



Australian Library and
Information Association



Australian Library and Information Association Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners

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1. Introduction

Minimum Standard Guidelines

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners* provide guidance on the establishment, operation, and evaluation of library services to prisoners in Australia. The *Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia* (2012) state that:

"Prisoners should have access to a library, adequately stocked with both recreational and information resources, which is operated according to standard library practice. Prisoners should be encouraged to make full use of the library."

All people - including prisoners - have a fundamental right to read, learn and access information. Prison libraries play a pivotal role in supporting constructive educational, recreational and welfare programs.

These Guidelines are a practical resource for prison librarians, prison authorities and other institutions responsible for administering prison library facilities. The original *Australian Prison Libraries: Minimum Standard Guidelines* were released in 1990. The current version has been substantially revised and is partly based on the *Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners* (3rd ed.), developed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (Lehmann & Locke, 2005).

Scope

For the purpose of this document, the term prison encompasses a range of private and public institutions including jails, remand centres, detention centres (including periodic detention centres, immigration detention centres and youth detention centres), correctional centres, forensic hospitals and like organisations. These guidelines are not designed to cover the specific needs of asylum seekers held in Australian immigration detention centres.

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2. Existence and Purpose of Prison Libraries

- 2.1 The purpose of prison library services is to meet the recreational, educational, and other information needs of prisoners during their imprisonment and to provide information which will help them subsequently to re-establish themselves in the community.
- 2.2 Every prison or similar institution with an average prisoner population of 25 or more shall have its own library for the exclusive use of prisoners, similar to a local public library.
- 2.3 In the case of smaller institutions, prisoners shall be guaranteed an alternative that will equally serve their needs. Alternatives might include access to a local public library, scheduled visits by a mobile library, or periodic rotation of a collection of books and other materials supplied by a library.

3. Management

3.1 Prison libraries should manage their operation based on a set of policies. The prison library policies should serve as the foundation for the development of local library procedures, addressing such areas as:

- Daily operations and library hours
- Collection management
- Acquisitions selection criteria
- Cataloguing/processing
- Donations
- Circulation and access to materials
- Inventory and weeding
- Copyright compliance
- Collection of library data and statistics
- Staffing
- Budgeting
- Reader services
- Policy review
- Use of computers/information technology.

3.2 Provision of library services to prisoners should be the responsibility of the prison authority. A network based on a strong central library, owned and operated by the prison authority, is the recommended model.

3.3 To achieve consistency and make best use of the resources available, a qualified professional librarian should be designated as Library Services Manager for the jurisdiction. This position will be responsible for managing the provision of library services to all prisons within the jurisdiction, and should report directly to not less than the third level of seniority within the prison authority. Within each prison an individual staff member with Library qualifications should be delegated to liaise with, and carry out the instructions of, the Library Services Manager to ensure that the individual prison library is compliant with the jurisdiction's library policies and procedures. It is recommended that this delegate should have a library technician qualification as a minimum.

3.4 Within each prison, matters affecting the library (e.g. of security, discipline, timetabling etc.) should be the ultimate responsibility of the senior manager within the prison in collaboration with the Library Services Manager or their delegate. However in anything relating to the profession of librarianship, responsibility will lie with the Library Services Manager.

3.5 Library staff should encourage and maintain close co-operation with others involved in prisoner programs (e.g. education officers, recreation officers, legal officers or welfare officers).

