

Review Articles

Classification and Pay Plans for Libraries in Institutions of Higher Education

Classification and Pay Plans in Institutions of Higher Education. A.L.A., 1943. 3v.

Modern methods of personnel administration are based on certain techniques or tools, among which two of the most important are the classification plan and the pay plan. In fact, the classification plan, which has as its primary purpose the setting up of classes of positions on the basis of careful job analyses, is essential if the other techniques of personnel administration are to be used at all. The pay plan itself could hardly exist without classification of positions, for its purpose is to show the range of salaries paid for positions of varying requirements and degrees of responsibility. Such other techniques as service ratings, training programs, testing of applicants, and certification lean heavily on the classification plan. In fact, the whole complex system of personnel administration in use in many large organizations could not function without both classification and pay plans.

Because personnel administration has developed very rapidly many of its techniques are relatively new. The Civil Service Commission of the City of Chicago is credited with being the first agency in this country to develop a practical program for the classification of positions. The plan which it began to develop in 1908 was adopted by the city council in 1912. Other cities, as well as counties and states, undertook similar programs in the decade that followed, leading to the

widespread use of the idea in the past twenty years.

The American Library Association and various state library associations have been working on classification and pay plans for many years. A committee of the District of Columbia Library Association prepared *Brief and Specifications for Library Service in the Federal Government*, which was published by the association in 1923. This was followed by the more elaborate plans prepared by the Bureau of Public Personnel Administration, published in 1927 under the title *Proposed Classification and Compensation Plans for Library Positions; Report of the Bureau of Public Personnel Administration to the Committee on the Classification of Library Personnel of the American Library Association*. While the first of these reports covered only positions in the federal government's library service, the second included positions in several types of libraries, among them college and university libraries. The first plans to be limited to positions in college and university libraries were prepared by a subcommittee of the A.L.A. Committee on the Classification of Library Personnel and published in 1929, with the title *Budgets, Classification, and Compensation Plans for University and College Libraries*. With the creation of the Board on Salaries, Staff, and Tenure by the A.L.A. Council in 1937, the series of classification and pay plans which had been started by the Committee on Salaries, Staff, and Service was

carried forward. The first publication of this type issued by the board was *Classification and Pay Plans for Municipal Public Libraries*, which appeared in 1939. *Classification and Pay Plans for Libraries in Institutions of Higher Education* was prepared by a subcommittee of the Board on Salaries, Staff, and Tenure, the members of the subcommittee constituting also a Committee on Budgets, Compensation, and Schemes of Service of the Association of College and Reference Libraries.

The construction of a classification plan for an institution or governmental jurisdiction usually involves the employment of a special group of trained personnel. They make a thorough survey of the employees and their work, using questionnaires filled out by the employees as a basis for the analysis of their jobs. The questionnaires are carefully studied by the staff and interviews are held with employees and administrators. From the information thus obtained the staff prepares a tentative classification plan which is then carefully checked and, if necessary, revised before it is put into operation. The staff also prepares a code of rules covering the installation and continuing administration of the plan.

Plans for Any Library

The two sets of plans prepared by the Board on Salaries, Staff, and Tenure differ from many classification and pay plans in use in government and industry in that they have been developed, not for a single institution or jurisdiction, but for any library of the types included. The plans are based on the survey of positions and compensation in a number of libraries. In the case of the plans for college and university libraries, the cooperating institutions numbered thirty-nine. They each

made job analyses which served as the basis for the preparation of the classification plan. The subcommittee held many meetings, some of which were open to members of the profession and at which the tentative plans were prepared and thoroughly discussed. A preliminary report was issued in March 1940 and sent to 250 libraries for criticism. A second draft was issued in August 1941 for criticism by two hundred libraries. By these methods a composite picture of library needs and library standards has been sketched, which does not represent any one library's plans but which presents plans that may be adapted to any library's use.

Classification and Pay Plans for Libraries in Institutions of Higher Education is in three volumes, each constructed for a special type of library. Volume I is for non-degree-conferring institutions, Volume II for degree-conferring four-year institutions, and Volume III for universities. Each follows the same pattern and each is a unit within itself, making it possible for a library to purchase only the volume suited to it. Within each volume the major parts are: instructions on the use of the book, descriptions of the classes of libraries, personnel specifications for library positions, and standards of education, experience, and pay for personnel grades. In addition each volume has an introduction, which gives the history and objectives of the project, and two appendices—the first listing accredited library schools and the second giving a form and instruction sheet for a job analysis.

Instructions on Use

The instructions on the use of the book are full and detailed. They may seem unduly complicated to the reader who

examines them casually. Part of this complication is due to the fact that the book not only presents classification and pay plans but also suggests personnel standards for libraries serving various sized groups of students and faculty members. In order to present these standards adequately, a method of classifying libraries is followed which is based on the service rendered by the library in terms of student and faculty use of the library. This phase of the plan requires lengthy description in the section devoted to the instruction on the use of the book. The object could scarcely be attained in less space, but the classification plan is not so quickly grasped as it would have been without the section on standards. Much is gained by having the plan broadened beyond the usual borders of classification and pay plans and by suggesting the distribution of professional and clerical staff, the working conditions, the annual salary budget, the number of books in the library, the annual book budget, and the hours of opening of the library. As the book is constructed, these suggestions of standards are integrated with the classification and pay plans and are helpful for comparative purposes.

The section entitled "Classes of Libraries" is the one in which the standards for various types of libraries are described. Following directly after the section of instructions, in which appears so much about personnel standards for libraries and carrying the word "Classes" in its heading, this section might lead one to think that the main object of the book is to classify libraries, whereas the classification is one of library positions, not libraries. The various classes of libraries have been set up primarily as a means of suggesting standards, for in the classification plan

itself reference to the class of library is made only in the descriptions of the positions of chief librarian and associate chief librarian. All other positions which have been ranked for varying sized departments have been treated on the basis of a statement of "Classes of Departments," which is a single page at the end of this section. These classes of departments, being based on the number of assistants in them, are clearly described in the classification plan proper, so the descriptions could have been omitted here.

