



# **The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture**

## **Librarianship**

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Librarianship, often known as library and information science, is an old profession whose procedures have been significantly changed by digital technologies. Subject-specific collections, supported by specialist staff, provide crucial materials that include print, audiovisual, and electronic resources. These holdings are vital to the study of musicology and ethnomusicology, offering not just *raw materials* in the form of transcriptions, recordings, and images but also commentary, analysis, bibliography, and expert support in accessing hard-to-find or little-known documentation. Subject specialist staff are often dual qualified in librarianship and their own specialism.

Many of the core principles of librarianship are defined by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). National associations endorse librarianship qualifications and provide a focus for professional development, while numerous other national and international specialist associations support music librarians and other workers, in particular collections and archives. This entry first discusses IFLA and other national and international library organizations. It then looks at ethnomusicology in libraries, types of libraries, and library processes and protocols. Finally, it discusses librarianship qualifications and librarianship as a career.

## Library Organizations

Overarching all the special interest organizations are the national library associations, linked by common membership in IFLA. Founded in 1927, IFLA publishes a *Code of Ethics for Librarians and Other Information Workers*, most recently revised in 2012. This codifies core principles to inform professional practice, such as the freedom of information; equal rights to information and its ethical use; the balance between data protection and public transparency; open access to information and a respect for intellectual property; neutrality; and the maintenance of high professional standards.

The International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML) is the worldwide association for specialist music librarians. IAML is a member of IFLA and also has links with a number of other professional library and information organizations. There are many national branches of IAML; in the United States, there were for many years two coexisting associations, IAML-USA, and the Music Library Association (MLA), with the two combining in 2011. MLA is now known as the U.S. branch of IAML. Some countries come together as a single branch, such as the United Kingdom and Ireland branch of IAML. Where there is no national branch, music librarians can apply to join a neighboring branch. IAML organizes annual international conferences, and national branches will often also have their own annual gatherings and other professional development events. There is an international music librarianship journal, *Fontes Artis Musicae*, and various national journals and newsletters.

Besides librarianship qualifications, music librarians often hold music degrees or practical performance qualifications, although other subjects, such as anthropology, folklore, Celtic, or archival studies, may also be relevant.

## Ethnomusicology in Libraries

The most significant collections of ethnomusicological material are found at universities strong in this discipline, and in other institutions with a similar remit. In the United Kingdom, the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies has a worldwide reputation, as does the University of Edinburgh's Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies (formerly the School of Scottish Studies). The Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University are the largest university ethnographic sound archives in the United States, with the Archive of World Music at Harvard University and University of California, Los Angeles Ethnomusicology Archive also offering notable holdings.

Such collections may include extensive holdings of recorded sound and still and moving images, supported by oral histories and commentaries in various recorded formats. Preservation of such materials requires specialist care; digital copies are often essential to balance the requirements of curating fragile early formats and facilitating access. Archives develop digital preservation policies to future-proof their holdings in line with best current practice. A 2013 article by Sally Treloyn and Andrea Emberly in *Musicology Australia* highlights the concerns of scholars about library preservation of ethnomusicological resources in Australia; issues of access and sustainability are pertinent to such collections worldwide.

The Society for Ethnomusicology is a U.S.-based organization, although it has connections with ancillary organizations (independent bodies focusing on Chinese, Korean, and Asian music) and liaisons with other organizations worldwide through delegate members who are involved with these other groups. The Society's website posts a summary of archives, libraries, and museums with significant ethnomusicological holdings, although this list focuses on North America. While the Archive of Māori & Pacific Music in New Zealand is listed, there is no listing for Australian or Asian musics other than U.S. collections embracing these areas. The listing also omits significant national holdings dedicated to indigenous national musics in Britain such as British Library Sounds; the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at the English Folk Dance and Song Society in London (which includes folklorist Cecil Sharp's personal library amongst its holdings); and the School of Scottish Studies Archive at the University of Edinburgh's Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, which collaborates in the *Tobar an Dualchais* digital archive.