4. Financial Resources

- 4.1 Financial provision for prison libraries should be made by the prison authority.
- 4.2 The Library Services Manager should be allocated a regular annual budget, adequate for the purpose.
- 4.3 The Library budget should include provision for staffing and other necessary library related expenses including:
 - Library staff salaries, which should be compliant with the *ALIA Salary Scales and Work Level Guidelines (ALIA 2015)*
 - Library staff training and development
 - Stationery
 - Equipment (e.g. shelving, trolleys, magazine racks, information technology, office equipment etc.)
 - Maintenance
 - Binding and photocopying
 - Collections and interlibrary loans
 - Overheads and capital expenditure are generally regarded as separate budget items.
- 4.4 The budget should include provision for the purchase of new collection resources for the prison libraries (e.g. books, magazines, newspapers, non print materials etc.) The resources budget should amount to not less than AUD\$30.00 (2015 dollars) multiplied by the number of available prisoner beds within the jurisdiction. This figure should increase each year according to the prevailing Consumer Price Index. The Library Services Manager should allocate the resources budget for each prison library, according to a formula that takes into account both the number of available beds and the specific needs of the prisoners within the prison.

5. Human Resources

- 5.1 The number of hours per week spent by staff in each library need to take into account the size of the library, opening hours, the special needs of the particular prison population and also the functions (such as cataloguing and interlibrary loans) carried out.
- 5.2 Staffing requirements should be systematically reviewed to ensure that recommended levels of service are maintained.
- 5.3 All library staff should abide by the *IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers* (IFLA 2012).
- 5.4 Professional staff and volunteers should comply with the appropriate screening and background checks of the relevant jurisdiction (e.g. working with children and vulnerable people checks).

Professional staff

- 5.5 Prison library services within each jurisdiction or private entity should be the responsibility of an experienced qualified librarian eligible for Associate professional membership of ALIA. This person will fulfill the role of Library Services Manager for the jurisdiction or entity.
- 5.6 Each library site should be supervised by a qualified librarian or library technician, full-time or part-time depending on the size of library. The role of the librarian or library technician will be - apart from supervision - to provide professional services such as readers advisory services, literacy support, collection development, cataloguing, copyright compliance, advanced bibliographical searching, and training in library skills.
- 5.7 The professional library staff member may be responsible for the supervision of libraries at more than one site. They may divide their time between sites over the course a working week.
- 5.8 As the Library Services Manager may be responsible for multiple sites, in their absence, each library should be supervised by a person trained in library procedures. This may be a prison officer or other member of staff (e.g. an education officer), a prisoner or some other person.
- 5.9 Professional library staff should be knowledgeable of the many and complex information needs of prisoners and should possess the necessary human and interpersonal skills to work effectively in a prison environment.
- 5.10 Professional library staff should extend services to all prisoners without discrimination and should respect the privacy and confidentiality of library users.
- 5.11 Professional library staff should be allocated time and financial support to attend professional development activities or continuing education programs and participate as members of their professional organization.

Non professional staff

5.12 Selection of prisoner library assistants should be by the Library Services Manager in consultation with the library staff member for the site and senior prison authorities. Factors taken into account will include aptitude, experience, reliability, personality and the length of time for which a candidate might be available to work in the library.

5.13 Officer or prisoner library assistants may be expected to carry out duties such as the following:

- Issue and discharge of loans
- Manage reserves and requests
- Basic reference work
- Maintaining simple records and statistics
- Filing
- Shelving and keeping general order
- End-processing and repair
- Publicity and displays.

5.14 Guidelines for training for non-professional library staff should be provided. These should outline responsibilities around library user privacy and confidentiality.

5.15 Non-professional library staff should be encouraged to undertake library qualifications (e.g. Certificate II or III in Library and Information Services).

