



Hybrid work in academic libraries: A scoping review of role stress, job control, service sustainability, and equity

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Academic libraries
Hybrid work
Remote work
Burnout
Job control
Role stress
Equity
Service sustainability

ABSTRACT

Hybrid work is no longer an emergency accommodation in academic libraries; it is a work-design issue that shapes service delivery, staffing equity, and employee sustainability. This scoping review maps academic-library literature on hybrid, remote, and flexible work and interprets it through scholarship on role stress, job control, workload equity, and resource loss. Searches of Google Scholar, major library and information science journals, publisher platforms, selected reports, and citation trails were conducted from November 2025 through April 2026. Eligible sources substantively addressed academic-library hybrid or remote work, return-to-campus practice, remote management, service continuity, or related work-design consequences. The final mapped corpus includes 32 direct and closely related academic-library sources. The evidence shows that hybrid work can operate as a job resource when it expands schedule discretion, reduces commuting burdens, protects concentration, supports accommodation, and strengthens recruitment and retention. It can also operate as a job demand when it intensifies telepressure, technostress, coordination strain, visibility anxiety, and unequal access to flexibility. The review argues that hybrid work is distinctive not because it creates wholly new stressors, but because it redistributes long-standing ones across space, time, visibility, and service coverage. For academic libraries, sustainable hybrid work requires more than deciding where employees work. It depends on task fit, meaningful job control, boundary norms, workload equity, hybrid-aware evaluation, and explicit attention to service sustainability.

Introduction

Hybrid work has become one of the most consequential post-pandemic questions in academic libraries, but discussion of it often remains more ideological than analytic. In professional conversation, hybrid work is commonly framed either as a long-overdue flexibility benefit or as a threat to collegiality, service quality, and institutional culture. The scholarly record suggests a more complicated reality. Academic librarianship is a layered form of work that combines public service, instruction, research support, collections and systems labor, scholarly or faculty work in some appointment systems, committee service, and substantial emotional labor. A change in where work occurs, therefore, also changes how boundaries are negotiated, how work is counted, and how professional value is recognized (Matteson & Miller, 2012, 2013; Shupe & Pung, 2011; Zai III, 2015). More broadly, recent organizational scholarship suggests that remote and hybrid arrangements are altering the temporal, spatial, and relational structure of knowledge work itself (Leonardi et al., 2024).

That question matters because role stress and burnout in academic librarianship predate COVID-19. Before the pandemic, researchers linked librarian strain to role ambiguity, role conflict, overload, emotional labor, and the pressure of expanding professional expectations (Nardine, 2019; Nicholson, 2019; Shupe et al., 2015). The pandemic did not invent those conditions; it exposed and intensified them. The rapid move to online reference, remote instruction, digital troubleshooting, emergency communication, and phased reopenings made clear how quickly work could be redistributed without a corresponding redesign of expectations or evaluation (Bullington et al., 2021; McCormick et al., 2022; McLay Paterson & Eva, 2022; Reed et al., 2022).

The direct academic-library literature also suggests that the profession has not simply returned to its pre-2020 form. In many settings, digital, physical, synchronous, and asynchronous work now coexist within persistent hybrid arrangements. Green (2022, 2023) documents continuing expectations for remote or hybrid options among academic library employees; Petersen et al. (2024) report similar patterns in academic health sciences libraries; and Hanz and McKinnon (2025) show

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacalib.2026.103275>

Received 12 March 2026; Received in revised form 11 May 2026; Accepted 26 May 2026

Available online 30 May 2026

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that librarian schedules and workspaces in Canada have stabilized into negotiated combinations of home and campus work. At the same time, these arrangements remain uneven across roles, services, and institutions, as research on job advertisements and position eligibility makes clear (Connell & Longmeier, 2025).

The implications are both practical and theoretical. For library leaders, hybrid work affects scheduling, supervision, recruitment, retention, space planning, workload equity, and service models. For workers, it affects concentration, commute burdens, autonomy, disability accommodation, visibility, and the boundary between professional and personal life. For libraries as institutions, it raises a service-design problem: how can an academic library meet its mission of research, teaching, learning, access, and community support while also sustaining the people who make those services possible?

This question is different from asking whether hybrid work is simply good or bad. A better question is how hybrid arrangements redistribute existing demands and resources. A public-services librarian may gain limited remote eligibility but continue to carry the heaviest interruption burden. A metadata librarian may gain concentration time while losing informal learning and team connection. A manager may support flexibility but spend more time coordinating schedules, documenting expectations, and maintaining trust. Hybrid work is therefore not just a location policy. It is a work-design intervention, even when institutions do not name it that way.

This review builds on, but differs from, prior conceptual work on occupational stress and role redesign in academic librarianship. Earlier work used Role Theory to argue that stress in academic libraries is structurally produced when service obligations, scholarly work, institutional citizenship, and emotional labor expand without corresponding clarity, resources, or evaluation alignment (De Prosperis, 2026). The present article makes a narrower contribution: it maps the emerging literature on hybrid, remote, and flexible work and clarifies what hybrid work adds to an already-stressed professional landscape.

Three questions guide this review. First, what does the academic library literature suggest about the prevalence, distribution, and organizational design of hybrid work? Second, what resources and demands are associated with hybrid work in academic libraries? Third, how do job control, role fit, service sustainability, and equity shape those outcomes? In answering these questions, the article argues that hybrid work serves as both a job resource and a job demand. It is most beneficial when it expands meaningful control over work, restores time and cognitive resources, supports accommodation, and is paired with transparent workload and evaluation practices. It is most harmful when it intensifies telepressure, creates inequitable access to flexibility, relocates work without redesigning it, or obscures the emotional and relational labor still required to sustain academic library services.

Conceptual framing: role stress, job demands-resources, conservation of resources, and job control

Role Theory offers a useful starting point. Classic role scholarship argues that work-related stress often emerges when expectations are unclear, incompatible, or excessive relative to available resources (Biddle, 1986; Kahn et al., 1964). Academic librarianship has long been susceptible to these conditions because librarians often work under multiple and partially competing expectations: responsive public service, teaching, research support, institutional citizenship, digital systems work, and, in some institutions, scholarly productivity. Hybrid work does not remove those tensions. It shifts where and how they appear. Tasks that once unfolded within a single physical workplace now unfold across offices, homes, classrooms, learning platforms, chat systems, meeting software, and local service desks.

The job demands-resources model sharpens this insight by distinguishing job demands that require sustained effort from job resources that help employees meet goals, reduce strain, or support growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Remote and hybrid arrangements can

serve as resources by reducing commute time, increasing scheduling flexibility, protecting concentration, and supporting accommodation. They can also operate as demands when they intensify communication load, expand technology dependence, fragment collaboration, or pressure workers to continuously signal availability. Conservation of Resources theory adds a temporal dynamic to this picture: time, energy, attention, and social support can be restored or depleted through hybrid arrangements, and resource loss can spiral when boundaries are weak (Hobfoll, 1989). This matters in academic libraries because flexibility without boundary protection can shift organizational strain into private time and space (McLay Paterson & Eva, 2022; Tedone, 2022).

