MANAGEMENT—JEWISH

Job Descriptions for a Library Servicing a Synagogue and Day School

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Introduction

The job of a Judaica librarian appears to be indefinable because it is difficult to break down the myriad of tasks into their component parts. Frequently, synagogue/school librarians either do everything themselves or pitch-in wherever necessary, erasing the demarcation between professional and nonprofessional library jobs.

It is important to describe in writing the many tasks involved in supplying library services to your institution. Job descriptions serve as: (a) a clear definition of the duties and responsibilities of employees or volunteers (Evans, 1976, p. 188), and (b) an evaluation tool for both the employee/volunteer and the administrator. Job descriptions also force heads of libraries to analyze what they and their assistants do, and serve to highlight problem areas or deficiencies in service, allowing for their resolution.

Another very important use for job descriptions is to communicate to administrators, principals, and lay leaders exactly what is involved in providing quality library services. These people, who have had no library work experience, usually have little understanding of library operations and responsibilities, and need enlightenment. Even if they do not read the entire document, it makes an impact by sheer detail and bulk, and gives them the feeling that the head of their library knows what to do and is well-organized. This can only help influence them positively when they need to make decisions affecting the library, such as personnel, expansion, furnishings, and budget.

The following is excerpted from a Job Description analysis made to justify a staff budgetary increase at Stephen S. Wise Temple Library, which employs the equivalent of eight full-time personnel. Job qualifications and compensations, which are frequently part of job descriptions, are not included here, but are enumerated in a separate document at the time when personnel changes need to be made.

Your library's job description may be different and simpler, but perhaps this can serve as a guide to make the task of writing a job description for your library more approachable.

The following set of Library Job Descriptions is divided into two main sections: (I) Personnel, and (II) Operations and Services. Section I is arranged by job title and notes Operations/Services performed by each staff member. Section II is arranged alphabetically by the name of the Operation/Service, with an indication of the responsible staff person in parentheses. Cross-references between Sections I and II are provided by the Personnel title or the Operation/Service name, the initial word of which is capitalized.

I. Personnel

A. Library Professionals and Non-Professionals are full-time (FTE) and part-time (PTE) employees who jointly keep the library open 55+ hours weekly and provide quality library services to all Temple departments, schools and members. Volunteers assist according to their abilities and schedules.

B. Professionals: "Professionals" is a collective term for Library Director, Adult Education Librarian, School Librarians, Judaica Specialist, and Audio-Visual Specialist. Library professionals participate in the decision-making process and represent their patrons and collections in most of the Operations and Services described in Section II.

1. Library Director (FTE) — Plans and designs a flexible library program suited to changing Temple needs. Develops and supervises all library Operations and Services, supervises Personnel, and provides professional leadership to the entire staff — setting the tone for high-quality library services. Serves as library administrator and head librarian to the entire Temple, just as the other librarians serve their specific schools/departments. Establishes an interactive relationship with all Temple departments and schools; gives library support to Temple affiliate groups when needed; and works cooperatively with Temple and school library committees. Arranges for computer implementation wherever cost-effective. Prepares an annual budget. Reports directly to Senior Rabbi, Educational Director, Temple Executive Director, and Temple Board of Trustees, as necessary.

2. Adult Education Librarian (FTE) — Serves as administrator and librarian of Adult Education Services, and performs whatever other tasks are needed in order to serve patrons during evening hours.

3. School Librarians (FTE and PTE)

a. Under Library Director's guidance, each School Librarian is supervisor and administrator of his/her school's library program and is responsible for providing appropriate School Services and tailoring and implementing Operations and Services to serve his/her unique school needs. Also, School Librarians serve as resource specialists, work with curriculum development, provide library use instruction and library lessons, and serve student needs, described as follows:

(1) As School Library Supervisor and Administrator: Designs and manages his/her own school library media program to supplement, complement and enrich school
goals and curricula, and works cooperatively with principal, curriculum specialists, and faculty to promote library use. Interprets the library goals and policies to faculty and students and develops a climate to encourage students and teachers to make optimal use of the library. Coordinates the selection, updating, organization and distribution of materials and participates in related school projects. Confers regularly with school principal and Library Director, and attends faculty meetings and parent meetings, as requested. Performs related activities, e.g., working with parent donors and presenting newly-donated birthday books to honor students, celebrating "books" through Special Events and Jewish Book Month activities.