Volunteers

5.16 Community volunteers should be supported to contribute to the prison library services (e.g. literacy programs).

6. Physical Facilities

- 6.1 Each library should be separately accommodated in an area set aside for this purpose.
- 6.2 The library should be centrally located in relation to the accommodation units and be positioned in such a way as to minimise the need for escort and supervision.
- 6.3 The library should be situated within the vicinity of the education centre, to best facilitate and support prisoner education. However, the opening hours of the library should not be limited by the closure of the education centre.
- 6.4 The library should be designed to make resources available to prisoners in an environment that will encourage use without prejudice to security.
- 6.5 The library should be a separate, lockable area. The design should include the following:
 - Functional lighting for reading, computer use and other library specific activities (including glare control at windows using venetian blinds or other approved method)
 - Acoustic treatment for walls, floor and ceiling
 - Climate control (heating, cooling, ventilation)
 - Load bearing capabilities sufficient for book stacks
 - Electrical and data outlets sufficient to accommodate the required technical and electronic equipment
 - Visual control of the entire library space
 - Lockable storage space
 - Electronic emergency communication system.
- 6.6 The library floor space should be large enough to accommodate user activities, staff functions and materials storage and display, including:
 - Reference desk/ station with counter and lockable storage cupboard/cabinet
 - Staff work area for technical processing, computer equipment, book carts and tables
 - Shelving for library materials that is suitable and secure (books, magazines, newspapers, non print materials)
 - Display area for books and promotional materials
 - Reading tables and chairs
 - Listening area (non print material)
 - Computers for prisoner use
 - Photocopier
 - Space for group activities.
- 6.7 Professional library staff should have access to:
 - A separate, secure office space that is not shared with prisoners
 - A telephone, allowing calls both internal and external to the prison
 - A computer with internet access
 - Lockable storage space to store these items when not in use
 - An emergency communication system or personal emergency communication device.

6.8 Provision should also be made for satellite library collections in other areas of the prison. These need to be on suitable secure shelving.

7. Library Collection

- 7.1 The library collection should include materials in both print and non print formats to meet the informational, educational, cultural, recreational, legal and rehabilitative needs of the prison population. Included should be a wide variety of current print, large print and non-print materials similar to those found in a public library/school library/TAFE library.
- 7.2 The number of materials that constitutes an adequate collection will vary according to the size and demographics (foreign languages, indigenous languages) of the prison population, the age range of the prison population, the custody level(s), whether a remand centre or detention centre, the number of satellite collections, the average length of prisoner incarceration, education programs available, the number of library visits per week and the extent of programs/activities offered in the library.

A general guideline is for a full-service library to have a *minimum* of the following materials (with multiple copies of those in heavy demand):

Books	10 titles per prisoner (in the relevant language and appropriate reading level)
Magazines	20 titles
Newspapers	2 daily English language titles; 1 title from each prisoner language group
Non print	2 titles per prisoner

- 7.3 Materials should be selected according to a collection management policy that is based on the demographic composition of the prison population.

The policy should address:

- The ethnic/cultural composition, ages, reading levels, educational backgrounds and languages of the prison population
- Materials required for preparing prisoners for re-entry into the community including information on community resources and support groups, job and housing opportunities, education and job training options
- A process for prisoner recommendation of titles and a process for handling requests for removing titles from the collection
- Procedures for regular withdrawal of outdated and damaged materials from the collection
- A process for handling donations
- A process for providing interlibrary loans and document delivery to complement the library collection. This would be subject to the lending library requirements and

conducted in accordance with the *Australian Interlibrary Resource Sharing (ILRS) Code* (ALIA 2013).

- A collection development relationship with National, State and Public libraries.

7.4 The library collection should be regularly updated with new purchased acquisitions and supplemented by donations. Acquisitions and donations should be selected by professional library staff and based on a selection criteria policy. Selection criteria should include:

- Suitability of subject matter
- Appeal to interests and needs of the prisoners
- Artistic, social, scientific or cultural significance
- Factual accuracy
- Suitability of format
- Relevance to existing library holdings
- Cost.

7.5 In general, no restrictions should apply to the selection of stock other than those accepted by public libraries, or restrictions dictated by the demands of maintaining good order and security in the facility. In accordance with the *ALIA Statement on Free Access to Information* (ALIA 2007), censorship of other kinds should not be exercised.

