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Section on Education and Training

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2000-2001 SECTION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING (SET) - OFFICERS

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>TERM</i>	<i>TASK(S)</i>
Benjelloun, Mohamed	Standing Committee Member Corresponding Member of IFLA Section Le Directeur de l'Ecole des Science de l'Information BP 6204, RABAT-Instituts, Morocco		1.
Bowden, Russell	IFLA Honorary Fellow Standing Committee Member 115/1 Parakum Mawatha Bangalawatte, Kottawa, Sri Lanka T: +941-840698 / F: +941-74795090 e-mail: russell@slt.lk	2001	2. History of SET (with Harbo) 3. Regional Seminars Proposal
Chazal, Mireille	Standing Committee Member Bibliothèque De L'université Du Littoral-Côte D'opale 55 Avenue De L'université BP 5250, Dunkerque, Cedex 1 59379, France T: +3303 28237470 / F: +3303 28237479 e-mail: chazal@univ.littoral.fr	2001	Translations to French
Christensen, Kari	Standing Committee Member Director, National Office for Research Documentation, Academic & Special Libraries PO Box 8046 Dep. 0030 Oslo, Norway T: 47-23118906 / F: 47-23118901 e-mail: kari.christensen@rbt.no	2003	Conference 2000 Proposal
Daniel, Evelyn	Standing Committee Member University of North Carolina, Professor, CB #3360, Manning Hall, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3360, USA T: +1-919 962 8062 / F: +1-919 962 8071 e-mail: daniel@ils.unc.edu	2001	1. Revision of LIS Standards 2. World Guide to LIS Education 3. Multilingual Glossary
Elkin, Judith	Standing Committee Member University of Central England, Faculty of Computing, Information & English, Perry Barr, Birmingham B42 2SU, UK T: 44-121-3315610 / F: 44-121-316281 e-mail: judith.elkin@uce.ac.uk	2001	1. Database Directory 2. Procedures for Refereed Papers 3. Reciprocity of Credentials 4. Conference 2002 Proposal
Ertel, Monica	Standing Committee Member Korn/Ferry International 3 Schirado Place, San Rafael, CA 94028, USA T: +1-310-226-2624 / F: +1-310-552-2915 e-mail: ertelm@kornferry.com	2003	1. Conference 2002 Proposal 2. World Guide to LIS Education
Ferguson, Stephey	Standing Committee Member The Library, University of The West Indies Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica, W.I. T: + 1-876-9272123 / F: +1-876-9271926 e-mail: sfergusn@uwimona.edu.jm	2001	Conference 2001 Proposal
Field, Judy	Standing Committee Member Wayne State University, Library & Inf. Science Program, 106 Kresge Library, Detroit, MI 48202, USA T: 313-577-8539 / F: 313-557-7563 e-mail: aa4101@wayne.edu	2001	1. Conference 2001 Proposal 2. World Guide to LIS Education
Gajo, Maria Gaia	Standing Committee Member - Senior Librarian, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale - Roma, Viale Castro Pretorio 105, 00185 Rome, Italy T: 39-06-4989249 / F: 39-06-4457635 e-mail: bn-cr@caspur.it	2003	Conference 2003 Proposal
Harbo, Ole	Standing Committee Member - Researcher, Royal School of Library & Information Science, 6 Birketinget, DK-2300, Copenhagen S, Denmark T: +45 32 586 6066 / F: +45 32 840201 e-mail: oh@db.dk	2001	1. History of SET 2. Revision of LIS Guidelines
Haycock, Ken, FCCT	Chairman, IFLA SET Section Director, School of Library, Archival & Info Studies, University of British Columbia, 831-1956 Main Hall, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z1 T: 1-604-8224991 / F: 1-604-8226006 e-mail: ken.haycock@ubc.ca	2001	Chair (elected)
Jhadko, Natalia	Standing Committee Member Director, Training Centre, Rudomino School Library of Foreign Literature, Nikoloyamskaya 1, Moscow, 109189, Russia T: 7-095-9150067 / F: 7-095-9153637 e-mail: jadko@libfl.ru	2003	Translations to Russian Liaison with management Study (section)
Kalkus, Stanley	Standing Committee Member Institute of Information Studies & Librarianship, Charles University, Faculty of Philosophy, Celena 20, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic T: +420 2 2449 1508 / F: +420 2 2449 1516	2001	1. Conference 2001 Proposal 2. Multilingual Glossary

