Rank Promotions Team will solicit successful examples from previous year's applicants who are willing to share their application during the information session.

September 15 (applicant)

Statement of interest from applicant is due to the Rank Promotions Team, copying supervisor.

October 15 (Applicant, Rank Promotions Team)

Completed applications are due to Rank Promotions team; Rank Promotions chair acknowledges receipt of application, copying supervisor and TLC chairs; Rank Promotions chair schedules meetings of Rank Promotions Team. Additionally, the Rank Promotions Team may be in contact with applicants for submission clarification purposes.

November 15 (Rank Promotions Team, TLC)

Promotions Team makes their recommendations and reasons for its decisions to the chairs of TLC.

December 15 (TLC, Rank Promotions Team)

The Directors of participating libraries review the recommendations; if they do not agree with the Rank Promotions Team's recommendations, they remand the case back to the Rank Promotions Team with specific reasons.

January 15 (Rank Promotions Team, TLC, Provost's Office)

Rank Promotions Team resubmits any remanded cases to the Directors. TLC chairs submit all favorable recommendations to the Provost's office at this time.

February 15 (Provost, TLC, Rank Promotions Team)

Provost reviews and signs off on positive recommendations, notifies successful candidates, informing TLC chairs, supervisor, and Rank Promotions chair; Unsuccessful candidates are notified by TLC chairs, with supervisor and Rank Promotions chair copied; TLC notification should include the reasons for non-promotion and remind unsuccessful candidates of the appeals process outlined in 4.d;.

March 1 (Rank Promotions Team)

Rank Promotions Team reviews Librarian's guide for updating and submits to TLC.

March 15 (Applicant, Rank Promotions Team)

Deadline for filing an appeal to Rank Promotions chair. If discrimination is suspected, the candidate should [contact the Office for Equal Opportunity](#) and notify the Rank Promotions chair.

April 15 (TLC)

Final revision of the Librarians Guide is approved by TLC and shared with librarians.

April 15 (Rank Promotions Team)

Promotions chair shares appeal decision recommendations with Directors.

May 1 (Applicant, TLC)

Deadline for candidate requesting a meeting with Directors for further discussion of the decision.

May 15 (TLC)

Directors decide on appeals; successful appeals are forwarded to Provost's office.

June 1 (Provost, TLC)

Provost notifies successful appeals applicants with copies to TLC chairs and Rank Promotions chair; TLC notifies unsuccessful applicants with copies to Rank Promotions chair