ARL Membership
Process, Responsibilities and Procedures

Table of Contents

1. ARL Membership

Membership in the Association for Research Libraries is by invitation upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors and approval of the Membership. An Applicant Library may request to be considered for membership by initiating a request to the ARL Executive Director or as a result of responding to an inquiry of interest from the ARL Membership Committee.

A. Qualifications for Membership

Consideration for ARL membership is based upon the *Principles of Membership in the Association of Research Libraries*. For consideration of requests for membership by non-university libraries, the principles are framed by the nature of the library/institution, its national scope/impact, and its governing body.

B. ARL Membership Committee

The ARL Membership Committee is a sub-committee of the ARL Board of Directors and reports to the ARL Board. The Committee Chair is an officer of the Board. Committee membership is comprised of three additional members of the Board and one member-at-large selected from the full membership.

C. ARL Staff Liaison

The ARL Staff Liaison to the Membership Committee provides support for the ARL Membership Committee and visiting site teams, works closely with the Committee Chair, informs the Membership Committee of the status of all membership inquiries, and maintains current and historical membership documentation. The Staff Liaison serves as the initial point of contact for potential and current Applicant Libraries interested in applying for ARL membership. In doing so, the Staff Liaison responds to membership queries by answering general questions and/or supplying or referring inquirers to the *ARL Principles of Membership* and the Procedures for Membership in the Association of Research Libraries.

2. Process and Procedures for Initial Contact and Informal Review

A. Applicant Library – Initial Contact

The Applicant Library Director may contact the ARL Executive Director and/or Membership Committee Staff Liaison about the process and procedures for ARL membership consideration.

Upon request by the Staff Liaison, the Applicant Library Director provides the library's institutional classification and initial data described in Appendix A. This is considered an informal confidential query and at no cost to Library. The Staff Liaison informs the Membership Committee of this query.

Upon reviewing the applicant library data, if the Library wishes to proceed further, the Applicant Library Director submits a formal letter expressing interest in ARL membership to the ARL Executive Director that indicates briefly how the institution believes it meets the *ARL Principles of Membership*.

B.   Referral to Membership Committee

Upon receipt of a formal letter from an Applicant Library Director expressing interest in being considered for ARL membership, the ARL Executive Director acknowledges the request and places it on the next agenda for the ARL Executive Committee for referral to the Membership Committee and reporting to the Board. This referral does not appear in formal minutes and is considered confidential. The Executive Committee does not evaluate the expression of interest.

C.   Membership Committee Consideration of Formal Letter of Request

The Membership Committee reviews the letter of request and preliminary data (Appendix A), and determines if the Committee will proceed with membership consideration.

1) **No further consideration:** If the Committee determines that no further consideration will be undertaken, the Committee Chair informs the Applicant Library Director of the decision with any observations and conclusions the Committee may have for the Library. The letter to the Applicant Library Director conveys the decision of the Committee by referencing the membership principles and is not designed to provide specific expectations for what the Library would need to do to obtain ARL membership through a subsequent membership request.

2) **Further consideration:** If the Committee decides to proceed further with membership consideration, one of two next steps could occur: (a) an informal site visit to assess the Committee's further interest in formal consideration (see 2 D); or (b) a formal membership site visit (see 2 E).

If the Committee decides to proceed with either an informal or formal visit, the Staff Liaison notifies the Applicant Library Director of the Committee's decision and its financial responsibilities. These financial obligations include a one time non-refundable administrative fee based on five hours each of support by the Staff Liaison and an administrative assistant and all travel costs for site visits, whether informal or formal. The Applicant Library Director notifies the Executive Director in writing if the informal site visit or formal membership consideration should continue.

If an informal visit is the next step, no further documentation is required of the Applicant Library at this time. If a formal visit is the next step, the Applicant Library will be notified to submit additional documentation (see section 3).

D.   Informal Site Visit

The Membership Committee appoints a member to serve as its Informal Site Visit Representative. The Representative reviews with the Staff Liaison the Library's basic documentation, including statistics for the most recent five years, background information, and how the Library meets the ARL membership principles, to determine points of discussion during the informal site visit.

The Applicant Library Director and the Staff Liaison arranges the informal site visit. During the visit, the Representative obtains as much information as possible regarding how the Library meets the principles and may provide initial observations to the Applicant

Library Director of what might be additional information that would be of importance if there were to be a formal site visit. The Representative also describes the benefits and obligations of membership and the next steps in potential membership consideration.

The Representative writes a summary site visit report for the Membership Committee with observations on how the Applicant Library is meeting the membership principles and its readiness for a formal site visit.

E.   Determination for Formal Membership Consideration

Following the informal visit and review of the summary site visit report, the Membership Committee determines if it should initiate formal membership consideration. The committee may also recommend formal consideration without a formal site visit.

1) **If the decision is no further action,** the Committee Chair notifies the Applicant Library Director in writing with reasons based on *ARL Membership Principles*.

