

# Adapting to New Needs in a Complex Research Environment

Barbara Rothen Renner, Lee Richardson, and Jennifer Walker  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Health Sciences Library



Medical Library Association  
Annual Meeting 2018

## Introduction

At the request of deans of health sciences schools for increased librarian involvement in the research process, library leadership recognized librarians may not have the broad understanding of research necessary to provide optimal support at an R1 research intensive university. An online guide for librarians was developed to help address this.

## Librarians Need to Know

Although it was originally thought that the greatest need would be increased research design and methodology training, liaison librarians reported an even more immediate need to understand the general language and context of research. Specific needs identified included:

- Fuller context of health-related research conducted at a research-intensive university
- Better understanding of research processes
- How researchers train
- Researcher career arcs and lives of researchers
- Stresses of research careers
- Major funding mechanisms
- Terminology
- Research supports (local and beyond)
- Overview of rules and regulations
- Others important to the research process

## The Process

Iterative!

- Circulation of early drafts of possible content to library leadership and several liaison librarians
- Seeking of input about format and best ways to share the resulting information
- Continued circulation of developing content and format
- Seeking continued input once in use

## Conclusions

The library has a resource to meet a variety of needs, including those of early career librarians and those new to the university or to research intensive settings. Librarians are developing sessions to review the guide, which will continue to be refined based on input. Other possible uses include sharing with librarians across campus who work with researchers outside of the health sciences and exploring how to select and adapt the content for early career researchers in specific health disciplines.

## Methods

### Project Team:

- PhD-trained library liaison with a broad research background, recent experience working with an NIH R01-funded research team as part of an NLM administrative supplement for informationist services, and service on her unit’s Research Advisory Committee
- An Information Discovery and Metadata Librarian was added to the project to assist in making the resources discoverable, more easily findable and usable

### Discovery Process:

- Interviewed several school liaison librarians about their needs to identify knowledge gaps
- Explored campus and select funding agency resources and funding mechanisms
- Surveyed published literature on research training and knowledge needs of liaison librarians participating in research
- Surveyed online resources and guides from other academic institutions and research agencies
- As useful resources were identified, thorough descriptions of each resource were created highlighting sections of particular importance or usefulness



## Results

An internal LibGuide for librarians and library staff was created to organize and share content. The guide is online and editable. An index and table of contents will facilitate easy of use. Anticipated uses include:

- Overview presented to various library groups
- Individual or group exploration
- Focused study of specific content
- Selection of training programs for in depth study
- Review of terminology in preparation for meetings or discussions with researchers
- Repository of information to use in consultation with researchers

## The Challenges

- So much information available it is hard to decide what to include, what to highlight, what to omit
- How to organize such a large body of information to make it easily findable
- Campus and funding agencies restructure; change focus, function and services; reorganize websites; URLs break

Contents
About Research at UNC
Research Careers
Early Career
Promoting Diversity
Doing Research at UNC
NIH
Selected Other Federal Granting Agencies
Proposal Writing/Samples/Templates
Find Collaborators
Training & Glossaries
Data Management, Sharing and Retention
Electronic Lab Notebooks (ELNs)
UNC Library Stuff
Index

