

**MEMORANDUM**

April 12, 2012

**To:** Shelly Martinez, OMB  
**From:** Tai Phan, NCES  
**Through:** Kashka Kubzdela, NCES  
**Re:** 2012 Academic Libraries Survey Survey Items Change Request (OMB# 1850-0781 v.4)

The Academic Libraries Survey (ALS) questionnaire is being revised for the 2012 data collection. Due to changes in the processes and roles of academic libraries, two survey items are being added and thirteen items are being deleted from the questionnaire. The estimated burden time per respondent to complete the revised questionnaire will decrease by 1 hour as compared to the 2010 questionnaire version and will require on average approximately 7 hours and 14 minutes to complete. The revised burden table and justification for changes to the questionnaire are provided below and the revised 2012 ALS questionnaire and instructions are attached with this memo.

Table 1. Estimated Respondent Burden.

Respondent type	Sample	Estimated Response rate	Estimated Number of respondents	Estimated number of responses	Average hours per respondent	Estimated total burden hours
2012 ALS Collection	4,300*	0.87	3,329	3,329	7.2333	24,080

\* Survey materials will be mailed to 4,300 degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Some will answer no to one of the eligibility questions and no longer be in the universe of academic libraries as defined by ALS, and some schools show as multiple institutions in IPEDS but want to report all of their library data in one record for ALS (e.g. the University of Phoenix has 30 separate records in IPEDS but reports library data under one record for the ALS). As a result, we estimate the final universe to be 3,827 and the estimated 87% response rate translates into 3,329 library respondents.

The following are the changes being made to the 2012 ALS questionnaire:

- Delete items 404 and 405 and renumber item 406 (Is the library collection entirely electronic?) to 404.**

Item	Collections	Fiscal Year (1)	Fiscal Year (2)
404	Current serial titles	_____	_____
405	Electronic reference sources and aggregation services	_____	_____

Changes in technology have dramatically changed the selection, cataloging, format, and delivery of materials essential to academic libraries. These changes also impact collection development practices, including issues of ownership and access to information resources. In recent years, respondents have struggled to understand the distinctions in these activities, as they relate to these two data elements. Responding has become so problematic that it is estimated that 80% of follow-up questions to Census staff in 2010 were related these two questions.

The Academic Library Survey Advisory Committee (ALSAC) has researched the issue extensively and determined that these two survey items should be deleted from the 2012 survey. As noted above, respondents have struggled to accurately respond to these questions. In addition, there is a precedent for eliminating counts

for these items as they are currently structured in the Academic Library Survey. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) survey does not include a question on electronic resources and aggregation services, and is poised to cut its question related to serial titles.

**2. Delete detail items 511-516 and renumber item 517 (Total information services to individuals) to 511.**

**Information services to individuals:**

**Reference (under 20 minutes):**

511	In-person	_____
512	Virtual	_____
513	<b>Total Reference (sum of items 511 and 512)</b>	_____

**Consultations (20 minutes or more):**

514	In-person	_____
515	Virtual	_____
516	<b>Total Consultations (sum of items 514 and 515)</b>	_____

These questions were added in the 2010 survey and had very poor response rates (ranging from 62.5% to 72.9%<sup>1</sup>). Many libraries indicated that it would be very time consuming to report this level of detail.

**3. Delete items 800-804 about Information Literacy and add 2 new survey items on student learning/student success outcomes.**

**Items being deleted:** **Yes/No**

**Does your postsecondary institution have the following, or has it done the following?**

800	A definition of information literacy or of an information literate student	_____
801	Incorporated information literacy in the institution's mission	_____
802	Incorporated information literacy in the institution's strategic plan	_____
If no, select "N" and skip 803 and 804.		
803	An institution-wide committee to implement the strategic plans for information literacy	_____
804	The strategic plan formally recognizes the library's role in information literacy Instruction	_____

**Items being added**  
**Yes/No**

800	Has your postsecondary institution articulated student learning/student success outcomes? If no, select "N" and skip 801	_____
801	Is information literacy incorporated in the institution's student learning/student success outcomes?	___

Librarians are increasingly called upon to document and articulate the value of academic and research libraries and their contribution to institutional mission and goals. Academic librarians recognize the need to be part of the larger national dialogue about higher education effectiveness and quality. Recent articles in the *Chronicle*

<sup>1</sup> Phan, T., Hardesty, L., Hug, J., and Sheckells, C. (2011). *Academic Libraries: 2010*, (NCES 2012-365). U.S. Department of Education, Washington DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved [3/16/2012] from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>, Table A-1, 25.

of *Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education*, as well as Congressional hearings, highlight the increased attention to issues of accountability, particularly student learning.<sup>2</sup> After almost three decades of advocacy by the American Library Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries, the National Forum on Information Literacy, Educause, and other groups, information literacy is now acknowledged and accepted as a key student learning outcome by leaders in many postsecondary institutions and accreditation bodies.

Accreditation commissions and postsecondary institutions have acknowledged the importance of developing students' information literacy capacities. At a recent IMLS-funded national summit convened by ACRL in December 2011 to further building capacity for demonstrating the value of academic libraries, accreditation officials affirmed the value of information literacy and the contribution librarians make to developing students' capacity to think critically.

Moreover, the six higher education accreditation commissions are changing the language of their accreditation standards to encompass a more holistic approach for assessing student learning outcomes, a paradigm shift from the largely prescriptive guidelines used in the past. In ACRL's most recent membership survey, a concern about demonstrating library relevance and effectiveness was among the top five issues members listed as important, and it has become one of the association's strategic priorities.<sup>3</sup> Given the new focus on academic rigor as part of the value proposition, the contributions of academic librarians to student learning and critical thinking are more important than ever. Most students entering college in the fall of 2011 acknowledged they lacked the research skills needed to complete assignments and be successful in an information-intensive economy.

Given that academic libraries no longer define information literacy in their institution's mission statement and are instead moving towards student learning outcomes, the ALS advisory committee decided to delete the 800-804 survey items and add the two new questions. The two new survey items have been tested in 2010 by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Library Associations (ALA), which conducts an annual survey of academic libraries using the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) survey instrument, and invites libraries identified in the NCES Academic Library Survey universe to respond: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/trends>

ARL achieves an annual response from 100% of academic library members (92% of total membership), and achieved a 45.9% response from the NCES ALS respondent universe in its 2010 annual survey (2009 academic year). ACRL also fields additional trends questions developed by the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board. In 2010, ACRL tested the two new survey items and received the following response rates from the different types of postsecondary institutions:

Doctoral degree granting schools: Yes: 134 / No: 165  
Total responses: 299 of 324 (92.2%) respondents answered the question

Master/Comprehensive schools: Yes: 246 / No: 191  
Total responses: 437 of 465 (93.9%) respondents

Baccalaureate schools: Yes: 140 / No: 159  
Total responses: 299 of 329 (90.8%) respondents

Associate schools: Yes: 222 / No: 153  
Total responses: 375 of 396 (94.6%) respondents

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<sup>2</sup> "Raising the Bar on Quality Assurance," *Inside Higher Ed*. November 18, 2011; "Governors Say It Again: Higher Ed Needs Accountability," *Chronicle of Higher Education*. July 15, 2011; Hebel, S. Education & the Workforce Committee, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training, *Keeping College within Reach: Discussing Ways Institutions Can Streamline Costs and Reduce Tuition*. November 30, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> *ACRL Plan for Excellence* (2011). <http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/strategicplan/stratplan>