	e-mail: kalkus@cuni.cz		
Kaniki, Andrew	Director, Information Studies University of Natal, Private Bag X01, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg 3209, South Africa Tel: 27-33-2605008, Fax: 27-33-2605092 e-mail: kaniki@infs.unp.ac.za / kaniki@science.unp.ac.za	2001	
Lazinger, Susan	Secretary/Treasurer Head of the Academic Program School of Library, Archive & Info. Studies The Hebrew University of Jerusalem POB 1255, Jerusalem 91904, Israel T: (972-2) 6585656 / F: (972-2) 6585707 e-mail: susan@wms.huji.ac.il	2001	1. Secretary/Treasurer (elected) 2. Revision of LIS Standards
Morizio, Claude	Standing Committee Member Enseignante Documentaliste Formateur 10 rte de Poitiers, 86130 Jaunay-Clan, France T: 0549521783 (h), 0549374566 (w) / F: 0549521783 (h) e-mail: crd@iufm.interpc.fr T: +33-5-49521783 / F: 33-5-49521783	2003	Conference 2003 Proposal
Nicholson, Jennefer	Standing Committee Member Executive Director, Australian Library & Inform. Association, POB E441, Kingston Act 2604, Australia T: 61-2-62851877 / F: 61-2-62822249 e-mail: jennefer.nicholson@alia.org.au	2003	1. Membership Development/Brochure 2. Cooperation with Other Groups
Weech, Terry	Standing Committee Member Associate Professor, University of Illinois Graduate School of Library & Info. Science, LIS Bldg., 501 E. Daniel Street, Champaign, IL 61820, USA T: 1-217-3330646 / F: 1-217-2443302 e-mail: T-Weech@UIUC.edu	2003	Conference 2003 Proposal
Corresponding Members:			
Harvey, John	Standing Committee Member 303 Chanteclair House, 2 Sophoulis Street, POB 21363, 1507 Nicosia, Cyprus T: +357-2-664286 / F: +357-2-676061 e-mail: john.f.harvey@usa.net	2003	1. Bulletin Editor 2. Information Coordinator
MacPhail, Martha	Spec. Clln/Catalog Librarian, San Diego State University, Malcolm A. Love Library, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182-8050, USA T: +619-594 6736 / F: +619-594 2700		Translations to Spanish
Rusch-Feja, Diann	Corresponding Member: Director, Library & Research, Documentation Max-Planck Institute for Human Dvlpmt Lentzeallee 94, D-14195, Berlin, Germany T: +4930-82406-230 / F: +4930-82499-39 e-mail: ruschfeja@mpib-berlin.mpg.de	2001	Translations to German
Xiaobin, Huang	Department of Library and Information Science, Zhongshan University, 135 Xin Gang Road West, Guangzhou 510275, P.R. China T: 020 84035077 e-mail: isdli03@zsu.edu.cn		
Official Observers:			
Ashcroft, Linda	Chair, CPERT Liverpool Business School John Foster Building, 98 Mount Pleasant Liverpool L3 5UZ, UK T: +44-151-231 3425 / F: +44-151-707 0423 e-mail: Ls.ashcroft@livjm.ac.uk	2000	CPERT Administration
Kagan, Al	Chair, Social Responsibilities, Library, University of Illinois, Room 328, 1408 West Gregory Drive, Urbana, IL 61801, USA T: 1-217-333-6519 / Fax: 1-217-333-2214 e-mail: akagan@uiuc.edu	2000	Social Responsibilities Administration
Lau, Jesus	User Education, Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez, Paseo Country 1305, Frac. Country Racquet, CD Juarez CH.H. 32460 Mexico e-mail: jlau@uacj.mx	2000	User Education Administration

The SET Bulletin is published twice a year in January and July. Please share your ideas and comments by sending your contributions or suggestions to John F. Harvey, PO Box 21363, 1507 Nicosia, Cyprus, Tel: (357-2) 664286, Fax: (357-2) 676061, e-mail: john.f.harvey@usa.net or Suite 1105, PMB-079, 82 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005-3682, USA, Fax: 212-968-7962. Secretariat: Janet Assadourian.