## Types of Libraries

Libraries are broadly categorized as public, academic, school, national, or special libraries. National networks enable lending among multiple libraries, and further or higher education libraries may group together for cooperative purchasing, staff-training schemes, or union catalogs facilitating access to their combined resources.

Local authority-funded public or municipal libraries have responsibilities to their communities; specialist services—such as music or audiovisual provision—are generally based in larger collections. Public libraries have traditionally had both lending and reference collections, although this is not always the case. There are also examples of dual-purpose college and public libraries, with school libraries also functioning as community libraries and hospital libraries serving both patients and practitioners, and so on.

National libraries are very large reference collections, often holding rare and unique items, and in some countries functioning as legal deposit libraries, allowing fulfillment of government requirements that books and periodicals published in these countries must be deposited in a repository. Special libraries can be collections for a professional association, a legal firm, a historical society, or indeed any organization or individual requiring books and/or information to be professionally managed.

Libraries are *open access* or *closed access* depending on whether readers have access to the open shelves or are required to request items to be fetched for them from closed storage areas. Rare materials are generally restricted to use within the library and may well be stored in secure, nonpublic areas for retrieval on demand.

## Processes and Protocols

While the processes of acquisition, cataloguing, classification, curation, and exploitation of information are governed in many instances by long-standing general principles, automation has greatly changed their implementation. Cataloguing can be done using shared, downloadable bibliographical (MARC, or machine-readable cataloguing) records; and cataloguing codes take account of new ways of codifying metadata, with the

Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules now being superseded by Functional Requirements of Bibliographical Records and Resource Description and Access. Classification of physical items often follows standardized schemes such as the Dewey Decimal System or Library of Congress schedules, but specialist libraries sometimes devise schemes to suit their collections.

The traditional dependence on physical resources such as books, recordings, sheet music, or maps has now also embraced electronic technology, whether e-books, e-journals, subscriptions to online databases, or streamed sound provision. This has greatly improved accessibility, offering today's scholars many new and innovative ways of interrogating collections and data.

## Librarianship Qualifications

The professions of librarianship and information science largely require graduate or postgraduate library or information science qualifications. Many librarians hold a first or even second degree in another subject, before taking a postgraduate qualification in library or information science, and postgraduate librarianship diplomas have generally been replaced by master's level degrees. Qualifications can sometimes be obtained through distance-learning programs, and some countries also have courses for paraprofessional qualifications.

Individual librarians are often, but not always, members of their national association. National associations endorse the qualification and/or professional registration of library and information workers. For example, American library qualifications are accredited by the American Library Association; Australian professionally qualified librarians are eligible for associate membership in the Australian Library and Information Association; German academic librarians and information workers join the Verein Deutscher Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare (Association of German Librarians), and British library qualifications are endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. Qualified British librarians, or library workers able to demonstrate sufficient experience and critical reflection, can become chartered members of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and use the abbreviation MCLIP (member) after their name. Later, they can optionally submit evidence of professional development and achievement to be elected FCLIP (fellow).

Librarians may engage in professional activities within a specialist group, as a subset of their national association, or in a special interest association affiliated with, or formally recognized by, the national body.

## Librarianship as a Career

Librarians help library users in many ways, including by facilitating and enabling access through accurate descriptive cataloguing and user education programs, by authoring library guides, and by conducting library outreach including the use of social media. In a specialist library, subject knowledge is invaluable. In the educational context, informal or formal teaching skills further enable the library professional to work alongside teaching faculty in helping students get the most out of these rich resources.

**See also** [Archiving](#); [Education](#); [Ethnomusicology as a Profession](#); [Schools and Universities](#)

## Web Resources

*Fontes Artis Musicae*. Retrieved from <http://www.iaml.info/fontes-artis-musicae>

*Notes, the Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.musiclibraryas-soc.org/?page=notes>

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