7.6 The library collection should include a range of materials (in English and other languages depending on the languages of the prison population), for example:

- General reference titles such as print dictionaries and encyclopaedias (as access to the internet is restricted)
- Fiction, including a broad range of genres: romance, mystery, crime, science fiction, fantasy, horror, poetry
- Non-fiction including a broad range of topics such as self-help, life skills, personal relationships, parenting, business skills, indigenous topics, history, biography, autobiography, art, music, film, hobbies, car maintenance, sport, car racing, photography and health and wellbeing.
- Movies and sport DVDs
- Comics and graphic novels (for beginning readers and advanced enthusiasts)
- Puzzles and games (crosswords, Sudoku)
- Textbooks and self-study materials (to support distance education and life-long learning)
- Literacy development materials such as English language readers (Cambridge, Macmillan) and English as a second language material
- Prison site specific subjects (agriculture, gardening, machine, engineering mechanics)
- Community information (brochures, directories, handbooks for pre-release planning)
- Legal reference material.

7.7 Resources in the library collection should be classified and catalogued in accordance with international standards. Appropriate identifiers should be implemented for library resources (e.g. call numbers).

Legal materials

- 7.8 The library collection should include up-to-date legal resources, such as legislation, legal reference books and legal self-help guides. For reasons of security and safety, access to some legal materials may need to be mediated (e.g. case law).
- 7.9 Library staff should check whether a prescribed list of prison library legal resources is available in their local jurisdiction. These resources should be included in the collection.
- 7.10 Library staff are encouraged to collaborate on collection development with local legal aid agencies, state libraries, university law libraries and the Australian Law Library Association.

8. Prisoner Services

- 8.1 All prisoners are to be given equal access to the library facilities and services. This includes prisoners in different classifications and on different management regimes (for example, segregation, special management area placement, protection limited association and protection non-association). The library facilities and services will be provided to the prisoners through a combination of the following (as appropriate):
- Making provision within the structured day for prisoners to access the library – this is the preferred model
 - Providing library resources and services to prisoners via a trolley delivery service - this is not to be used as the only method for providing library resources within the prison
 - Providing a small satellite collection within the prisoner's accommodation or recreation area, with the resources in these small collections being regularly replaced (at least monthly). This option is best used when there is insufficient space for a full size library or because the prisoners are not able to visit the main library (e.g. for security reasons).
- 8.2 Prison library services should be free in accordance with the *Statement on Free Access to Information (ALIA 2007)*. Under this statement, library and information services have a responsibility to ensure "information needs are met independently of location and an ability to pay". Charges may be levied for printing and photocopying on a cost basis.
- 8.3 Prisoners with unrestricted movement within the facility should be able to visit the library every week for periods sufficiently long to:
- Select and check out materials
 - Ask reference questions
 - Order interlibrary loan items
 - Read materials that do not circulate
 - Use computers
 - Participate in cultural activities organized by the library.
- 8.4 At all times during prisoner use, the library should be staffed by a person (professional or non-professional staff) trained in library procedures (see Section 5).
- 8.5 The prison library should comply with existing accessibility laws and codes that prescribe how library users with physical or cognitive disabilities are served. Such requirements may relate to:
- The physical access to the library building/space
 - Access to library materials and information in alternative
 - Non-print format
 - Adaptive equipment
 - Special outreach services and accommodations.

For specific recommendations, please refer to, *Access to libraries for persons with disabilities – Checklist* (Irvall & Nielsen, 2005).

Services and Programs

8.6 The extent and level of library services to the prisoners should be based on a demographic profile of the prison population and the library long-range plan (see Section 2.4). User services should include, but not be limited to:

- reference and information service through in-house materials and, where feasible, Internet resources – to meet patrons' needs for research and information
- readers advisory service – to recommend to patrons items of interest at appropriate reading levels
- regular library orientation and instruction in the use of the library and computers
- provision of special materials for patrons with disabilities (e.g. materials from the national library for the blind, disability support groups, etc.).

8.7 The library should organize and support a variety of activities and programs that promote reading, literacy, and cultural pursuits. Such programs provide the opportunity for creative use of time and improved quality of life. They also foster social skills and enhanced self-esteem. Prison authorities should be aware that prisoners who are engaged in productive pursuits are less likely to cause problems and disturbances. Examples of interesting and relevant library programs are:

- Author readings
- Book clubs and discussions
- Literary and "fact" contests that use library resources
- Creative writing workshops
- Music programs
- Art workshops and displays
- Literacy tutoring
- Spelling contests
- Holiday and cultural celebrations
- Job fairs.