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DEALING WITH MULTINATIONAL AUDIENCES AT SHORT-TERM PROBLEM -ORIENTED TRAINING WORKSHOPS RUN BY THE "RUDOMINO SCHOOL" FOR LIBRARIANS OF CIS-COUNTRIES

By Natalia Zhadko, Ph.D., Director, Training Centre " Rudomino School ", State Library for Foreign Literature, Moscow, Russia.

In this article I am looking into the specific problems and methods of the "RS" international activities and partnership with LIS specialists of the US and CIS-countries. In this article are covered: the subject matter and principles of the partnership, and structural organisation principles of postgraduate educational activities. The multicultural aspect of dealing with international partners and trainees is not to be viewed as understanding of ethnic cultural differences, but as understanding of differences in the traditions of management, organisation and educational standards. This aspect is of great importance if one bears in mind that the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of problem-oriented training are to be applied in different cultural contexts. In this article I have paid special attention to the principles of adaptation of training materials for the audience and the issue of applicability of foreign professional expertise to the local professional contexts of different countries.

Library education and vocational training in the former Soviet Union were orientated towards uniform ideological, cultural and professional standards. It is noteworthy that the then political and economical situation was exactly reflected in the system of professional training. The access to the information about the situation and tendencies in the international librarianship being limited, Soviet librarians felt still more isolated from the information development in other countries.

The current LIS practices testify that further development of LIS education and the profession itself in any country is dependent upon the global tendencies in librarianship and information science. It is conditioned by the global information explosion, the huge information torrents and new information technologies, which tide over national state

borders. But, at the same time, the globalisation processes make the issue of national and local traditions and specific features of culture, education and librarianship of a given country especially important. One cannot neglect this aspect in the process of LIS education and professional training. The problem of establishing a balance of global and local tendencies acquires still more importance for the short-term specialist training.

In the early 90's "RS" established partnership with the Mortenson Centre for International Library Programmes (Illinois University, USA). The partnership was designed to organise short-term trainings for LIS specialists from Russia and other CIS-countries. It is noteworthy that "RS" participation in the first projects launched within the frameworks of this partnership was that of a supporting, administrative (i.e. not educational) body. But in 1998-1999 the scheme of the project activities was changed and certain steps were taken to provide complex training for Russian LIS specialists.

The necessity to adapt the teaching programmes by means of analysis and to rebuild the **professional** and **educational** systems of co-ordinates (i.e. set of standards) has been one of the factors which conditioned the changes in the partnership scheme.

As far as the **professional** system of co-ordinates is concerned, I think it necessary first of all to define the question of *applicability of acquired knowledge and skills* as an issue of high priority and importance. I would also like to underline the fact that the achievements in the sphere of customer service in the libraries of USA and EU are very interesting as examples of

innovative experience and a subject of training.

There is a wide range of pressing issues (such as organisation and development of librarianship; reorganisation of library structures; partnership with foreign institutions, authorities, donors; fundraising; and others concerning library management) which demand review and reconstruction of the legal, administrative, social, historical and cultural contexts, comparative analyses of the information policies, financial resources and local professional traditions.

I would like to underline that by the reconstruction of professional **co-ordinates system** I mean, first of all, comparative analysis of the differences between the Anglo-American and post-Soviet librarianship models. There are the following landmark problems in the post-Soviet librarianship (not only in Russia, but also in the Central Asia and Caucasian states: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan):

- 1) ideological changes, working out new methods, organisation of open indiscriminate access to information resources;
- 2) librarianship has always been viewed as a cultural, enlightenment service for people (not as a social and informational profession); information services of a library are regarded as promoting the culture of reading, giving access to sources of culture (not information);
- 3) lack of customer service traditions, poor management of such services;
- 4) unification of libraries, leading to overlapping each other's functions and missions (e.g. public libraries provide services for students whereas university libraries try to provide services for the local population indiscriminately, without due regard to the specific character of their mission);
- 5) library development issues are often regarded as a matter of introducing new

services and extending library's functions, not as re-organisation and optimisation issues (which also results in overlapping functions and services).