Job control is especially important because it helps explain why similar hybrid policies produce different outcomes. Karasek's (1979) demand-control tradition argues that high demands are most damaging when workers have little discretion over how and when work is performed. Formal permission to work remotely is not the same as meaningful control over the workday. A worker may technically be hybrid while still having little influence over meeting schedules, availability norms, task sequencing, service coverage, or evaluation criteria. The academic library literature does not yet consistently measure this mechanism, but Johnson's (2023) study of instruction librarians links job control to burnout, and Johnson (2024) shows that control varies across work domains rather than existing as a single undifferentiated feeling.

Because academic-library studies do not yet directly measure all hybrid-work mechanisms, this review draws on broader telework and work-design literature to contextualize patterns identified in the academic-library corpus. Research outside librarianship consistently suggests that remote and hybrid work are more sustainable when paired with genuine autonomy and less sustainable when they increase ambiguity, telepressure, or isolation (Allen et al., 2013; Becker et al., 2022; Gajendran et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021). Read together with role-theory work on academic-library stress (De Prosperis, 2026), these perspectives support a central proposition: hybrid work outcomes depend less on modality alone than on whether modality redistributes demands and resources in ways that expand or erode control, and on whether inequities in visibility, workload, and flexibility are explicitly governed.

What is distinctive about hybrid work?

A central distinction is necessary at the outset: stress, burnout, inequity, and limited autonomy are not unique to hybrid work. They are long-standing problems in academic librarianship. The distinctive contribution of a hybrid-work analysis is therefore not the claim that hybrid work creates these problems from nothing. Rather, hybrid work changes the mechanisms through which they are experienced and governed.

In fully on-site arrangements, many pressures are organized around visible presence, immediate interruption, physical service coverage, and local norms of availability. Hybrid arrangements redistribute those same pressures across space and time. They can reduce some burdens, such as commuting and office interruption, while intensifying others, such as message vigilance, meeting coordination, visibility anxiety, and resentment when place-bound workers absorb more in-person service. Table 1 summarizes this difference. The table is intended to move the article beyond a simple claim that hybrid work can be positive or negative and toward a more specific account of how modality alters the pathways through which stressors affect people and services.

Methods

Review design and reporting approach

This scoping review followed the foundational framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005), subsequent methodological guidance (Levac et al.,

Table 1
How hybrid work changes preexisting academic-library stressors.

Preexisting issue	How it appears in fully on-site work	Hybrid-specific mechanism and supporting sources	Potential service or mission implication
Role overload	Interruptions, desk coverage, meetings, instruction, consultation, and project work compete within the same campus workday (Nardine, 2019; Shupe et al., 2015).	Workload may shift to dispersed calendars, asynchronous follow-up, message vigilance, and remote troubleshooting, without a visible reduction elsewhere (Barber et al., 2019; McLay Paterson & Eva, 2022; Murgu, 2021; Zipf, 2025).	Service continuity may appear stable while staff recovery declines, increasing longer-term burnout and turnover risk (Green, 2024; Petersen et al., 2024).
Role ambiguity	Expectations are inferred through local presence, supervisor cues, and visible service rhythms (Kahn et al., 1964; Shupe et al., 2015).	Workers may not know which work must be visible, how quickly messages require response, or whether remote work counts equally in evaluation (Hosoi et al., 2021; McCormick et al., 2022; Meregaglia et al., 2021).	Unclear expectations can weaken accountability and produce inconsistent service across departments and roles (Lembinen, 2023; Obenauf, 2021).
Limited autonomy	Control is constrained by desk schedules, class times, committee meetings, and campus norms (Johnson, 2023; Karasek, 1979).	Formal remote eligibility may not translate into control over pacing, response windows, focus time, or task sequencing (Johnson, 2024; Wang et al., 2021).	A policy that looks flexible may fail to improve morale or retention if actual control remains low (Green, 2023, 2024; Petersen et al., 2024).
Workload inequity	High-interruption, emotional, or service-heavy work may cluster around particular roles or individuals (Vong et al., 2023; Winterman & Asher, 2021).	Hybrid work can create a second layer of inequity if on-site workers absorb more visible coverage while remote-eligible roles gain more discretion (Connell & Longmeier, 2025; Dong & Mabry, 2024).	Libraries may unintentionally protect some forms of work while making public service less attractive or less sustainable (Hanz & McKinnon, 2025; Petersen et al., 2024).
Invisible labor	Mentoring, troubleshooting, emotional regulation, and preparation are often hidden behind visible desk or classroom work (Matteson & Miller, 2012, 2013; Nicholson, 2019).	Remote and asynchronous labor may become harder to see, while physical presence may be overvalued as a proxy for contribution (Meregaglia et al., 2021; Vong et al., 2023; Winterman & Asher, 2021).	Evaluation and promotion systems may misread who sustains the mission, especially when collaborative and relational labor is undercounted (McCormick et al., 2022; Meregaglia et al., 2021).

Note. Citations in the rows identify representative sources supporting the synthesis rather than every source used in the review. The point is not that hybrid work uniquely causes these problems. The point is that hybrid work changes where it occurs, how visible it is, and who is expected to absorb it.

2010; Peters et al., 2020), and PRISMA-ScR reporting principles (Tricco et al., 2018). The review was designed to map the emerging academic-library literature on hybrid, remote, and flexible work and to interpret it through work-design and role-stress frameworks. No protocol was prospectively registered.

Eligibility criteria

For methodological clarity, the review used two related but distinct evidence streams. The mapped academic-library corpus consisted of sources that directly or closely examined hybrid work, remote work, telework, flexible work agreements, return-to-campus experiences, remote management, work-from-home practice, or post-pandemic work-design consequences in academic libraries. A second stream of contextual mechanism literature consisted of foundational telework, work-design, emotional labor, role-stress, evaluation, and workload studies, which were used interpretively rather than counted as part of the mapped academic-library corpus.

Eligibility for the mapped corpus was deliberately broad enough to capture both explicit hybrid-work studies and closely related academic-library workplace studies. The mapped corpus, therefore, includes sources that substantively address service continuity, return-to-campus practice, remote management, productivity while working from home, and the organizational effects of flexible work arrangements, even when the word hybrid is not central to the title. This boundary was used because role stress and service sustainability are often discussed through related language such as remote management, work-from-home productivity, flexible work arrangements, videoconference consultations, workspace design, and crisis librarianship.