2) **If the decision is yes for a formal site visit,** the Committee Chair contacts the Applicant Library Director of its decision to proceed and asks if the Library Director wishes to continue the process.

   a) **If the Applicant Library Director states no**, the Staff Liaison creates an electronic file of all documentation.

   b) **If the Applicant Library Director states yes**, the Committee typically appoints a Membership Site Visit Team (see 3 A).

3) **If the decision is yes without a formal site visit,** the Committee chair contacts the Applicant Library Director of its decision and asks if the Library Director wishes to continue the process.

   a) **If the Applicant Library Director states yes,** the Committee identifies any additional documentation it requires for submission by the Applicant Library to proceed with formal membership recommendation to the ARL Board of Directors.

   b) **If the Applicant Library Director states no and requests a formal site visit**, the Committee appoints a Membership Site Visit Team (see 3 A).

   c) If the Applicant Library Director states no, the Staff Liaison creates an electronic fill of all documentation.

3. Formal Membership Site Visit

The formal site visit occurs if the Applicant Library would like to continue with a formal membership review.

A.   Formal Membership Site Visit Team

The Formal Membership Site Visit Team consists of three members who can be members of the Committee or other directors as appropriate due to location or type of library. The chair of the visiting team is a member of the Membership Committee. An alternate team member is appointed and is kept apprised of the visit schedule. Appointment consideration includes prior service on a site visit team and experience/knowledge as to the characteristics of the Library. The Informal Site Visit Representative may serve on the Site Visit Team but not as the Team Chair.

The Committee Chair reports the appointment of the site visit team to the ARL Board and it is included in the Board minutes, making information about the candidacy public to the ARL membership. The Applicant Library is informed of the members on the site visit team.

B.   Library Documentation

The Applicant Library prepares the site visit documentation (Appendix B) and any updated Appendix A data and submits it to the Staff Liaison for distribution to and comment from Site Visit Team (with at least 6 weeks lead time). Prior to the visit, if the Site Visit Team wants additional documentation, data, and/or information as well as additions or changes to the proposed site visit agenda, such requests are made by the Staff Liaison.

C.   Library Site Visit

The Applicant Library Director and Staff Liaison determine the site visit agenda and arrangements with consultation with the chair of the Site Visit Team. The agenda typically includes chief institutional administrators (e.g., President, Provost, Vice President for Research, Vice President for Undergraduate Education, and Chief Information Officer).

The Site Visit Team members arrange their own transportation with subsequent reimbursement by the Applicant Library. The Applicant Library Director arranges necessary accommodations and any necessary local transportation.

D.   Site Visit Team Report and Recommendations

Following the visit, the Site Visit Team submits a formal written report (based on *ARL Principles of Membership*) for the Membership Committee's consideration. The Team Chair may request further information and/or clarifications from the Applicant Library Director during the drafting of the Site Visit Team Report. The report concludes with the Team's recommendations for membership that may be positive, negative or include the possibility of deferral and would provide the Library with advice as to what would be needed for further consideration by the Membership Committee.

The Site Visit Team report outline includes:

1) Brief Introductory remarks including the report sections and background
2) Site Visit Team's Visit Description
3) University Description
4) Library Description
5) ARL Principles of Membership – Analysis and Conclusions

6) Visiting Team's Recommendation for ARL Membership
7) Appendices:
   a. ARL Membership Site Visit Team Schedule
   b. University Organizational Chart
   c. Library Organizational Chart
   d. ARL Investment Index Comparative Rankings with the Library (5 years)
   e. Other ARL comparative rankings data
   f. Other documentation

E.   Membership Committee Review and Actions of Formal Site Visit

The Membership Committee reviews the report and recommendation(s) of the Site Visit Team, and makes its membership recommendation(s):

1) Supports Extending an Invitation for ARL Membership

Forwards the Site Team Report and its recommendation(s) and any further observations to the ARL Board for its deliberations and action.

2) Does Not Support Extending an Invitation for ARL Membership

Forwards the Site Team Report and its recommendation with any further observations to the ARL Board for its information only. The report is considered a confidential administrative document and is not distributed outside the Membership Committee and ARL Board. If the ARL Board does not refer the report back to the Committee for reconsideration, the Committee Chair notifies the Applicant Library Director in writing of the committee decision not to recommend an invitation for membership. The notification includes a summary of the reasons and observation as to the decision based on *ARL Membership Principles*.

4. ARL Board of Directors

The ARL Board reviews the Site Visit Team report, and the recommendation(s) with any further observations of the Membership Committee.

A.   Request for Additional Information, Clarification, or Reconsideration

If the Board wishes additional information, clarification, or reconsideration, the report is referred back to the Membership Committee before taking formal action. The Board takes formal membership action only if there is a positive recommendation from the Membership Committee.

B.   Supports Extending an Invitation for ARL Membership

If the Board supports the Membership Committee's positive recommendation, the Board prepares a recommendation for membership action at the next ARL Membership Business meeting for extending an invitation to the Library to join the Association. The Site Visit Report is provided with the Board's recommendation and rationale to the Membership.

The Site Visit Report is sent to the Applicant Library under the signature of the ARL Executive Director and ARL Board President. The report is confidential.