That is why the specificity of a certain region must serve as a kind of frameworks for the curricula of short-term training in management, not just as an additional or facultative subject. It is characteristic of the heads of regional libraries not to take into consideration this regional specificity and its impact on the development of regional librarianship. Most of them bear in mind only the quantitative data, such as finance and books supply delivered by the state.

Making the regional specificity the frameworks of a short-term training curriculum requires certain changes in the management and organisation methods used in the project. Due to this, the *problem-oriented* forms of training acquire a still greater importance. Problem-oriented forms of training give both the trainers and trainees an opportunity to carry out analysis of the specific features of a given professional situation and compare it to the library development models adopted abroad.

Because of the stated above, the significance of the trainee's self-dependent research, new IT used in the training process, discussion and dialogue forms of training become more important than the traditional lecture-seminar forms of education. And I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the library education in Russia has always been traditionally based on the algorithmic teaching process with lectures and seminars playing the most prominent role in it.

So, most of the Russian regional LIS specialists (as well as most of the librarians from the Central Asia countries) need to be prepared for successful participation in the new forms of training (discussions, IT-based, etc). The special classes on the principles and methods of comparative analysis of different library systems could be included into the curricula of international training projects for the Russian and CIS-

countries librarians along with the discussion forms of training.

So, the international training programmes for Russian and CIS librarians should be planned and organised with due regard not only to the multicultural and multiethnic issues, as an additional subject of the training, but also with due regard to the problem of rebuilding the **professional** and **educational** systems of co-ordinates. This requirement is relevant both to the projects in which American and European LIS experts take part and the ones which are run by the Russian specialists.

Most of the specific features common for the librarianship in Russia and other CIS-countries are not ethnic or cultural but rather based on the specific mentality, which had been cultivated within the few decades of the Soviet era. "RS" has run more than 40 short-term training workshops on LIS management for 2467 librarians from Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan and the Caucasian countries. In the course of those workshops there appeared some issues reflecting the cultural or ethnic specificity of the region (such as a stronger trust in and more respect for the trainer's opinion, the posts of chief executives in libraries being dominated by the male specialists, etc). But these issues did not have any bearing on the teaching process, methods of training and the results of training in general.

That is why the training programmes for LIS specialists from Russia and other post-Soviet countries should rather be adapted all to the specific features of the post-Soviet librarianship in general than to the ethnic and cultural traditions of each participants. The fact that the Russian language is widely used in most CIS-countries not only as a means of interethnic and intercultural communication but also within ethnically non-Russian families, along with the dominance of Russian language cultural programmes (in most of these countries) conditioned that the training classes should be run in Russian. All this makes the issues of ethnic and cultural specificity not as

pressing as to be included into the curricula as a separate subject.

International Program Opportunities of Training Center "Rudomino School"
Report on Network Library Program Training Centre Initiative:

September 12th - 14th 2000 Meeting

The Training Centre "Rudomino School" – provides continuing education opportunities and designs training workshop methods for library specialists; library directors, heads of library departments, teachers of LIS subjects and representatives of regional cultural departments of local authorities. "Rudomino School" provides problem-oriented training in library change management, strategic planning, fundraising social partnership and human resources. TC "Rudomino School" was established in 1997 as one of the departments of the all Russia State Library for foreign literature. For this period TC "Rudomino School" has carried out 48 training seminars in 40 region of Russia and CIS. By working both as an information resource centre and a non-profit initiative, TC "Rudomino School" plays a unique role in opening access to management information and in providing a successful organisation during a period of economic and social transition. Main partners of TC "Rudomino School" in Russia are regional library training centres in Novosibirsk, Arkhangelsk, Vladimir, Tver, Nizhny Novgorod; library science department of Moscow State University of Culture and Arts and other library departments in regional universities and regional libraries. Our international partners: Open Society Institute – who provide to majority of the funding for our training activities; Network Library Program; Mortenson Centre for International Library Programs University, of Illinois; Kettering foundation, and a variety of training centres in the Common Wealth of Independent States. "Rudomino School" approaches its international programs from two different directions. While in practice they are separate, we consider that the end result of these two pronged approach is much stronger over all international program. The first component of this approach is group cooperation or trainee exchanges, involving groups of librarians from one country visiting another country to make contacts and learn both from other libraries and librarians. Such exchanges work not only with librarians but also with trainers who conduct professional workshops. These programs are meant not only to provide practical tools for the trainees, but

help to broaden their professional knowledge of library development. Such exchanges are extremely integral and important part of our activities.