Sources were eligible for the mapped corpus if they were English-language sources published from January 2019 through April 2026; focused on academic libraries, academic librarians, academic health sciences libraries, or academic library employees; and offered substantive empirical, managerial, reflective, or analytic evidence about workplace modality, flexible work arrangements, service delivery, role design, employee experience, or staff management. Peer-reviewed journal articles, analytic reports, evidence summaries, and selected grey literature were eligible when they contained sufficient methodological or interpretive substance. Selected grey literature was retained when widely used in academic-library discourse, especially in early

ACRL and Ithaka S + R reports on workplace change (Bullington et al., 2021; Hinchliffe & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). Excluded from the mapped corpus were public-library-only studies, pieces focused only on user behavior or collections without workplace relevance, purely technical systems papers with no work-design implications, and short news items or editorials lacking substantive analysis.

Information sources and search strategy

Searches were conducted between November 2025 and March 2026, and the results were updated in April 2026. Information sources included Google Scholar; publisher and journal search interfaces on ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis Online, Project MUSE, and the websites of College & Research Libraries and Ithaka S + R; targeted searching of The Journal of Academic Librarianship, Journal of Library Administration, portal: Libraries and the Academy, Technical Services Quarterly, Public Services Quarterly, Journal of the Medical Library Association, Library Leadership & Management, Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, and related library-management venues; and backward and forward citation chaining. The April 2026 update added directly relevant academic-library workplace sources located through targeted retrieval and citation chaining, including Kaplan (2022), Tagge et al. (2024), Ragon et al. (2022), and Rodarte and Moore (2022).

A representative search string was: (“academic librar*” OR “university librar*” OR “college librar*” OR “academic librarian*”) AND (“hybrid work” OR “remote work” OR telework OR telecommut* OR “work from home” OR “flexible work” OR “return to campus”) AND (burnout OR “role stress” OR “job control” OR wellbeing OR recruitment OR retention OR scheduling OR workspace OR service). This string was adapted for journal and publisher interfaces, and additional combinations paired academic-library terms with COVID-19, virtual work, remote management, technostress, videoconference consultation, workspace, equity, return to campus, productivity, and accommodation.

Selection process and corpus update

The initial keyword search and targeted-platform process identified 101 records for screening. After duplicate and near-duplicate removal, 81 unique records remained for title-and-abstract screening. Forty records were excluded at that stage because they were outside academic-

library settings, focused on pandemic service change without workplace relevance, or did not meaningfully address work modality or work design. Forty-one full texts were assessed against the direct-modality eligibility criteria, yielding an initial mapped corpus of 23 sources. A supplemental April 2026 screen then applied the broader workplace-design eligibility rule described above and added or reclassified nine academic-library sources with clear relevance to hybrid, remote, flexible, or return-to-campus work design. The final mapped corpus, therefore, contains 32 academic-library sources. Relative to the initial mapped corpus, this represents a 39.1% increase following the supplemental update. Fig. 1 summarizes the screening and corpus-building process.

Data charting and synthesis

Data were charted in a structured matrix that recorded citation, publication year, country or institutional context, population or role, study design, modality focus, primary outcomes, equity dimensions, key findings, and relevance to role stress, job control, and service sustainability. The synthesis proceeded in two stages. First, the academic-library corpus was descriptively mapped to identify recurring patterns around normalization, eligibility, resources, demands, equity, service implications, and organizational design. Second, themes were interpreted through the lenses of role stress, job demands-resources, the Conservation of Resources theory, and job control. The contextual mechanism literature was used to explain patterns observed in the academic-library corpus, but it was not counted as direct evidence of hybrid-work outcomes in academic libraries.

Critical appraisal statement

No formal critical appraisal or risk-of-bias assessment was undertaken. That choice is consistent with many scoping review designs and appropriate for a heterogeneous corpus that includes surveys, interviews, cross-sectional studies, analytical reports, evidence summaries, and practice-oriented reflections. It also means that the review maps the contours of the literature more than it adjudicates relative evidentiary strength. Heterogeneity was handled through transparent eligibility criteria, explicit separation of the academic-library corpus from contextual mechanism literature, and thematic synthesis rather

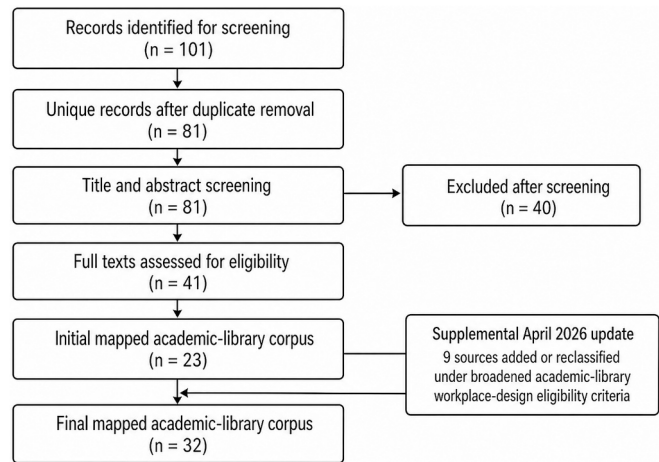


Fig. 1. Selection process for the mapped academic-library corpus. Note. The figure summarizes the screening and corpus-building process used for the mapped academic-library literature. The supplemental April 2026 update added or reclassified nine sources under the broadened academic-library workplace-design eligibility criteria, resulting in a final mapped corpus of 32 sources. Kaplan (2022) is included as an evidence summary and interpretive commentary on flexible work agreements rather than as independent primary empirical evidence.

than vote counting. Selected academic-library studies are summarized in Table 2, and the full source list appears in Appendix A.

Hybrid work became normalized, but not evenly distributed

The direct academic-library corpus suggests that hybrid work has become normalized across many academic-library contexts, but unevenly and not universally. Early pandemic-era writing focused on emergency adaptation: remote reference, online instruction, distributed technical-services work, remote management, and the conversion of in-person workflows into digitally mediated ones (Bullington et al., 2021; Cohn & Hyams, 2021; Obenauf, 2021; Reed et al., 2022; Wheeler & Kyprianou-Chavda, 2021). In these early accounts, modality change was less a choice than a survival strategy. Even so, these sources documented how quickly academic libraries could reorganize labor when

Table 2
Selected academic-library sources across the mapped corpus.