(2) As Resource Specialist for the School Faculty: Responds to faculty needs for specialized educational resources, including teaching aides and guides, AV materials, etc.; makes recommendations and locates materials in library's Teacher Resource Center, general collection, or other library-resource centers. Plans and implements Information and Bibliographic Services. Selects and reviews new materials for school appropriateness.

(3) In Curriculum Development: Assists school curriculum specialists and teachers by suggesting appropriate and timely library materials to complement and enrich school curricula and facilitate the learning process; researches media selection tools for materials needed by faculty; supervises development of materials to meet specialized or unique needs of learners. For each grade level, develops a library curriculum to supplement and enrich school curricula, i.e.: Library Orientation and use, library skills, research techniques, and special resources; and a literature component that emphasizes reading as a recreational as well as an educational activity.

(4) In the area of Library Use Instruction and Library Lessons: Prepares library lessons geared to school and library curricula and presents them during regularly-scheduled class library visits. When possible, relates lessons to the various subject disciplines and develops subject-oriented activities. Instructs students on how to use the library efficiently and effectively, e.g., card catalog, standard reference works, specialized Judaica resources, research techniques, and library skills. Plans field trips to public libraries, etc., when appropriate.

(5) As for serving student needs: Facilitates student use of Temple library; prepares students for current and future use of public, private, and college library/resource centers; and makes the library experience so positive that, as adults, they will seek Jewish information and enjoy Jewish books as a natural way of life. Places heavy emphasis on Reader's Advisory Services; and treats students as individuals and helps them develop into intelligent, curious, and caring human beings through library materials geared to their personal interests and needs.

b. Librarians and Library-Teachers are assigned to one or more of the following Temple schools: Nursery School, Day School (Elementary and Middle), Hebrew School (two days/week), Religious School (Sundays), and Confirmation Department. (Librarian is a library professional (M.L.S.); Library-teachers are teachers who have been trained to work with classes in the library.)

(1) Nursery School: Library-Teacher of Pre-Kindergarten (PTE)—Serves the Nursery School as described above. Meets with the Pre-K children at regularly-scheduled times to set the stage for positive Jewish library experiences on which to build for the future; and confers with Elementary School Librarian so that the Nursery School library program bridges to the Elementary School library program.

(2) Day School: Elementary School Librarian (PTE)—Serves Elementary School as described above. Meets with students in grades K-5 regularly and motivates teachers to incorporate research techniques into classroom assignments and lessons; encourages students to read for pleasure and personal problem-solving. Supervises Library-Teachers who may be employed to work directly with Elementary School classes in order to alleviate a heavy library class load. Confers with Middle School Librarian to coordinate Elementary and Middle School library programs and plan for library continuity.

(3) Day School: Middle School Librarian (PTE)—Serves Middle School as described above. Meets with students in grades 6-9 on a regular basis or as needed, and functions similarly to the Elementary School Librarian.

(4) Hebrew School and Confirmation Department Librarian-Teacher (PTE)—Serves both schools (which meet at the same time) as described above. Meets with each Hebrew School class several times a year and with Confirmation Department classes at instructors' requests. Regarding library lessons: helps students translate general library skills into those applicable to specialized Judaica resources; introduces students to the wide variety of Jewish resources and materials; incorporates a multimedia approach when appropriate; and encourages students to read Jewish books for pleasure.

(5) Religious School (Sunday) Librarian (PTE)—Serves Religious School as described above; and functions similarly to the Hebrew School Librarian.