Classes of Libraries

As has been said, the classes of libraries have been made determinate on the service loads of the libraries, the service loads being calculated in units as follows: one unit for each underclass student, two units for each upperclass student, three units for each honors student, four units for each graduate student, and five units for each faculty member. The total number of units places the library in its class. One might quibble over this neat progression of weightings, wondering, for instance, whether an average honors student uses the library only three-fifths as much as the average faculty member and whether the average junior uses the library twice as much as the average sophomore. To be scientifically exact in this respect would be impossible. The suggested scale has the advantage of ease in use and probably is as close an approximation as anyone could devise without endless labor.

The section entitled "Personnel Specifications for Library Positions in the Professional and Clerical Services" is the actual classification plan, wherein positions are given titles, are defined, their typical tasks described, the minimum qualifica-

tions outlined, and the minimum salary indicated. The last item is taken from the pay plan that follows this section, to which reference is made at the top of each sheet by giving the grade of the position and the page number in the pay plan. The terms used for titles of positions have been carefully devised to be specific and indicative of the rank of the position. The word "librarian" appears in the title of almost all professional positions. The definition of the class of position is given succinctly. The paragraph following the definition gives examples of typical tasks, which adds much to the understanding of the position. Some ambiguous terms have been used, such as "handling," "assisting," and "supervising," but they are usually accompanied by other detailed and specific descriptions which make them less ambiguous, particularly to one familiar with library processes. However, the non-librarian would not get a very clear impression from such a phrase as "handling reference matters of average difficulty," as applied to the position of intermediate reference librarian, especially if this were compared with the statement applied to the position of intermediate circulation librarian, "assisting readers in making effective use of library facilities by answering their questions and helping them to make use of the card catalog." In general the examples of typical tasks are full and complete, with little chance for confusion.

Classification Plan Is Narrow

The classification plan for university libraries might be called narrow rather than broad. The professional positions in this volume of the set are almost all highly specialized. In many of the classes only one employee would be included,

while in others several might belong to the same class. A few broad classes are provided, such as senior librarian, intermediate librarian, and junior librarian, which make it possible to have positions which are not highly specialized, if that is desired. In the volume for non-degree-conferring institutions fewer classes are provided and they are generally broad. The plan for degree-conferring four-year institutions resembles the university plan in the number of specialized classes which are provided, though it is somewhat less detailed. The major omission from the classification plan is the professional school library in a university. So many difficulties were encountered in attempting to include positions in such libraries in the plan that they were finally dropped. It is to be hoped that a future revision of the book may include them, for they constitute a special problem which cannot be easily solved with the present plan.

The information given about minimum qualifications is divided into two groups, professional and personal. In the paragraph on professional qualifications are included such matters as education, experience, knowledge of library methods, of foreign languages, and of special subjects. The personal qualifications include such factors as accuracy, judgment, resourcefulness, and similar qualities. There is naturally much repetition, for the qualifications for many library positions are similar in both professional and personal phases but variations have been carefully made to fit the special requirements of the positions.

The Pay Plan

The final major section of the book is entitled "Standards of Education, Experience, and Pay for Personnel Grades,"

and constitutes the pay plan. The service is divided into two branches, clerical and professional, with several grades in each branch. Under each grade a list of typical positions is given, with reference to the page in the classification plan where the position is described. The minimum salary scale is given and minimum qualifications for persons holding positions in the grade. The salaries suggested are not based on country-wide averages but are the salaries that were thought to be suitable by the compilers of the plan. Since no provision for differences in living costs are made, adjustments would have to be made to bring the pay plan into line with local conditions. In the general introduction a method of equating library salaries with academic salaries is suggested, which, with the pay plan as a guide, would make it possible to devise a plan that would fit local conditions. The salaries given in this pay plan can be used only as a guide to one preparing his own pay plan anyway. Changes have taken place since this plan was prepared which make some of the salary figures obsolete even now and other changes will occur which will affect more of the plan. It is fortunate that it was set upon a somewhat idealistic basis in the beginning, for less change will be needed as a result. This plan differs from the plan for public libraries in not providing for a subprofessional class of employees. While there may be some who would prefer to have such a group, the plan seems better without it, both from the viewpoint of employer and employee.

A major omission is the score card which was provided in the volume for public libraries. After considerable work

had been done on this feature, it was dropped from the plan. While some standards are included in the section on "Classes of Libraries" and one might judge that they are a major part of the plan, the absence of the score card indicates that this is not the case, and care should be taken not to rely on it nor advocate its use primarily as a guide to general standards.

A classification plan usually includes a section on the administration of the plan and the methods to be followed in keeping it up to date. Since this classification plan is not designed for a specific institution, such a section does not appear in it. Anyone preparing a plan for use would have to make provision for its administration and should include a detailed statement on this matter in the plan. This may raise the question of the practicability of instituting classification and pay plans in college or university libraries if all the personnel of the institution is not included in such plans. Very few colleges and universities have classification and pay plans for their staffs. To be wholly successful the institution should develop plans for all its departments at the same time. If this cannot be done, then the library may have to prepare its own plans, hoping that they may later be fitted into the plans for the institution. In developing its own plans, the library will be fortunate in having *Classification and Pay Plans for Libraries in Institutions of Higher Education* to use, for it will serve as an excellent model and will save much time and labor.—*John R. Russell, Librarian, University of Rochester, Rochester, N.Y.*