Source	Design or setting	Contribution to the review
Hosoi et al. (2021); Kaplan (2022)	Leadership interviews in large research libraries and evidence summary	Shows that flexible work depends on technology, communication, trust, role fit, equity, and implementation support. Kaplan sharpens the equity implications of flexible work agreements.
Green (2022, 2023, 2024)	Surveys and analysis of modality expectations, options, preferences, and satisfaction	Documents continuing interest in remote or hybrid options and links remote-work satisfaction to recruitment and retention.
McLay Paterson and Eva (2022)	Qualitative interviews with Canadian academic librarians	Documents boundary blurring, intensified work, isolation, and the feeling of being always at work.
Rodarte and Moore (2022)	Survey of academic librarians working from home during COVID-19	Adds evidence on productivity and job satisfaction during forced work-from-home arrangements.
Tagge et al. (2024)	Socio-ecological reflection on hybrid work in an academic library	Moves the discussion from individual preference to individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels of impact.
Petersen et al. (2024)	National surveys in academic health sciences libraries	Finds remote and hybrid work common and associated with morale, work-life balance, retention, productivity, and recruitment.
Hanz and McKinnon (2025)	Canadian study of academic librarian schedules and workspaces	Shows stabilized home-campus work combinations and the importance of interruption-resistant workspaces.
Connell and Longmeier (2025)	Job advertisement analysis and follow-up survey data	Shows uneven hybrid or remote eligibility by role and continuing variation in whether arrangements are disclosed.
Folk (2023); Rathbun-Grubb (2024)	Studies of long COVID and chronic conditions among library workers	Shows that flexibility can support continued participation but remains unevenly supported and culturally fragile.
Murgu (2021); Zipf (2025)	Studies of technostress and burnout in academic library work	Shows that technology-mediated work can amplify role overload, disruption, and burnout risk when support and boundaries are weak.
Ragon et al. (2022)	Multisite mixed-method study of academic health sciences libraries during COVID-19	Shows that service transferability varied by function and that telecommuting and staff well-being concerns persisted beyond the emergency pivot.

Note. The table highlights selected sources used in the synthesis. Appendix A lists all sources in the mapped corpus.

access to physical buildings was constrained.

Later studies suggest that some of those arrangements persisted. [Green's \(2022\)](#) survey of employees in collections and resource-description contexts found expectations that remote-work trends would continue, especially where digital systems and workflow-based tasks already supported location flexibility. [Green \(2023\)](#) extended that picture across a broader U.S. sample and found that regular remote or hybrid options had become common, even as preferences remained divided rather than uniform. [Woods \(2023\)](#) reports continued weekly remote work among many academic librarians in Virginia, while [Hanz and McKinnon \(2025\)](#) describe stabilized combinations of home and campus work in Canada. In academic health sciences libraries, [Petersen et al. \(2024\)](#) likewise found that remote and hybrid work were common and were associated with morale, work-life balance, and retention-related outcomes. [Meyers-Martin's \(2024\)](#) survey of videoconference research consultations, conducted nearly three years after the onset of the pandemic, further suggests that remote service modalities remained embedded in everyday practice rather than disappearing after reopening.

The expanded corpus adds useful nuance. [Rodarte and Moore \(2022\)](#) show that academic librarians working from home during the pandemic often perceived themselves as productive and generally satisfied, although their study also reflects the limits of emergency conditions as evidence for long-term design. [Ragon et al. \(2022\)](#) found that academic health sciences library services varied in how easily they could be transferred to remote environments, which helps explain why hybrid policy cannot be separated from service function. [Tagge et al. \(2024\)](#) use a socio-ecological model to show that hybrid work affects not only individuals but also interpersonal relations, program culture, the wider library community, and societal expectations. [Kaplan's \(2022\)](#) evidence summary of [Hosoi et al. \(2021\)](#) further emphasizes that flexible work agreements may be durable but uneven in equity and implementation.

Normalization, however, did not mean uniformity. Eligibility for hybrid work remains distributed unequally across roles and tasks. Technical services, metadata, digital scholarship, systems, and some scholarly writing translate more readily to remote environments than circulation, facilities-dependent work, public-facing service points, or some forms of in-person instruction and outreach ([Connell & Longmeier, 2025](#); [Dong & Mabry, 2024](#); [Green, 2022](#)). In other words, unequal access to flexibility is not simply a matter of individual preference. It is built into job design.

That structural unevenness has practical consequences. [Berg et al. \(2022\)](#) found mixed experiences among New Jersey academic librarians during reopenings, including anxieties about return-to-campus conditions, austerity, and intention to remain in the profession. [Lembinen \(2023\)](#) similarly shows that academic-library leaders faced difficult decisions about safety, physical services, and new ways of working during the crisis, and those decisions continued to shape the post-crisis organization of work. What emerges from the mapped corpus is not a single post-pandemic model but a differentiated landscape in which hybrid work persists, yet is unevenly distributed across roles, service models, institutional policies, and local cultures.

Hybrid work as a job resource

The mapped literature suggests that hybrid work can create genuine resources for academic library employees. One recurring resource is time. Reducing or eliminating commute time returns hours and energy to workers, especially in regions with long travel times, parking costs, or difficult campus access. [Woods \(2023\)](#) identifies transportation burdens as a salient disadvantage of on-site work, and [Green \(2023\)](#) documents strong continued interest in modality flexibility. Under the Conservation of Resources theory, such recovered time can buffer overload by increasing recovery and allowing more intentional task sequencing ([Hobfoll, 1989](#)). In academic library work, where many employees move among meetings, consultations, preparation, email, and project work,

even modest gains in uninterrupted time may matter disproportionately.

A second resource is concentration. Several studies suggest that remote work can improve conditions for tasks requiring sustained attention, including writing, metadata creation, documentation, analytical work, and some kinds of planning and problem solving ([Green, 2022](#); [Hanz & McKinnon, 2025](#); [Rodarte & Moore, 2022](#)). These benefits appear most plausible in roles where work is partly asynchronous and interruption-heavy office conditions are common. Broader remote-work research supports this interpretation by showing that home-based or self-selected work locations can protect deep work when demands for constant responsiveness are controlled ([Wang et al., 2021](#)).

A third resource is autonomy, but only under supportive conditions. The academic-library corpus repeatedly points to communication, trust, and supervisory support as conditions for flexible work to become sustainable ([Hosoi et al., 2021](#); [Obenauf, 2021](#)). [Green \(2023\)](#) and [Petersen et al. \(2024\)](#) suggest that modality options are associated with positive perceptions of work-life balance or morale for many employees, while [Albro and McElfresh \(2021\)](#) found that employee-organization relationship and engagement during the work-from-home period were shaped by information flow and organizational commitment. Read together, these studies suggest that flexibility is experienced not simply through location but through how strongly employees feel supported, informed, and trusted.

Recruitment and retention are another recurring resource pathway. [Green \(2024\)](#) argues that satisfaction with remote-work options has clear implications for recruitment and retention, and [Petersen et al. \(2024\)](#) found that remote and hybrid work ranked highly among factors shaping job satisfaction and willingness to remain. [Lowe et al. \(2024\)](#) add a complementary perspective from job seekers, emphasizing the importance of candidate-centered practices and work environments aligned with personal wellness and values. [Connell and Longmeier \(2025\)](#) further suggest that hybrid or remote eligibility can function as a recruitment signal, even though many institutions still under-disclose it in job advertisements. In a labor market where academic libraries compete for digital, technical, and instructional talent, flexibility has become part of the employment package.