4. Judaica Specialist (PTE)—Works with the Judaica and Hebraica collections and assists Library Director in serving as Judaica Resource and Information Specialist to faculty and students of the Temple schools and departments, rabbis and Temple staff, Temple affiliates, and Temple members (adults and children). Works closely with other Library Professionals and implements the Judaic component of Library Operations and Services. [This position was recently added to provide stronger Judaica information services. The person hired to fill it is also the Administrative Assistant and Hebrew School/Confirmation Department Library Teacher, as the three part-time jobs were combined to create one full-time position.]
Library Aides in cataloging and processing books and materials. Department Head and Assistants must be skilled typists; Library Aides perform non-typing tasks. Volunteers serve as assistants or aides depending upon their skills and the library's work priorities at that time.

4. Library Aides (PTE)—Assist Administrative Assistant, Circulation Department Head, Technical Services Department Head, and Library Professionals as needed. Are responsible for Room Services and Shelving Services at all times; and perform non-typing clerical tasks in the following Operations and Services, as needed: Administration, AV Services, Circulation Services, Displays and Exhibits, Periodical Control and Services, Repair and Bindery Services, Reserve Materials Services, School Services, Technical Services, and Vertical File Services.

II. Operations and Services
A. All Library Operations and Services have been standardized by agreement among the Library Professionals, with few exceptions. In this way, non-professionals learn uniform procedures and work more efficiently and effectively to serve the entire library collection and its patrons, without concern for personal or school/department variables.

B. Operations and Services have been divided into their component parts to allow flexibility when assigning tasks in a library where staff is small, time is limited, and personnel schedules vary. (‘Standard’ library operations and services in larger libraries combine more than one, e.g., the standard “Acquisitions and Selections” combines “Acquisitions” (Par. 1) with “Selection of Materials” (Par. 32).)

C. Listed below are the Library Operations and Services, along with the titles of Personnel member(s) who retain full responsibility and report directly to Library Director.

1. Acquisitions (Administrative Assistant): Order and receive materials as Selected by Professionals; prepare purchase orders and follow Temple comptroller’s rules and procedures; know sources (jobbers, wholesalers, distributors, publishers and producers) and discounts; return items for credit; follow-up on back orders; re-order ‘out-of-stock’ materials from other sources; and maintain request files for prompt selective distribution of new materials; utilize computer data management and spreadsheet programs to maintain control and to prepare acquisitions notices for distribution to rabbis and department heads.

2. Administration (Administrative Assistant): Assist Library Director in managing the library and its various Operations and Services, and coordinate closely with Professionals, schools and departments. Maintain bookkeeping records and Budget Control; serve as liaison to other Temple departments, e.g., schools, administration, payroll, maintenance; anticipate and solve daily problems and make effective, timely and well-informed decisions. Prepare weekly library class schedules, distribute mail, answer phones, delegate clerical tasks (e.g., photocopying, collating, stapling, running errands, delivering rush materials) and generally manage the library as an efficient business office. Utilize computer business programs as necessary.

3. Adult Education Services (Adult Education Librarian): Provide library services to Temple adult education instructors and students and to havurot, e.g., promote library to adult-ed classes, hold occasional classes in library and display resources, give book talks appropriate to class topic, prepare booklists, find book reviews for instructors, prepare discussion packets for havurot. Serve school parents who desire Judaica materials for self-education or to enrich their Jewish home experiences.

4. Audio-Visual Services (Audio-Visual Specialist): Design, coordinate, and implement a Temple AV program and work closely with Temple departments and schools and with Library Professionals. Maintain AV equipment inventory, supervise AV Circulation Control, AV Technical Services, and Organization of AV collection for efficient storage and quick retrieval. Make minor equipment repairs or send out for repair. Evaluate and select new AV equipment; preview new AV materials and schedule showings; and help professionals evaluate and select new AV materials. Instruct users on operation and use of AV equipment; set up library viewing centers; recommend creative use of AV materials and equipment; disseminate current copyright information about off-the-air videotaping rights; and assist library staff in AV matters as needed. Create new AV materials to supplement school curricula, as requested; record in-house events via still camera or video camera; produce slide shows or videotapes of Temple or school events for publicity, information or archives. Maintain an AV catalog file and a professional AV library and be familiar with contents of other AV resource centers locally and nationally. Utilize the computer for AV administration as needed.