C.   Does Not Support Extending an Invitation for ARL Membership

If the Board does not support the Membership Committee's positive recommendation, the Site Visit Report is considered an administrative document. The ARL Executive Director and the ARL President formally notifies the Applicant Library Director in writing of the Board's decisions with the Board's reasons and observations as to its decision based on the *ARL Membership Principles*. The Site Visit Report is shared with the Applicant Library as a confidential document.

5. ARL Membership Review and Action

The Board prepares a recommendation for membership action with the Site Visit Report for the next ARL Membership Business Meeting.

At the next ARL membership Business Meeting, the Membership considers and takes formal action on the Board's recommendation to extend an invitation for Association membership. The ARL Executive Director informs the Applicant Library Director of the upcoming Membership Action with a copy of the Site Visit Report

A.   ARL Membership Votes to Extend an Invitation for ARL Membership

The ARL Executive Director and ARL President extends a formal written invitation to the Library Director for the Library to become an ARL member. If the Library accepts the invitation, the ARL President notifies the ARL Membership, and the ARL Executive Director makes the public announcements.

The written invitation will include an invoice for the library's contribution to the Board Designated Reserve Fund that is calculated by dividing the amount of the fund at the time of the membership vote by the current number of members in the Association and the dues for the year the applicant library will join the Association. If the applicant library joins ARL following the Spring Association Meeting, the library will pay a pro-rated dues amount.

B.   ARL Membership Votes Not to Extend an Invitation for ARL Membership

The ARL Executive Director and ARL President formally notifies the Library Director that the ARL Membership has decided not to extend an invitation for the Library to become an ARL member. They provide reasons and observations as to the reasons for the decision that are based on the *ARL Membership Principles*.

6. Formal Request for Reconsideration

A Library that has previously undergone a membership review (including an informal or formal site visit) may request reconsideration. Such a request for reconsideration should be made following a minimum of three years and is based on demonstrated progress in meeting the current *ARL Principles for Membership*, responding to issues of concern that were raised with the previous review, and enough time to provide evidence of sustainability of resources.

7. Request for Reinstatement of Membership

A former member of the Association that has voluntarily withdrawn may submit a request for membership renewal through a formal letter to the Executive Director outlining the reasons for membership reinstatement. The institution should also complete the ARL Membership survey (Appendix A) to establish that it meets current requirements and should document how it meets the Principles of ARL Membership. At a minimum, a member of the Board or a designated representative should visit the institution to ensure that the Principles of ARL Membership are fully met, and shall present a report to the Board. The Board, following this process, shall prepare a recommendation on reinstatement for consideration by the membership.

8. Procedures for Membership Review

As stated in the ARL Principles of Membership, where there appears to be a significant and sustained disparity between the accomplishments of a member institution and the principles of membership, or when a member institution does not meet its obligations, an in-depth review may be initiated. The ARL Executive Committee will recommend a course of action and the ARL Board will determine the criteria to be used for the review and the procedures to be followed. The final decision to remove a member will be determined by a vote of the ARL Membership at a membership business meeting.

Adopted by the Membership Committee
October 2001, Revised November 2005, May 2008, October 2008, October 2009, November 2017

Appendix A

Request for ARL Membership Consideration

Statistics Form

Reporting Library:
Contact Person:
Title:
Telephone:
Email:
Date returned to ARL:

Institutional Classification/Membership (i.e., current Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning, membership in Association of American Universities, and/or comparable affiliations or documentation)

ARL Investment Index Data Comparison – Based on last **five** years. See annual editions of the ARL Statistics for instructions on reporting data in each category.

- Total Library Expenditures:

- Total Library-Materials Expenditures:

- Number of Professional and Support Staff:

- Salaries and Wages of Professional Staff:

For expenditure figures, use US dollars. For conversion rates in Canadian dollars for each year used by ARL, contact Sue Baughman, ARL Staff Liaison for the Membership Committee.

Send form to: Sue Baughman, sue@arl.org

Appendix B

Request for ARL Membership Consideration

Applicant Library Report

In preparation for the ARL Membership Site Visit Team, the Applicant Library should submit a narrative report of approximately 10 pages that <u>briefly</u> describes the library and its institution and then addresses how the Library meets the ARL Membership Principles. The report may include appendices that provide relevant context or background documentation that supports the report.

Section I:

Provide a description of the Institution and Library including scope, mission, organization, history, etc.

Section II:

Principles of ARL Membership

Appendices

1. Data submitted to surveys such as ACRL, CARL, and NCES-IPEDS for the same five years (if possible) as submitted to ARL.

2. Examples of recent federal or foundation grant applications, if relevant to demonstrating the characteristics outlined in the ARL Membership Principles.

3. Additional Information and Data (Examples)

   a. Annual reports and statistics
   b. Library and University Organizational Charts
   c. Institutional repository, journals, conference papers, and other publications managed or sponsored by the Library
   d. Renovation or building plans
   e. Library Current Strategic Plan and/or operational plans and reports for the last five years
   f. University Strategic Plans
   g. External research funds for the last five years
   h. University student enrollment (undergraduate, graduate and professional) for last five years
   i. Outside evaluations or consulting reports prepared in the last five years.
   j. Awards, honors, collaborative initiatives