Finally, hybrid work may support accessibility and continued participation for some librarians with disabilities, chronic conditions, or long COVID. [Folk \(2023\)](#) and [Rathbun-Grubb \(2024\)](#) both show that health conditions continued to shape academic library work during and after the pandemic. [Corrado \(2023\)](#) similarly notes that telework may support employees who benefit from modified environments or reduced commuting burdens. For some workers, then, hybrid work is not best understood as a perk. It is part of an accommodation ecology that affects whether continued employment remains feasible. The literature suggests that these resource benefits are real, but also conditional: they depend on role fit, supervisory support, and norms that protect control rather than merely relocating work.

Hybrid work as a job demand

The same body of literature also documents substantial costs. Hybrid work can create or intensify job demands even when workers value flexibility overall. The most frequently reported demand in the direct corpus is boundary erosion. [McLay Paterson and Eva \(2022\)](#) found that many Canadian academic librarians experienced themselves as always at work during the pandemic, with the workday leaking into evenings, weekends, and domestic space. [Berg et al. \(2022\)](#) likewise found that return-to-campus arrangements did not erase strain; many respondents continued to report negative experiences, changed views of the profession, and concerns about staying. [Obenauf \(2021\)](#) describes the managerial and interpersonal difficulties of supervising remote staff, including communication overload and the need for new norms. Together, these studies suggest that when work leaves the building, it does not necessarily leave the worker.

Contextual telepressure research helps explain why. [Barber et al.](#)

(2019) show that pressure to respond quickly to messages undermines recovery and work-life balance, and Tedone (2022) links after-hours email behavior to well-being risks. Academic library work is especially susceptible to this dynamic because many roles are relational, service-oriented, and built around responsiveness. In hybrid settings, therefore, flexibility may coexist with heightened vigilance.

Technostress is a second recurring demand. Direct academic-library evidence is especially important here. Murgu's (2021) mixed-methods study of digital scholarship librarians found that technostress itself was not uniformly extreme, but organizational factors surrounding complex and rapidly changing technical work exacerbated feelings of role overload and burnout. Zipf (2025) extends this picture across academic library workers, highlighting constant connectivity, disruption, and role overload as technology-mediated stressors. Broader research on information and communication technologies suggests a similar pattern: the same systems that enable remote and hybrid work can also produce strain when support is weak, or expectations proliferate (Day et al., 2012; Ninaus et al., 2021). Hybrid work does not create technostress on its own, but it often expands the number of platforms, channels, and mediated tasks employees must manage simultaneously.

A third demand concerns coordination, onboarding, and community. Hybrid arrangements may support concentration for individually managed tasks, but they can complicate collaboration and informal knowledge exchange. Hosoi et al. (2021) emphasize that flexible work succeeds only when communication, role fit, and managerial support are explicit. Hanz and McKinnon (2025) suggest that workspace design and schedule coordination have become intertwined questions, while McBrayer (2025) identifies managing flexibility and building team culture as post-pandemic leadership competencies. Tagge et al. (2024) similarly show that hybrid work has interpersonal and community-level consequences, not only individual-level effects. In libraries, where much practical learning still occurs through observation, quick consultation, and local knowledge, reduced co-presence can create friction even when employees value hybrid schedules overall.

A fourth demand is visibility uncertainty. The literature suggests that some employees worry that work conducted remotely will be judged differently from work performed in person, especially when outputs are collaborative, relational, or asynchronous. This issue is particularly salient in faculty-status or tenure-track contexts, where evaluation systems may continue to privilege familiar markers of productivity even as actual work patterns change. McCormick et al. (2022) document how the pandemic complicated expectations for tenure-track librarians, while Meregaglia et al. (2021) show the importance of revising evaluation frameworks to reflect contemporary library work. Role-architecture scholarship makes the same point at the conceptual level: stress intensifies when actual responsibilities and formal evaluations diverge (De Prosperis, 2026). Hybrid work may widen that gap when institutions expect the same level of visible participation, service, and scholarly output across multiple modalities without explicit recalibration.

Finally, hybrid work does not eliminate emotional labor. Librarianship has long required workers to regulate both their own emotions and those of others, often without formal acknowledgment (Grandey, 2000; Matteson & Miller, 2012, 2013). Salvesen and Berg (2021) show that pandemic-era academic librarians experienced intense emotional strain, and later reopening research suggests that emotional demands persisted rather than disappearing with physical return (Berg et al., 2022). Hybrid service environments may require librarians to support anxious students and faculty, maintain a collegial tone across fragmented interactions, and address institutional uncertainty through both digital and in-person channels simultaneously. The literature therefore suggests that hybrid work can feel simultaneously liberating and exhausting: it may return time and discretion to some employees while intensifying the self-management, communication, and emotional steadiness required to keep work sustainable.

Why job control matters

Across the literature, job control emerges as a central moderator and recurring explanatory mechanism, helping explain why hybrid work is beneficial in some settings and corrosive in others. Workers do not simply need the option to work somewhere else. They need meaningful discretion over how work is organized, paced, and judged. In academic libraries, hybrid work may reduce some demands while increasing others. The balance appears more favorable when workers retain influence over task sequencing, location choice, concentration time, meeting burden, response expectations, and how outputs are evaluated.

Direct academic-library evidence on this mechanism is still limited but suggestive. Johnson (2023) found that job control was an important factor in burnout among academic instruction librarians, a group whose work is often highly scheduled, relational, and visible. Johnson (2024) further shows that job control varies across work domains, including evaluation, workload, and other dimensions of professional discretion. Although these studies are not themselves hybrid-work studies, they offer direct academic-library evidence that control matters for strain and that it is experienced unevenly across the job.

Several studies in the mapped corpus indirectly support this interpretation, even when they do not explicitly measure job control. Green (2023) shows that preferences for work modality are divided, suggesting that workers value flexibility differently depending on role and circumstance. Hanz and McKinnon (2025) highlight the importance of scheduling and workspace arrangements, and Petersen et al. (2024) link remote or hybrid options to morale and work-life balance in settings where flexibility is substantively available rather than merely symbolic. Rodarte and Moore (2022) add evidence that productivity and satisfaction can remain strong when work-from-home conditions support the work being performed. These findings do not prove that hybrid work always increases control; rather, they suggest that control is the mechanism libraries must examine to understand why a policy succeeds in one role and fails in another.