5. Bibliography, Book List and Pathfinder Services (Professionals): Prepare topical bibliographies, book lists and pathfinders when needed, utilizing computer programs to save time and maintain up-to-date documents.

6. Bookkeeping and Budget Control (Administrative Assistant): Prepare and maintain bookkeeping records of income, Acquisitions, Supplies, salaries, and other disbursements within the various library accounts; periodically compare library records with comptroller’s records; and carefully manage accounts to stay within budget or specified donations. Utilize computer spreadsheet program for budget control.

7. Circulation Services (Circulation Department Head): Circulate all materials and equipment (including AV) according to library rules and procedures; maintain circulation files; follow through with overdue notices and statements as needed; impose appropriate fines and follow through with collection; serve non-members by collecting a refundable deposit; and contact borrowers as needed to maintain circulation control. Train library staff in basic circulation procedures. Utilize computer data management and word processing programs for overdue procedures.

8. Collection Development and Evaluation (Professionals): Develop the collection (materials and equipment) based on the collection development policy within the Library's Media Selection Policy; continually re-evaluate Temple, school and department needs and revise the collection policy accordingly.

9. Computer Implementation (Audio-Visual Specialist): Train the library staff on computer utilization and help design templates for various procedures and operations—to maintain efficiency, to save time on repetitive tasks and/or to provide a library patron service.

10. Consultation Services (Professionals): Provide consultation services to Temple staff, faculty, students or members, and recommend appropriate or creative use of library materials. Consult with library professionals outside the Temple when needed, and reciprocate accordingly.

11. Current Awareness Services (Professionals and Administrative Assistant): Inform rabbis, department heads, and school administrators and faculty, via acquisition notices prepared by the Administrative Assistant or special notes prepared by the Professionals, of the following: new library materials, library materials relating to current topics, articles of interest in periodicals and professional journals, published or non-published relevant materials available elsewhere, etc. Maintain notebooks and files for easy access to these lists and items of interest.

12. Displays and Exhibits (Administrative Assistant): Based upon themes and/or materials suggested by Professionals,
maintain changing displays of books and other materials within the library and in its showcases—in order to promote library use; coordinate displays with local and world events; change bulletin board displays regularly. Prepare exhibits for the annual Jewish Book Month Shabbat Open House and for other Temple or school events, when desirable.

13. Donations and Acknowledgments (Library Director and Administrative Assistant): Encourage library donations by individual donors and through Committee Fundraising events. Work cooperatively with the Temple's tribute chairpeople and with individual donors and B'nai Mitzvot parents to find the appropriate gift library books or AV materials. Prepare donor plates, send library acknowledgments, and notify Temple Amarim (bulletin) editor about significant donations. Promote library donations at adult classes, through articles in Amarim, at parent and faculty meetings, through student "Library Birthday Book Program," and at other appropriate events.

14. Facilities and Office Equipment Management (Library Director): Design facilities for function and use; re-evaluate annually and confer with Temple Executive Director as needs and services change; and authorize purchase of new furniture, furnishings and office equipment accordingly.

15. Fundraising Coordination (Administrative Assistant): Coordinate the library fundraising events which are organized and implemented by the various Temple and school library committees and their volunteers. If library staff or facilities are involved, define areas of responsibility and supervise library staff as needed.