Such TC "Rudomino School" programs have included: conducting short-term training workshops on library management for CIS countries, organizing and conducting internships based in Moscow for library specialists from CIS countries, providing opportunities for Russian Librarians to engage in international professional communication through international conferences, providing opportunities for Russian librarians to train abroad and initiating TC "Rudomino School" international projects.

1. The second element of this approach involves professional exchanges between Training Centers. In order to best serve clients, trainer and management team of training center must continue to grow and adapt our own methods of teaching library development and library science. Because of this, we actively encourage meetings and seminars to take place between Russian Training Centers and is very interested in linking up with similar programs in other countries. Such joint projects could be concentrated on strengthening continuing education as a whole, and allow experts from a variety of countries to share their experiences and successes — to concentrate on the common problems facing library continuing education.

These two approaches are mostly aimed at LIS teachers, librarians, directors, and heads of departments. In addition to this work, specialists of TC "Rudomino School" can see that there is a need to develop programs aimed at professional management of Training Centers. For obvious reasons the majority of training centers in Russia are currently run by librarians, trainers and teachers. While these people have a great deal of expertise in their own subject areas they have seldom had specific knowledge in the management of training institutions. This gap exists in large part because until very recently such training simply did not exist. In response to this problem TC "Rudomino School"

is developing new programs which will be aimed directly at the teaching of such management process and TC "Rudomino School" are open to discuss this initiative with any other training centers and professionals who may be already working along the same lines. We have identified the following topics as essential to such a program: finance - fundraising, financial management, accounting, taxes, etc; regulatory issues – social partnership, how to work with a board, advocacy, standardization of activities; management - strategic planning, decision making, project management, HR management.

Within the framework of such a program there could be organized: individual and group internships, round tables, conferences, electronic conferences, information exchanges.

All these and many other problems will be carefully discussed at the conference "Perspective Development of Continuing Education for Librarians and Information Specialists", that will take place in Moscow between 5 and 7 December 2000. The international Conference "Perspective Development of Continuing Education for Librarians and Information Specialists" is dedicated to various issues of organizing educational process, integration of educational standards, formation of new educational disciplines, development of regional training centers activities. Alongside with the foregoing the questions of reorganization of library education and introduction of new electronic technologies will be covered. The Conference will bring together teachers, libraries leadership, publishers of educational literature, representatives of library training centers and other information institutions. The Conference is organized by Training Center "Rudomino School" of the Library for Foreign /VGBIL/ and Center for Applied Humanities Technology.

Maria A. Churkina
Program coordinator, Training Center
"Rudomino School"
Mchurkina@libfl.ru
Tel: +7 (095) 915 0067

**International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)
Continuing Professional Education Round Table (CPERT)
Annual Report 1999/2000**

Scope Statement

The Round Table on Continuing Professional Education (CPERT), established under the Section on Education and Training, works to encourage and develop continuing education programmes for information and library personnel and to provide a focal point for relevant activities. New trends in information sources, technology, users' needs and management of libraries and information services emphasize the requirement for continuing education and retraining. The Round Table brings together those interested in and/or responsible for providing delivery systems for continuing education, persons interested in improving the quality of continuing education, etc.

Officers

Linda Ashcroft (Chair)
Liverpool Business School
Liverpool John Moores University
98 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5UZ, UK

Blanche Woolls (Secretary/Treasurer)
San Jose State University
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0029, USA

Information Coordinator

John F Harvey
PO Box 21363, 1507 Nicosia, Cyprus
Email: john.f.harvy@usa.net

Goals 1998-2001

1. Encourage and develop international continuing professional education programmes for library and information personnel.
2. Improve the opportunities of librarians worldwide to contribute to the lifelong learning of individuals both within and outside the profession including facilitating collaboration and development of networks for the exchange of ideas.
3. Increase membership worldwide in the Round Table and facilitate communication between members.
4. Stimulate research in continuing education for information and library professionals.

