

**Medical
Librarianship:
A Career Beyond
the Cutting Edge**



**Do you have any of
these characteristics?**

- **thrive in changing environments**
- **innovation**
- **technological aptitude**
- **creativity**
- **service orientation**
- **excellent communication skills**
- **teaching ability**
- **public relations savvy**
- **Web design talent**

**Visit www.mlanet.org/career/
for additional career information.**

**Consider becoming
a medical librarian!**



What is a medical librarian?

Medical librarianship is a service profession. Medical librarians provide health information about new medical treatments, clinical trials and standard trials procedures, tests, and equipment to physicians, allied health professionals, patients, consumers, and corporations. They help physicians provide quality care to patients, help patients find information, answer consumers' questions, and provide information to the health care industries.

Medical librarians become Web managers, medical informatics experts, and chief information officers as well as catalogers, instructors, and reference librarians. A medical librarian needs a graduate degree in library or information science. A background in science, health sciences, or allied health is beneficial, as are graduate courses in medical informatics or medical librarianship. Those who are willing to be flexible in employment opportunities or are geographically mobile have greater career options.

Where do medical librarians work?

- hospitals, academic medical centers, and clinics
- colleges, universities, and professional schools
- consumer health libraries
- research centers and foundations
- industry
 - biotechnology
 - insurance
 - medical equipment
 - pharmaceutical
 - publishing
- federal, state, and local government agencies
- anywhere health information is needed

What are some positions that might be available to you?

- Web manager for an academic medical center
- community outreach coordinator for a public health agency
- collection development officer at a university library
- reference librarian at a hospital
- electronic resources cataloger for an Internet startup company
- director of a nursing school library
- user education specialist at a consumer health library
- information architect for a pharmaceutical company

Whom do librarians work with?

- physicians, nurses, health educators, and other allied health care professionals
- administrators
- programmers and information technology specialists
- faculty and students
- consumers and the community

What abilities must medical librarians have?

- retrieve, select, organize, and disseminate health information
- evaluate advanced information technologies
- instruct end users in the retrieval and application of health care information
- develop content and design materials for instructional purposes
- plan, budget, and manage programs and services
- develop, design, and manage digital access and content
- work on multidisciplinary teams
- use technology appropriately and effectively
- communicate well, both in written and oral formats

What are the minimum qualifications for medical librarians?

- Master's of library and information science from an American Library Association-accredited school
- strong oral and written communication skills
- strong interpersonal skills
- strong computer skills

Should I become a medical librarian?

If you are people and service oriented or enjoy interacting with others, intrigued by the electronic delivery of information, Web page design, delivery of health care information, or information retrieval, a career in medical librarianship may be right for you.

For more information about medical librarianship, visit the Medical Library Association Website at www.mlanet.org or contact the Medical Library Association at 65 East Wacker Place, Suite 1900, Chicago, IL 60601-7246; 312.419.9094; mlapd2@mlahq.org; or info@mlahq.org.



Salaries

Salaries vary according to the type and location of institution, the level of responsibility, and the length of employment. The Medical Library Association reports that in 2005, the average starting salary was \$40,832. The overall average salary for medical librarians in 2005 was \$57,982. Library directors can earn up to \$158,000.

MLA, a nonprofit, educational organization, is comprised of health sciences information professionals with more than 4,500 members worldwide. Through its programs and services, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.