16. Information Services (Professionals): Train non-professional library staff in use of card catalog, information files, and simple information procedures. Respond to information requests at the following levels of service: rabbis and department heads—do research for them and provide actual information when time permits; school faculty, older students and Temple members—guide them in their research, utilizing card catalog and reference collection; younger students—find appropriate materials and guide card catalog use; ready-reference questions—answer questions if research is relatively quick, or guide requestor if search appears to be more difficult; telephone requests—answer simple requests over the phone or invite patrons to do on-premises research for lengthy requests. For difficult questions, contact other Jewish synagogue, university, or resource center libraries, or day school libraries, public libraries, Metropolitan Cooperative Library System, Southern California Answering Network, etc. Arrange interlibrary loan reciprocal agreements. Maintain an information and referral file and refer patrons to other libraries and resource centers when necessary. Utilize computer data management program to create booklists and special indexes for illustrations, student periodical articles, short stories, etc.

17. In-Service Faculty Training (Professionals): Provide faculty in-service training when desirable. Prepare presentations on appropriate topics, e.g., research techniques, library use, audio-visual use, book-talk techniques, storytelling/story reading techniques, "what's new in the library?" preview of new AV materials, effective utilization of specialized materials, and review of resources on a Judaic topic.

18. Inventory Control (Professionals): Re-evaluate the collection as an on-going task and maintain control of the inventory by weeding the collection, binding materials, replacing materials, etc. To weed, study Library's Media Selection Policy, and consult with department heads, faculty, and other Library Professionals to determine current and perceived future needs of users.

19. Library Committees' Liaison (Administrative Assistant): Serve as liaison with Temple and school library committees. Work with committees, as needed, to assist them in planning, organizing and running the Fundraising activities, recruiting Volunteers to assist with library clerical and typing tasks, and designing Publicity to promote greater adult library use.

20. Library Orientation Services (Professionals): Provide orientation to library, its organization, resources and services. Gear presentations to needs of individual or specific groups, e.g., school students, faculty, b'nei urot, adult education classes, or visitors.

21. Organization of Library (Professionals): Supervise the organization of the collection and ensure continued accessibility and efficient retrieval by patrons (individuals and groups).

22. Parent Education Services (Professionals): Provide services to parents, as requested by the Parenting Department and the school Parent Education programs. Build a parenting collection on various levels to include child development, family structure, crisis situations, self-help materials, bibliographies and booklists; and give parent library workshops, as time permits.

23. Periodical Control and Services (Circulation Department Head): Record receipt and maintain inventory and control of all periodicals (acquired by subscription or free); routinely circulate to rabbis, department heads, and Library Professionals as requested; display current issues; store back issues, and withdraw as directed. Automatically circulate current catalogs to Library Professionals and arrange for storage of current issues.

24. Personnel Management (Library Director): Train and supervise library personnel; re-assign tasks as needed; utilize personnel management methods and techniques; help staff manage time efficiently; evaluate staff annually according to Temple administration policy; conduct regularly-scheduled library staff meetings; maintain confidential personnel records.

25. Public Relations (Professionals): Promote good public relations with the library profession, the Temple and the surrounding community. Within the profession, participate in professional organizations (local, regional and national), lead or attend workshops and seminars, write media reviews and articles, and share library resources and services through interlibrary loans, reciprocal services, etc. Within the Temple, write articles and attend meetings and events as deemed desirable. Within the community, work cooperatively with other libraries/resource centers and other institutions, host professional meetings, etc., as time permits.

26. Publicity (Administrative Assistant): Publicize library collection and services in appropriate publications, particularly Temple Amarim during annual Jewish Book Month observance, focusing on adult patrons.

27. Reader's Advisory Services (Professionals): Advise children, young adults and adult readers by helping them find appropriate reading materials insofar as subject, scope, depth, vocabulary and interest levels. Keep current on selection criteria, library contents, newly-published materials and newly-acquired library materials; and preview AV materials appropriate to their respective audiences.

28. Repair and Bindery Services (Administrative Assistant): Repair damaged materials according to standard library repair procedures or send badly damaged important materials for rebinding or repair. Arrange for binding of periodicals and other materials when desirable.