Not all of these activities may be appropriate for all types of prisons. Library sponsored events should be compatible with the overall mission of the prison and should be approved by the administration.

8.8 Where prisoners are allowed to leave the facility for work or study, arrangements should be made for them to use the local National, State, Public, or Academic libraries (including Vocational Education and Training (VET) libraries).

8.9 Assistance in legal reference work should be available from professional library staff with legal research experience (if necessary, by contract or via the State Library).

8.10 Prison libraries should make their stock available for loan to prisoners as in public libraries. For items not held, a request service should operate. This may include use of the interlibrary loan

system, access to other library collections through participation in regional and state systems, networks, or other cooperative relationships. Any losses of items acquired by interlibrary loan will be paid for by the prisoner to whom the item was provided (See Section 7.3).

8.11 Custodial staff should be encouraged to make use of the prison library resources.

9. Digital Services

- 9.1 An ICT committee should be set up, comprising Librarian, Security, and Education staff, particularly where new prisons/buildings are being erected. The presence of a Professional Librarian on such a committee would ensure current and ongoing Library requirements are met, and new technologies evaluated from an information perspective, as they arise.
- 9.2 Professional library staff should have access to the Internet and to email, in order to answer information requests, search web based library catalogues, communicate with professional colleagues and vendors, take distance learning classes, and participate in interlibrary loans.
- 9.3 The prison library should make use of current information technology to the fullest extent possible without compromising prison security.
- 9.4 The library should implement an automated circulation and catalogue system which uses a bibliographic database in an international standardized format.
- 9.5 State wide prison libraries should use or consider moving to a standard automated circulation and catalogue system so prisoners find consistency across all libraries.
- 9.6 Prisoner access should be provided to an online catalogue to allow remote access and communication with the Library. The online catalogue should provide federated search of the library catalogue and available electronic resources.
- 9.7 A library website should be made available on the internet and/or local intranet to provide general information about the library services and link to the online catalogue. The website should meet international standards for accessible web design and disability access (e.g. W3C 2015).
- 9.8 Where prison network security permits, prisoners should be given supervised Internet access for education and treatment purposes, as well as pre-release planning. The Library should have computers for such prisoner access. The Librarian should be consulted in the setting up of approved sites to facilitate security.
- 9.9 Where no other digital access is possible, access for patrons to freestanding computers with multimedia software should be provided for informational, educational, and recreational pursuits.
- 9.10 Online and multimedia resources should be provided for prisoners with disabilities or other special needs.
- 9.11 Useful online resources should be made available for prisoners whose languages and culture are other than English.
- 9.12 Prisoners should have supervised and/or mediated access to digital legal resources, including legal databases.

10. Performance Assessment

- 10.1 A prison library advisory committee should be organised and meet on a regular basis. The committee should include representation from a range of prison departments and prisoner groups. It can also be useful to include representatives from other library services in the local area.
- 10.2 An annual evaluation of library services should be conducted with reference to the stated performance goals, policies and objectives of the prison library service. This evaluation should be made by the library services manager or another professional librarian of equivalent standing.
- 10.3 A comprehensive needs evaluation of the prison population should be conducted and regularly reviewed.
- 10.4 Regular user satisfaction surveys are recommended.
- 10.5 Library statistics should be collected and reported on a regular basis with reference to relevant national or international standards (e.g. the Australian Public Library Statistics collected by National and State Libraries Australasia).

Both quantitative and qualitative measures can assist in monitoring the effectiveness and demonstrating the value of library services. Statistics should be reliable and measurable, recording information about the collection, expenditure, staffing, services and usage.