Newsletters

2 newsletters were produced and distributed - October 1999 and April 2000.

Projects

IFLA Preconference -15-17 August 2001
(Approved by Professional Board)
"Delivering Lifelong Continuing Professional Education Across Space and Time" (4th World Conference on Continuing Professional Education for the Library and Information Professions)
Venue: Chester, Vermont

Meetings

One Executive Committee business meeting was held in Jerusalem - August 12, 2000.
Attendance was 4 plus 4 observers.

Program

Open Session (60 attendees)
"Continuing Professional Education: A contemporary update"
August 15, 2000 -15.30-18.00
Chair: Linda Ashcroft

Developing an electronic textbook for continuing professional development of librarians

Olga Lavrik
Laboratory of Information Analysis, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk, Russian Federation
Victor Glokhov
Department of Electronic Technologies, Inion Ras, Moscow, Russian Federation

Digital distance education for continuing education

Presented by Blanche Woolls on behalf of Kenneth Dowlin, San Jose State University, San Jose, California, USA

Workplace learning for information professionals in a changing information environment

Chutima Sacchanand
Thailand

Author: Linda Ashcroft, December 2000

NEWS.....

The Chair of the Professional Board, Ralph Manning, announced that the winner of the first annual award for **the Best IFLA Section Newsletter** was the Newsletter of the Section of Libraries for the Blind. Runners up were the newsletters of the Section for Reading and the Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments, whereas honorary mention was made of two newsletters appearing for the first time: the ones from the **Section on Education and Training ("SET Bulletin)** and the Section for Audiovisual and Multimedia.

2nd INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR ARCHIVAL BUILDING STUDIES

International Institute for Archival Science
Maribor, Slovenia, University of Maribor,
Slovenia and State Archives of the Province
of Styria, Graz, Austria, in co-operation with
International Council on Archives

Will organize
**2nd INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR
ARCHIVAL BUILDING STUDIES (ISFABUS II)**
with subtitle

Basic conditions, ways, forms and structure
of new buildings, adaptation, long term
preservation and safeguarding of archives
and new information media as a part of
cultural heritage

INTRODUCTION

The increasing acceleration of modern life
and of the whole human activity as well as of
the development of new media and
information systems and subsystems create
bigger quantities of records and archives
from day to day, written on classical and new
information carriers as well.

In the archival theory and practice we
therefore have to pay more attention to the
questions of how to gain new capacities for
the long term preservation and safeguarding
of archival material. However, it depends on
the creation of the best conditions, among
which building and equipment are primarily
and obvious.

To construct a new archival building or to
adapt an existing one for the needs of
archives means to consider big financial
resources. Also technical and professional
questions concerning co-operation with other
professionals appear. The archivists have to
get proper education since that is the only
way to avoid unprofessional decisions
related to new buildings, adaptations and/or
technical equipment.

ORGANIZATION OF ISFABUS II

ISFABUS I was organized in 1996 in
Slovenia. Twenty archivists from different
countries took part. Lecturers from many
archives and other institutions gave an
updated survey of modern archival
buildings, preservation, storage equipment,
standards and modern information
technology.

Regarding the positive results of ISFABUS I
the above mentioned institutions decided to
organize the 2nd International School For
Archival Building Studies - ISFABUS II in the
year 2001.

The study programme will be divided into
lectures, workshops and professional study
of new and adapted buildings as well as the
visit of restoration and conservation
workshops in Slovenia, Austria, Italy,
Hungary and Croatia.

The lecturers from France, the United
Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Italy, Slovenia,
Israel, Switzerland and Slovakia will teach in
the morning "ex cathedra", and in the
afternoon they will organize exercises,
workshops and professional discussions.

