Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council | **Le Conseil de l'agrément et du contrôle des lignes directrices pour les bibliothèques publiques de l'Ontario**

OPLG Accreditation Process:
Information for Libraries

January 2023

Use of the ***Ontario Public Library Guidelines*** is voluntary. They may be used for internal purposes only, i.e., by a library's administration or board as an external benchmark for services or methods. The Guidelines may also be used as part of the process of accreditation under the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council (OPLG Council). An accreditation is valid for a five-year period and libraries are notified as a re-accreditation audit is required.

During an Accreditation Audit, an audit team will work with library staff to go through the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Checklist document to determine how the library measures against the Guidelines. In this process,

1. each of the guideline statements within the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Assessment Tool requires a "yes" or "no" answer
2. the library is required to achieve all the mandatory guidelines (marked as M); and
3. the library system and at least one physical location must achieve a score of 90% in each of the seven sections.

An Accreditation Audit is now completed virtually. The work of audit team is conducted electronically, in the virtual process,

1. The library uploads its documentation onto a specific Google Drive for review by the audit team prior to the virtual tour (for Sections 1 to 5 of the *OPLG Checklist*)
2. The audit team conducts a virtual tour of the physical space(s) for observational purposes (for Sections 6 & 7).

This document describes preparing for an audit and the accreditation audit process from start to finish.

Preparing for an audit

1. Version of the *Ontario Public Library Guidelines* Checklist

    In preparing for an audit, please ensure that you are working with the <u>most recent </u>version of the *OPLG Checklist* as posted on the OPLG Council website at
    http://www.ontariopubliclibraryguidelines.ca/.

    Note: *the OPLG Council performs an "Annual Update" on the OPLG Checklist. Your preparation should be based on the version of the OPLG Checklist which is posted at the time that the request email is approved. Please confirm your Audit version once your request email is approved.*

2. Request the audit:

    To start the process, send an email to guidelinescouncil@olservice.ca to request an audit. Any public library in Ontario may request an audit in English or French.

    - Please provide a minimum of eight (8) weeks' notice of your intended audit date. This will allow enough time for your library to upload necessary documents and for the OPLG Council to prepare. All audit requests should be made by September 15th.

3. Upon receiving a request for an audit:

    - a peer audit team will be appointed through the Ontario Library Service (Jesse Roberts – jroberts@olservice.ca or Peggy Malcolm – pmalcolm@olservice.ca). The audit team will include a staff person from the Ontario Library Service and a Librarian member of the OPLG Council or staff person from an accredited library.
    - OLS staff will provide the link to the electronic platform to prepare for the virtual audit.
    - OLS staff will arrange the time for the observation portion.

4. Fees for audits:

    The audit fee is $200, with an additional fee of $75 for each additional day required. The fee is inclusive, and no additional charges will be levied for transportation costs, honoraria or any other costs. Fees are billed through the Ontario Library Service.

Process

Step 1 – Explore the Google Drive

As part of the preparation work, OLS staff will provide you with a link to a Google Drive that has been set up just for your library accreditation work.

- You should find a copy of the latest version of the *Ontario Public Library Guidelines Checklist* (also called an "Assessment" Tool).
- You will see the location where you will upload the necessary documentation (the evidence) using the instructions provided below.
- You should also see a folder which includes examples of documents used in previous audit uploads.

Step 2 - Annotate the OPLG Checklist

The expectation of the OPLG Council remains that any public library seeking accreditation or re-accreditation be prepared to provide clear and concise supporting information in their pursuit of the OPLG Guidelines. To accomplish this, we ask that the library staff annotate the *OPLG Checklist*– providing information on the library's ability to fulfill that specific guideline. In the *Checklist* you can provide any notes or links that show how your library has met the guidelines. Some notes are shown in the example below.

> **Please note** that if you have already annotated your own copy of the *OPLG Checklist*, you do not need to transfer your data to this new file – and may simply upload your existing annotated *OPLG Checklist*.

Auditors understand that by the very nature of the process, some policies, procedures, or documentation may account for one or more guideline. In the below example, the library noted in the *Checklist* that the policy related to Harassment is included under 12.3. If it is helpful in finding the exact section, you could add a note in the annotated *OPLG Checklist* to "see" a section or specific page within the document. The expectation is that auditors should be able to easily locate your supporting evidence using the *Checklist*.