Broader telework research helps interpret why this matters. Allen et al. (2013) argue that flexible work arrangements should not be treated as universally empowering; their effects depend on how flexibility interacts with work-family conflict and control. Wang et al. (2021) emphasize that effective remote work depends on work design rather than on location alone, while Gajendran et al. (2024) show that remote-work intensity can generate both positive outcomes through autonomy and negative outcomes through isolation and communication strain. The implication for academic libraries is clear: modality policy should not be confused with job control. A library can allow remote work while retaining an inflexible meeting culture, vague availability norms, or opaque evaluation systems.

Hybrid work, equity, role fit, and power

In academic libraries, the consequences of hybrid work are distributed through role fit, visibility, disability, caregiving, status, and the unequal allocation of invisible labor. The current evidence base is stronger on differential access and visibility than on cumulative inter-sectional effects, which remain undermeasured in academic-library research. Still, the available literature is sufficient to show that hybrid work has a central equity dimension rather than an incidental one.

Role fit. Because some roles are more compatible with off-site work than others, flexibility becomes stratified by function. Workers in technical, digital, systems, or writing-intensive roles may receive more location discretion than workers whose jobs center on desk coverage, facilities, or place-bound instruction. Connell and Longmeier (2025) show that hybrid and remote eligibility varied by job function in academic librarian job advertisements, and Green (2022) documents a similar pattern in technical-services-adjacent work. Dong and Mabry (2024) likewise remind us that reference

scheduling is itself a workload-design problem in the post-pandemic period. A library may believe it has adopted a neutral policy while still creating a two-tier workplace in which some employees gain discretion, and others absorb the costs of visible, place-bound service.

Caregiving and gender. Research across academia shows that pandemic and post-pandemic work arrangements affected caregivers, especially women, unevenly, often by compressing professional labor and caregiving into the same space and time (Myers et al., 2020; Staniscuaski et al., 2020). Direct academic-library studies do not yet consistently measure these effects, but Lowe et al. (2024), Green (2024), and Petersen et al. (2024) suggest that wellness, fit, and flexibility matter for recruitment and retention. The literature therefore suggests that hybrid work does not uniformly reduce work-family conflict; for some employees, it may do so, but for others, it may intensify it unless control and workload expectations are thoughtfully designed.

Disability, chronic illness, and long COVID. Folk (2023) shows that academic library employees with long COVID experienced both support and strain, while Rathbun-Grubb (2024) documents how chronic conditions continued to shape library work during and after the pandemic. For some librarians, hybrid arrangements may reduce commuting burdens, exposure risks, or environmental strain. Yet these benefits remain conditional on supportive supervision and on institutional willingness to treat flexibility as a legitimate accommodation rather than a sign of reduced commitment. The equity potential of hybrid work for disability inclusion is therefore real, but not automatic.

Racialized invisible labor. Vong et al. (2023) show that racialized academic librarians often perform multiple forms of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism labor that exceed what job descriptions formally capture. More broadly, scholarship in higher education shows that service burdens are not distributed randomly (Guarino & Borden, 2017). Hybrid work can intersect with these dynamics in contradictory ways. It may reduce daily exposure to some hostile interactions for some workers while increasing invisibility for others. Meanwhile, workers from marginalized groups may continue to carry disproportionate mentoring, representational, and climate labor regardless of modality.

Symbolic visibility. The rhetoric around hybrid work often privileges what is visible and countable: days on campus, hours online, response speed, and meeting attendance. Yet libraries also depend on forms of labor that do not map neatly onto such metrics, including mentoring, emotional steadiness, troubleshooting, coordination, and relational repair. Matteson and Miller (2012, 2013), Winterman and Asher (2021), and role-architecture scholarship each show, in different ways, how consequential hidden work can be (De Prosperis, 2026). If hybrid work is assessed through simplistic visibility standards, the burden will fall hardest on those whose contributions are already easiest to overlook. For that reason, hybrid work cannot be evaluated solely by aggregate preference or morale measures. Libraries need to ask who gains control, who loses it, whose work becomes more visible, whose becomes less visible, and who is expected to compensate for the resulting imbalances.

From work arrangement to library service sustainability

A central implication of this review is the explicit connection between hybrid work and the library's mission. Hybrid work is not only an employee preference issue; it affects how libraries sustain instruction, reference, research support, technical infrastructure, collections workflows, assessment, and campus partnerships. The literature does not yet offer strong causal evidence that hybrid work improves or worsens service quality across academic libraries. It does, however, identify mechanisms that are likely to affect service outcomes: schedule reliability, staff retention, time devoted to complex work, coordination

across units, interruption burden, and the credibility of hybrid policies among workers who must implement them.

This service connection also helps answer why the recommendations below do not apply only to work performed remotely. Hybrid work changes the entire service system because the flexibility of one role often depends on coverage, coordination, documentation, or availability from another role. A liaison librarian's protected remote writing day may depend on shared reference coverage. A technical-services employee's remote concentration time may depend on clear handoffs with acquisitions, access services, or systems. A manager's flexible policy may work only if staff know how communication, emergency coverage, and evaluation will be handled. The hybrid design, therefore, reaches beyond remote days because academic library services are interdependent.

Table 3 summarizes role-specific pathways that future research and local policy assessment should examine. The table does not imply that every role within a category is identical. Rather, it shows why library leaders need role-sensitive analysis rather than a single universal hybrid rule.

Implications for academic library design and leadership

If hybrid work is both a resource and a demand, and if job control is one of the most recurrent explanatory mechanisms shaping that balance, then the practical question becomes how libraries should design hybrid work rather than whether they should endorse or reject it in principle. The recommendations below are not a call for a complete restructuring of all library work. They are narrower hybrid-governance levers: actions that help libraries make modality decisions visible, equitable, and connected to service sustainability.

First, libraries should adopt task-based rather than ideology-based modality planning. Not every role requires the same arrangement, but neither should modality be assigned based on informal assumptions or historical bias. Leaders should ask which tasks require physical co-presence, which benefit from it, which can be performed remotely without service loss, and which require protected focus regardless of location. The direct corpus repeatedly points toward this task-fit logic, whether in technical services, public services scheduling, health sciences work, or position eligibility (Connell & Longmeier, 2025; Dong & Mabry, 2024; Green, 2022; Petersen et al., 2024). Many positions contain both place-bound and location-flexible components, and hybrid design works best when those components are mapped explicitly rather than reduced to a single label.

Second, libraries should protect job control in substantive rather than merely symbolic ways. This means more than allowing occasional remote days. It means giving employees real discretion over when concentrated work occurs, limiting unnecessary meetings, clarifying expected response times, and building trust into supervision. Johnson's (2023, 2024) research suggests that burnout cannot be understood apart from control, while broader telework research shows that autonomy is one of the strongest routes through which flexibility becomes beneficial (Allen et al., 2013; Gajendran et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021). A hybrid policy that expands location options while preserving constant interruption is unlikely to deliver its promised gains.