29. Reserve Materials Services (Circulation Department Head): Reserve materials and equipment for users when requested; maintain reserve files to flag materials in circulation; hold materials on reserve and contact users; pull and reserve materials for class use at teacher's request. Notify Technical Services Department Head when uncataloged materials are on reserve.

30. Room Services (Administrative Assistant): Maintain an attractive, neat library.
environment at all times.

31. School Services (Professionals): School Librarians, Judaica Specialist and AV Specialist provide their individual areas of expertise to the schools as described in Section I; work closely with each other to coordinate efforts wherever possible; and monitor library Operations and Services to their respective schools. Library Director supervises School Librarians and AV and Judaica Specialists to ensure that they are providing the required high-quality library services to each school; and meets with Educational Director and School Principals from time to time to evaluate present and future library-school services.

32. Selection of Materials (Professionals): Select appropriate materials based upon quality selection criteria for synagogues/schools and annual needs assessments, as specified in the Library's Media Selection Policy—seeking input from rabbis, department heads, faculty and others who are knowledgeable about the Temple's actual/potential users and use. Keep up-to-date with newly published materials through current professional review journals and other sources as well as standard library selection tools.

33. Selective Dissemination of Information (Professionals): Maintain information files on topics of interest to the rabbis, department heads, faculty members, etc., and selectively disseminate information to them about new materials and other items of special interest. Utilize computer data management program for easy cross-referencing and updates.

34. Shelving Services (Circulation Department Head): Supervise Library Aides as they perform the following procedures: Check books and materials for correct bookcards before reshelving; reshelve all materials in their proper places; "read" shelves on a regular basis to be certain that materials pulled by users were reshelved properly; and keep shelves neat and orderly.

35. Special Events (Administrative Assistant): Schedule speakers (e.g., authors, illustrators), library field trips and special events, as requested by Library Professionals; help with plans and programs; handle all details as well as follow-up, including writing and filing staff evaluations and suggestions.

36. Staff Development (Professionals): Keep current by reading professional journals, attending meetings and conferences, and sharing new knowledge with other Library Professionals. Instruct Library Non-Professionals on improved library procedures. Continually upgrade and improve library staffs understanding and knowledge of Judaic topics and Jewish resources.

37. Supplies Management (Administrative Assistant): Maintain a supplies inventory for smooth flow of operations; order new supplies before current supply is exhausted; and arrange storage in an organized manner for easy access by all library personnel.

38. Technical Services (Professionals and Technical Services Department Head): Catalog and process all books and AV materials as soon as possible after arrival, giving priority to those items on Reserve. Responsibilities are as follows: Library Director, School Librarians, and Judaica Specialist classify and subject catalog the specific materials agreed upon among them; Assistants do descriptive cataloging and type catalog cards according to library's "Cataloging Manual," prepared cooperatively by Librarians and AV Specialist. Library Aides process the materials (glue in pockets, stamp ownership, and laminate or cover book jackets) in accordance with the Manual. Technical Services Department Head is familiar with professional cataloging and filing resources; handles more complex descriptive cataloging; trains and supervises Assistants under Librarians' guidance; double-checks all typing and processing; and files catalog cards. Librarians double-check card catalog filing and revise as needed. Cataloging and filing rules follow professional library standards agreed upon among Librarians.

39. Vertical File Services (Professionals and Library Aides): Professionals select the pamphlets and ephemeral materials for the Vertical Files, and assign appropriate subject headings based on the library's Vertical File Subject Authority List. Library Aides process and file the materials.

40. Volunteers Management (Administrative Assistant): Contact Library Personnel for timely tasks geared to volunteers' abilities and time schedules; arrange work schedules; organize tasks according to library priorities; coordinate training and supervision by appropriate library personnel. Encourage volunteers' continued participation in library development.

Note

* Technical Services professional reference tools include:


References

These Job Descriptions were adapted from various sources, including:


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