	Mandatory	Status (Y/N) whether you have the item or not	G-Drive Evidence	Online Evidence
Section 12: Safety Security & Emergencies				
12.1 Safety, Security and Emergencies Policy - The library board is responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for library staff as they carry out their duties and for members of the public who use public library services. The library has established and adopted a policy to deal with safety, security and emergency issues.	þ	y	12.1 H&S	http://www.thebluemountainslibrary.ca/policy.cfm
12.2 Working Alone - The Library has established and adopted a policy pertaining to staff and volunteers who working alone in the library or other designated sites.	þ	y	12.2 Work Alone	
12.3 Workplace Violence - The library has established and adopted a policy in place that adheres to relevant provincial and/or federal legislation on workplace violence and sexual violence.	þ	y	12.3 Respectful Workplace	
12.4 Harassment - The library has established and adopted a policy in place that adheres to relevant provincial and/or federal legislation on harassment and sexual harassment.	þ	y	See 12.3 Respectful	

We realize that the annotation of the OPLG Checklist will continue as you work to upload the various pieces of documentation. For this reason, you may not want to upload the final version of the checklist onto your library's Google Drive until you have gone through the entire process.

Step 3 – Uploading documentation

Using the annotated *OPLG Checklist* as your framework, you will need to upload "evidence" for some of the elements. In some cases, the evidence will be on the library website, and this location would be marked in your annotated checklist. In other cases, you might provide a written explanation within your annotated checklist. For some elements, however, we want to see the actual evidence (e.g. documents, photos, videos or other appropriate proof).

To help the audit team to sort through materials, documentation needs to be organized on the Google Drive using the numbering convention in the *OPLG Checklist*. These are the areas, sections and the number of statements in each area:

Area #	Section #	Number of questions or statements in this area	Number of Mandatory items in this area
#1 Governance & Administration	Sections 1 to 6	24	19
#2 Planning Documents & Process	Sections 7 to 11	26	8
#3 Policy	Sections 12 to 15	24	16
#4 Personnel & Human Resources	Sections 16 to 18	19	17
#5 General	Sections 19 to 23	26	7
#6 Collections & Services	Sections 24 to 26	25	8
#7 Physical & Facilities	Sections 27 to 30	31	5

The library must provide all documentation for Areas 1 to 5 (System-wide guidelines) but is encouraged to also submit any photographic evidence which may be more difficult to experience on a virtual tour for the on-site observation areas of Section 6 and 7. Examples

might include parking lots where Wi-Fi may not be strong enough for a virtual tour or directional signs which are not onsite.

A. **Naming Convention on the Google Drive -** Each guideline is numbered for the section – 1.1., 1.2, etc. For the purposes of this audit any document, photo, video, or other evidence provided to support any of the OPLG Guidelines should be appropriately labelled for easy review and retrieval by the audit team. The names should include reference to the **actual OPLG Guideline number** and the name of the local file. For example:

- 14.5 Trillium Public Library programming policy.pdf
- 27.4 Trillium Public Library Road Sign West End.jpg

B. **General files -** We know that there are some items which provide supplementary evidence to support several guidelines. In this case, these can be uploaded using this naming convention. The audit team will "find" these files through the annotated *OPLG Checklist*.

- General A – Trillium Public Library Brochures
- Board By-law – Trillium Public Library Board By-laws
- General B – Trillium Public Library Event Posters
- Guidelines #'s – Trillium Public Library Social Media Posts

Step 4 – Review of materials

The audit team will review the annotated OPLG Checklist and the other documentation that was uploaded onto the Google Drive against the requirements of the OPLG Guidelines to determine whether the specific guideline was met.

The Library can expect to receive documentation feedback after the upload deadline and no less than two weeks prior to the Observation step (Virtual or In-person). This has been done to allow ample time for the Library staff to determine if additional documents, supports or information is needed to support the evidence of the guideline. Additionally, if policy, plans, or other evidence needs to be developed by the CEO or the Library Board, this gives the library time to start the process.