Third, leaders need explicit boundary governance around after-hours communication, meeting density, platform sprawl, and expectations for online presence. McLay Paterson and Eva (2022), Barber et al. (2019), Tedone (2022), Murgu (2021), and Zipf (2025) all suggest that digital work can easily become endless work. Boundary protection is therefore not an individual lifestyle preference. It is a resource-preservation strategy. Without it, hybrid work relocates the overload.

Fourth, a hybrid design must be paired with workload equity. If some employees receive flexibility while others absorb more desk hours, service coverage, or interpersonal labor, resentment and exhaustion will follow. Libraries should therefore audit who covers high-interruption service points, who carries the heaviest in-person burden, who performs the most emotional or representational labor, and how those

Table 3
Role-specific service and mission pathways in hybrid academic-library work.

Role or work area	Likely hybrid resource	Likely hybrid demand	Service or mission question	Illustrative supporting sources
Instruction and public services	Remote days may protect lesson design, asynchronous content creation, assessment, and consultation preparation.	Desk coverage, classroom schedules, and faculty expectations can reduce actual discretion; virtual service may increase after-hours follow-up.	Does hybrid design improve instructional quality and consultation responsiveness, or does it simply move preparation into invisible time?	Johnson (2023, 2024); Meyers-Martin (2024); Dong and Mabry (2024)
Reference, access, and place-bound services	Some administrative, training, scheduling, or documentation work may be remote or asynchronous.	Workers may have less remote eligibility and carry more visible interruptions, emotional labor, and building-based coverage.	How are place-bound burdens recognized, rotated, compensated, or balanced against flexibility elsewhere?	Dong and Mabry (2024); Cohn and Hyams (2021); Reed et al. (2022)
Technical services, metadata, and collections	Remote work may support concentration, productivity, and fewer interruptions for complex workflow tasks.	Onboarding, informal problem-solving, and coordination across acquisitions, access, and systems may become harder.	Are workflow quality, turnaround time, staff learning, and cross-unit handoffs sustained under hybrid arrangements?	Green (2022); Corrado (2023); Hanz and McKinnon (2025)
Systems, digital scholarship, and technology-intensive roles	Location flexibility may work well for both project-based and platform-based work.	Technostress, tool sprawl, and pressure for constant availability can intensify.	Are technology services reliable because roles are well-designed, or because staff absorb unmanaged response pressure?	Murgu (2021); Reed et al. (2022); Corrado (2023)
Managers and administrators	A hybrid policy can support recruitment, retention, inclusion, and space planning.	Managers must coordinate fairness, communication, evaluation, culture, and handling of exceptions across unequal roles.	Does the policy strengthen trust and service continuity, or does uneven implementation erode morale and staffing stability?	Hosoi et al. (2021); Obenauf (2021); McBrayer (2025); Tagge et al. (2024)

Note. The sources in the final column provide representative support for each role-specific pathway. Because Table 3 synthesizes patterns across the mapped literature, the citations are not intended to list every source relevant to each row. All sources cited in the table are included in the reference list.

burdens correlate with status, role type, and social position. In academic libraries, equitable hybrid design is not sameness of location but fairness in workload, visibility, discretion, recognition, and evaluation across differently situated roles (De Prosperis, 2026; Vong et al., 2023; Winterman & Asher, 2021).

Fifth, evaluation systems, supervisory practice, and workspace design all need to become hybrid-aware. Meregaglia et al. (2021) show that annual evaluation frameworks can be revised to better reflect contemporary library work, and McCormick et al. (2022) demonstrate how disruption complicates established tenure-track expectations. In hybrid settings, evaluation should explicitly recognize asynchronous instruction, digital troubleshooting, collaborative planning, relationship maintenance, and service design. Hanz and McKinnon (2025) further suggest that workspace design must now account for the coexistence of on-campus presence and off-site work rhythms, while McBrayer (2025) argues that post-pandemic leadership requires skills in managing flexibility, culture, and sustainable workplaces. The best formal policy will fail if daily managerial practice continues to reward presenteeism over thoughtful work design.

A practical implementation sequence can keep these recommendations manageable. A library could begin with a brief policy audit that identifies which roles are hybrid-eligible, which are not, and why. It could then map major tasks by location requirement, interruption intensity, and service consequence. Next, supervisors and staff could establish response-time norms, meeting boundaries, and protected focus blocks. After that, workload-equity data could be reviewed to determine whether place-bound, emotionally demanding, or high-interruption labor is unfairly concentrated. Finally, annual-review templates and service metrics could be updated to document asynchronous, remote, and relational labor rather than assume it. This sequence does not require rebuilding the library from scratch. It requires making the hidden design choices in hybrid work explicit.

Discussion

Three contributions emerge from this review. First, hybrid work in academic libraries is neither uniformly beneficial nor uniformly harmful. The academic-library corpus is heterogeneous in setting, role focus, and method, so the patterns synthesized here should be read as convergent tendencies rather than uniform effects. The evidence suggests a dual reality: hybrid arrangements can restore time,

concentration, and flexibility for some workers while simultaneously increasing telepressure, coordination burdens, and visibility uncertainty for others. A simple pro- or anti-hybrid position, therefore, obscures the most important finding in the literature, namely that outcomes depend on the surrounding design of work.

Second, the review clarifies what is distinctive about hybrid work. Hybrid work does not create academic-library burnout, role conflict, invisible labor, or inequity out of thin air. Those problems were already present in academic librarianship. What hybrid work changes is the distribution of those pressures across location, time, communication channels, symbolic visibility, and service coverage. This clarification strengthens the link between hybrid work and stress, burnout, autonomy, and equity: hybrid work is analytically important not because it is the only source of those problems, but because it reorganizes the conditions under which those problems are either relieved or intensified.

Third, job control helps explain the balance between resources and demands. Direct academic-library studies rarely comprehensively measure hybrid-work mechanisms, but the available evidence on burnout, flexibility, schedule design, and work-from-home productivity repeatedly points to control as a recurring explanatory mechanism. Contextual telework research strengthens this interpretation by showing that autonomy and discretion are among the clearest pathways to sustainable remote work. For academic libraries, the practical implication is that modality policy alone is a weak intervention. What matters is whether employees retain meaningful influence over pacing, sequencing, responsiveness, concentration, and evaluation.

Finally, equity depends on role fit, visibility, and invisible labor. Hybrid work does not distribute its benefits evenly. The literature suggests that eligibility is stratified by function, that disability and caregiving needs shape the value of flexibility, and that symbolic visibility can obscure important forms of labor already underrecognized in academic libraries. This means that a hybrid-work policy cannot be treated as a neutral scheduling matter. It is also a question of workload governance, accommodation, institutional culture, and organizational justice.