Example statistics include:

- Number of loans (total and per capita)
- Number of library materials (total and per capita)
- Number of visits
- Median user satisfaction rating
- Number and value of donations received
- Estimated number of hours prisoners were occupied (i.e. average number of loans per prisoner multiplied by the average time taken to read a book).

Appendix I: Facility Assets Data Sheet

Adapted from the *Corrective Services NSW Enterprise Assets Room Data Sheet*

Planning

Description	Prisoner library
Area	70m ²
Relationships	Access from hallway circulation
Habitable Space	Habitable space
Acoustics	High activity – acoustic treatment to be provided
Supervision and privacy	Supervised by Officer Post

Fabric

<i>Area</i>	<i>Security rating</i>	<i>Material</i>
Wall	SW3A	Masonry
Floor	SF1A	Concrete
Ceiling	SC2B	Secure lightweight, with mesh or ply above

Finishes

<i>Area</i>	<i>Material</i>
Wall	Paint
Floor	Carpet
Ceiling	Paint
Skirting	Vinyl

Openings

<i>Area</i>	<i>Security rating</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Door Set	D4C	Solid core door with vision panel double leaf door required
Direction of Swing		Outwards
Hardware	L3A	Commercial lock; hold open device
Hinges		Heavy duty
Keying		
Signage		Library
Windows		Aluminium frame with 6.3mm laminated glass
Operation		Openable to walkway; fixed on external perimeter walls
Protection		Security screen to windows on external perimeter

Electrical and Mechanical Services

<i>Service</i>	<i>Specifications</i>
Power	Normal 240v (double) x 6 – general use
Lighting	200 lux general
Ventilation	A/C
Heating	A/C
Cooling	A/C
Fire protection	Early smoke detection

Security and Communications

<i>Service</i>	<i>Specifications</i>
Data	Triple outlets x 3 for prisoner use
PA, Intercom	Yes

Furniture (Suggested)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Specifications</i>
Waste paper basket	
Study carrels	
Library trolley	
Mobile poster rack	
Library shelving - low	900 x 300 x 1000h
Library shelving - high	900 x 300 x 1500h
Magazine rack	1800 x 600 x 1200h
Table	1800 x 750 x 710h
Polypropylene vinyl upholstered chairs	
Computer terminal	Prisoner use
Photocopier	

Glossary

<i>custodial staff</i>	Staff members of a prison or similar organisation, such as prison officers.
<i>detainee</i>	See 'prisoner'.
<i>ICT</i>	Information and Communications Technology.
<i>inmate</i>	See 'prisoner'.
<i>jurisdiction</i>	The area over which legal authority extends.
<i>library staff</i>	Library staff members may include professional staff (e.g. librarians), prisoner library assistants, other prison staff members or other volunteers working in a library.
<i>materials</i>	The library collection can include a range of different materials, including physical and electronic resources, print and non-print items.
<i>non print</i>	Library resources other than printed materials. For example, this includes video or audio resources and ebooks.
<i>non-professional staff</i>	Prisoners who work in the prison library, for example as prisoner library assistants.
<i>prison</i>	For the purpose of this document, prisons may include jails, remand centres, detention centres (including periodic detention centres, youth detention centres and immigration detention centres), correctional centres, forensic hospitals or like organisations. Prisons may be private entities or government institutions.
<i>prison authority</i>	The local or national government department or private entity that oversees prison administration.
<i>prisoner</i>	Person held at a prison, remand centre, detention centre or other similar facility. Note that some entities use other terms, for example detainee or inmate.
<i>professional staff</i>	For the purposes of this document, a professional staff member is a trained librarian working in a prison library. It does not cover prisoners who work in the library (See 'non-professional staff').
<i>satellite collection</i>	A stand-alone collection of library materials. A satellite collection is smaller than the main library and usually located in a restricted area such as an accommodation unit.
<i>segregation</i>	Physical separation of prisoners for example for security reasons.

<i>TAFE</i>	Australian provider of vocational education and training.
<i>user</i>	Any patron of the prison library. This can include prisoners and prison staff.

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