Step 5 - Observation Sections of *OPLG Checklist*

For Sections 6 and 7 of the OPLG Guidelines, the audit team will observe each of the library branches. It may be in the form of a virtual audit or, where there are more than 5 branches, it may be an on-site observation by one or more of the audit team.

A. **Virtual Tour Method**
When the audit team takes a "virtual" tour of your public library space, the date and time will be set by the audit team, in consultation with the library. It is the expectation of the

OPLG Council that the members of the audit team will be shown all areas of the public library required for the purposes of a virtual audit. Special care should be taken to demonstrate and guide the audit team through all public library spaces virtually, to address each of the guideline elements found in Sections 6 and 7.

This portion must be done in real time and not submitted to the audit team in recorded video format. The OPLG Council, in trust, will assume the public library system being audited will not purposefully or knowingly hide or obstruct any areas of the library for viewing during a virtual audit for any reason.

For the "virtual" tour of the library space, it is the OPLG's recommendation that a mobile device (e.g. smart phone, tablet) be used to conduct the tour. We will be using ZOOM. We also recommend having a team of two staff members or volunteers be available to provide the tour. That way, one person can be a "camera/device person" and another person can give the tour and provide the necessary evidence and information for each guideline in Sections 6 and 7.

B. Hybrid Audit: On-site observation Method
Where on-site observation is conducted, the audit team will visit the main facilities and all the branches within the system. If there are staff at the other locations, it is not necessary that the library CEO accompany the team on its tour of the facilities. The team will review the Guidelines within Sections 6 and 7 of the OPLG Checklist at each location to determine if that specific location can achieve a score of 90% (to pass the accreditation). The system sections (Sections 1 to 5) will be conducted via online method (using the Google Drive) at least two weeks prior to the onsite visit. Email the OPLG Council for consideration.

Step 6 - Audit Reports

After the audit, the audit team will provide an audit report, as outlined here:

1. The audit team will provide the library with a general report indicating the result shortly following the audit and **before** the report goes to the OPLG Council for consideration.

2. In the written report, the audit team will state whether the library is to be recommended to the OPLG Council for accreditation or not, as per the following scoring standards:
   a. Each question in the Guidelines shall be scored 1 point for successful achievement.
   b. To be recommended for accreditation a library must achieve no less than 90% of the overall Guidelines *and* in each of the major areas of the Guidelines. In addition, **all** Mandatory Guidelines must be met.
   c. Should the library being audited demonstrate to the audit team's satisfaction that any particular question is not relevant to the library's local situation because of the presence of a local institution, organization or service, this question may be omitted from the total number of questions and not used in calculating the above percentage.

3. If the library does not *quite* meet the required standard, but is substantially in compliance with the guidelines, the report *may* indicate which items require attention and set down a timetable within which these items may be upgraded to the appropriate standard without there being a need for another full peer audit. For example, a library with a total score of 88% (below the required minimum of 90% overall), could be given the opportunity to address enough outstanding items to meet the required minimum. Similarly, a library which fails to meet one or more guidelines designated as mandatory will be given an opportunity to correct the situation.

4. If the library is **not** to be recommended for accreditation, information is provided as to where the library may get assistance in helping it to meet the Guidelines in future.

After time for a review, the library must confirm with the audit team that they agree with the findings of the team. Once confirmation is received, then a copy of the report is forwarded to the Ontario Library Service representative(s) on the OPLG Council. Details of the audit report to OPLG Council are to remain confidential to the members of Council.

Step 7 - Accreditation Review by OPLG Council

1. Once the OPLG Council has an Audit Report which recommends accreditation or reaccreditation, the Council will review the report at their next meeting and may approve the recommendation.
2. Where the OPLG Council approves an audit team's recommendation, Council will formally recognize the library as an Accredited Ontario Public Library.
3. An Accredited Ontario Public Library will receive an accreditation certificate and such promotional items as the OPLG Council may make available, e.g. window clings. The Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries will be invited to sign the certificate. The certificate will be co-signed by the Chair of the OPLG Council and, whenever possible, presented at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference OPLA Awards Gala or other appropriate function.

Questions:

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