Limitations and directions for research

This review has several limitations. It is a scoping review rather than an effectiveness review, and no formal critical appraisal was undertaken. The search strategy emphasized Google Scholar, journal and publisher interfaces, selected reports, targeted source retrieval, and

citation chaining rather than a full export from a proprietary database. The supplemental search and broader eligibility rule added targeted and citation-chain sources and broadened the mapped corpus, but the review still should not be treated as a database-exhaustive systematic review. The evidence base is weighted toward North America and English-language publications, and terminology remains inconsistent across remote, telework, flexible, work-from-home, return-to-campus, and hybrid arrangements. Screening and charting were conducted by a single reviewer, increasing the risk of judgmental bias in borderline cases. Finally, some explanatory claims rely on contextual mechanism literature because direct academic-library studies still underemphasize job control, telepressure, service outcomes, and cumulative intersectional effects.

These limits also clarify the next phase of research. First, academic libraries would benefit from comparative studies of hybrid-work designs across role types and institution types, especially studies that examine how schedule design, service expectations, and modality eligibility interact. Second, qualitative intersectional studies are needed to examine how hybrid policies are experienced by caregivers, librarians with disabilities or chronic conditions, racialized librarians, contingent employees, and early-career staff. Third, the field is ready for multi-site survey research that pairs validated burnout measures with constructs such as job control, telepressure, technostress, retention intention, perceived service coordination, and perceived workload fairness. Fourth, research should move beyond employee preference and examine service-level consequences, including consultation quality, instruction preparation, response reliability, workflow turnaround time, onboarding, and staff retention. Such work would move the field from descriptive mapping toward stronger empirical explanations of when hybrid work supports sustainable academic-library practice and when it reproduces existing strains in new form.

Conclusion

Hybrid work is now part of the organizational reality of academic libraries. The literature no longer supports treating it as either a temporary concession or a self-evident solution. Instead, the mapped evidence suggests that hybrid work is a dual phenomenon: it can provide autonomy, concentration, accessibility, and benefits for recruitment or retention, but it can also produce telepressure, technostress, isolation, visibility anxiety, and inequitable workload distribution. The difference lies less in modality itself than in how work is designed, governed, and evaluated.

The most important practical lesson is that hybrid work should be managed as a service-design and role-design issue, not merely as a scheduling preference. A library that offers remote days but leaves response expectations undefined may increase flexibility while reducing recovery. A library that protects remote concentration time for some roles but leaves others to carry more interruptions and emotional labor may deepen inequity even while appearing progressive. A library that advertises hybrid flexibility but evaluates only visible presence, rapid

responsiveness, or traditional outputs may undermine the very retention benefits it aims to achieve.

Implementation can begin modestly. Leaders can map tasks by location requirements, clarify which work requires physical co-presence, set explicit response-time norms, create protected focus blocks, document hidden labor, and review whether place-bound services are being distributed and recognized fairly. They can also ask whether evaluation criteria reflect the work that now sustains the library: asynchronous instruction, digital troubleshooting, consultation preparation, emotional labor, mentoring, and coordination across platforms and places. These steps do not require a perfect hybrid model before action begins. They require a willingness to make tradeoffs visible.

For academic libraries, the practical task is not to decide whether hybrid work is inherently good or bad. It is to govern hybrid work deliberately by matching modality to tasks, protecting boundaries, increasing meaningful control, making hidden work legible, connecting flexibility to service sustainability, and building evaluation systems that reflect the realities of contemporary academic library labor. Sustainable hybrid work in academic libraries depends less on modality itself than on task fit, meaningful job control, boundary norms, workload equity, and the continuing alignment between staff well-being and the library's mission.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Marco De Prosperis: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author used Grammarly for grammar, spelling, and style edits. AI tools were not used to generate content or analyze data. The author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the published article.

Funding

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Declaration of competing interest

The author declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Mapped academic-library corpus

The mapped corpus includes 32 academic-library sources with direct or closely related relevance to hybrid, remote, flexible, work-from-home, return-to-campus, remote management and post-pandemic work design issues. The appendix is included to make the review's evidence base transparent.

Source	Primary relevance to this review
Albro and McElfresh (2021)	Work-from-home engagement and employee-organization relationship.
Berg et al. (2022)	Return-to-campus experiences and concerns about professional sustainability.
Bullington et al. (2021)	COVID-19 protocols and operational changes in academic libraries.

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Source	Primary relevance to this review
Cohn and Hyams (2021)	Remote reference during COVID-19.
Connell and Longmeier (2025)	Hybrid or remote eligibility in job advertisements and role variation.
Corrado (2023)	Telework and remote work in library futures.
Dong and Mabry (2024)	Reference scheduling and post-pandemic service coverage.
Folk (2023)	Long COVID and academic library work.
Green (2022)	Collections, remote work expectations, and resource description staffing.
Green (2023)	Academic library employees' modality options and preferences.
Green (2024)	Remote-work satisfaction, recruitment, and retention.
Hanz and McKinnon (2025)	Academic librarian schedules and workspaces.
Hinchliffe and Wolff-Eisenberg (2020)	Academic library responses to COVID-19 and the emerging new normal.
Hosoi et al. (2021)	Flexible work and academic-library management.
Kaplan (2022)	Evidence summary highlighting flexible work agreements and equity concerns.
Lembinen (2023)	Academic Library Leadership Decision-Making During a Crisis.
Lowe et al. (2024)	Recruitment practices and candidate-centered work environments.
McBrayer (2025)	Leadership competencies for flexible and sustainable post-pandemic libraries.
McLay Paterson and Eva (2022)	Boundary blurring and Canadian academic librarian work during COVID-19.
Meyers-Martin (2024)	Videoconference research consultations after the pandemic pivot.
Murgu (2021)	Technostress and digital scholarship librarians.
Obenauf (2021)	Remote management of academic library staff.
Petersen et al. (2024)	Remote and hybrid work in academic health sciences libraries.
Ragon et al. (2022)	Shared lived experience of academic health sciences libraries during COVID-19.
Rathbun-Grubb (2024)	Chronic conditions and library work during and after COVID-19.
Reed et al. (2022)	Online librarianship roles during a crisis.
Rodarte and Moore (2022)	Productivity and satisfaction while working from home.
Salvesen and Berg (2021)	Emotional affect among academic librarians during COVID-19.
Tagge et al. (2024)	Socio-ecological reflection on hybrid work in an academic library.
Wheeler and Kyprianou-Chavda (2021)	Distance learning informed the library team's response to COVID-19.
Woods (2023)	Online and remote work of academic librarians in Virginia.
Zipf (2025)	Burnout and technostress among academic library workers.

Note. The corpus is intentionally heterogeneous. Some sources are empirical studies of hybrid or remote work; others are analytic reports, evidence summaries, or role-relevant workplace studies included because they clarify service continuity, management, return-to-campus practice, or work-design implications.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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