The main topics of ISFABUS II will be:

1. New buildings (Duchain, Rumschöttel, Buchmann, Ogris etc.)
2. Adaptations (Duchain, Klasinc, Brunner, Oppl, Ruhri, Sagstetter)
3. Repository equipment (Schöggl-Ernst, Haspel, Brunner, Cova, Tató, Dorsi)
4. Conservation, restoration (Hanus, Hödl, Kolar, Prosser)

5. New media and computerization (Cook, Riegler, Pivka, Novak)
6. Other: Typology of archival material (Pferschy); Archival libraries (Spreitzhofer)

Study visits are planned to archival buildings in: Austria (Wien, Graz); Slovenia (Maribor, Ljubljana, Ptuj); Italy (Trieste, Venezia); Hungary (Szombathely); Croatia (Zagreb, Karlovac)

All potential participants who need visa for the above mentioned countries are asked to provide them considering several entries to each country.

ISFABUS II will take place from 20th October to 11th November 2001 in Slovenia. The participation fee will be US\$990 only (including the participation fees, accomodation, transport, working materials and simultaneous interpretation). The organizer will provide some scholarships under special conditions. The course will be organized in a quiet place near Murska Sobota.

The official language of ISFABUS will be English. The participants should have at least as much knowledge of the English language in order to follow the lectures.

All participants will get a confirmation of participation. After having written a paper within a six month's time approved by ISFABUS they will also receive a certificate.

Prof. Dr. Peter Pavel Klasinc, Executive Director, IIAS - Maribor

Prof. Dr. Walter Brunner, General Director StLA - Graz

Prof. Dr. Ludvik Toplak, Rector, University Maribor

More information on ISAFABUS II on web site:
<http://www.pokarh-mb.si/miaz/isfabus2.htm>

Online Cataloging Course

The School of Library & Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison will offer a Basic Cataloging non-credit course via the Internet. This course covers methods of organisation of print and electronic information for today's libraries. In ten weeks, we cover the foundations of library cataloging and classification practices updated for the 21st century. Topics include: interpreting and creating bibliographic records, the MARC formats and Anglo-American Cataloging rules, and assigning subject headings such as Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and classification using Dewey Decimal Classification and Library of Congress Classification. We will also look at evolving metadata schemes such as the Dublin Core and discuss cataloging books, Internet resources, e-books, and other new formats. The next session of the course will be offered February 5 – April 15, 2001. The fee is US\$385. For more information about the course format see

<http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/slis/academic/ces/wbctcat.html> or for course or registration information, please contact the course instructor, Debra Shapiro, UW-Madison, School of Library & Information Studies, 608-262-9195, e-mail: dshapiro@slis.wisc.edu

AN INVESTIGATION OF LIS QUALIFICATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

By Peter Dalton, Research Fellow and Kate Levinson, Researcher,
Centre for Information Research (CIRT),
University of Central England in Birmingham (UCE), United Kingdom.

Email: Pete.Dalton@uce.ac.uk / Kate.Levinson@uce.ac.uk

INTRODUCTION

The paper provides an overview of research undertaken by CIRT on behalf of IFLA's Section of Education and Training (SET). The purpose of the research was to investigate the accreditation and approval mechanisms for Library and Information Science (LIS) qualifications throughout the world and to begin to provide information to help in determining the equivalency of LIS qualifications between different countries world-wide. This somewhat ambitious proposal is explored below.

The initial rationale for the research, the research methods chosen and the findings from the research are described. At this stage it should be noted that the research did not produce as much data as was anticipated. Nevertheless, its value lies in providing more information about the context in which issues surrounding LIS qualifications and equivalencies are based. The area is one that is not cut and dried and does not lend itself to a quick-fix solution. The research, begun in 1999, was funded by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

RATIONALE

The research emerged as a result of the recognition by members of IFLA SET that there are no world-wide approved standards for LIS education and that there is no standard method for determining the equivalency of LIS qualifications between schools in different countries.

The differences among countries include:

- Variations in the provision of LIS education throughout the world. A look at the World Guide, shows that in some countries there exists no formal LIS education provision, and that where provision does exist it varies.¹ For example, the USA has 58 institutes listed as providing LIS education. This is in contrast to China, which has 22 institutes listed and Latvia, for which there is only one institute is listed.

- National variations in LIS education systems. Education systems throughout the world have evolved as a result of many influences. For example, in France, there has traditionally been a system of LIS education which has been strongly monitored by central government through a number of Ministries, in which two entirely independent institutes provide LIS education to individuals seeking work in the public sector. This involved a clear distinction between education for librarians and education for information scientists, with one institute providing graduate level work for librarians and the other for information scientists. Although nearly all posts are 'fonctionnaires' i.e., civil service posts, there also existed another form of education typically undertaken by prospective information professionals wishing to work in the commercial sector. These courses could be studied at an Institut Universitaire Technologique (UIT) and were not of graduate level, being of 2 years duration.
- Levels at which education is provided. In the USA, for example, professional LIS qualifications are offered only at the masters level; there is no undergraduate level of study as there is in other countries such as Australia. In addition, for work in the academic sector, employers prefer to recruit LIS professionals with a Master's level qualification in a separate subject, in addition to the professional LIS qualification. It would appear a complex enough task to assess the equivalency of qualifications between two or more countries, without having to take into account differences in the level of qualification awarded by institutions in the same country. In some countries two qualifications, although nominally the same, may have a different value depending upon the institution from which they were awarded.

- Changes over time. In recent times, however, the situations mentioned above in France and Hong Kong have begun to change. That the education systems of countries change must be considered when examining equivalency of qualifications world-wide. Many factors have an impact on the traditions of a particular country. Political reform for example, can affect the education system in a country.

It was intended that this exploratory research underpin two priority areas within the SET: standards for LIS education and reciprocity of qualifications, both of which are inextricably linked. Impetus for work to be done in this area came initially from a workshop held by SET at the IFLA conference in Amsterdam in 1998. This emanated from a number of concerns from a variety of sources, which included:

- some library associations and professional bodies had expressed concern over the lack of clarity and coherence in this area and the current lack of information to enable them to address sufficiently the issues surrounding the equivalencies of LIS qualifications
- a desire by IFLA to provide input into current planning and development of human resource development on a global stage
- a desire to reduce restrictions to international workforce mobility and to encourage professional movement, exchanges and co-operation internationally
- providing prospective employers with confidence that there exists a means of assessing the suitability of an overseas candidate's LIS qualifications, particularly a consistent and authoritative means of doing so
- LIS workers having easier access through the world-wide web to information about posts in other countries. For example, an information professional could be sitting at a PC in Jerusalem, Israel and looking on the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) employment web pages for jobs in Jerusalem, New Zealand. In an environment of increasing globalisation

the case for increased international mobility is a strong one

- the possibility that useful data would emerge which might feed into, and support, the work that has been done on *Guidelines for Library/Information Education Programmes*, which Evelyn Daniel and Susan Lazinger have been developing on behalf of SET.ⁱⁱ

In addition a small informal snapshot survey undertaken by the research team at CIRT using mailbase and IFLA discussion groups, demonstrated that about half of the respondents who had moved countries had experienced some degree of difficulty in moving due to issues of equivalencies.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The original research aim was:

to research and create a database of recognised Library and Information Science (LIS) qualifications and the responsible sanctioning / accrediting / approving body / agency in individual countries world-wide.

In order to meet this aim it was initially intended that appropriate sanctioning bodies, for example, but not necessarily, library associations, in each country could be identified, and information on the designated core body of knowledge and accrediting process for each country could be collected. It was then intended that the criteria by which a sanctioning body accredits LIS courses could be collected and entered on a web mounted database and used as a basis to inform further work into equivalencies of LIS qualifications.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methods of data gathering used will be outlined and the way in which the original method had to be adapted as it was based on assumptions about the accreditation of LIS courses which did not hold true for many of the countries discussed.

Original Proposed Methodology

The starting point that the research team took was initially to base the methodology on the assumption that some form of professional accreditation/ approval of LIS courses takes place in most countries.

It was intended that the appropriate sanctioning body for each country would be

identified using information sources such as; the IFLA web site; the World Guide to Library Archive and Information Science Education and the World Guide to Library, Archive and Information Science Associations, published by IFLA, the IFLA directory, www searches and personal contacts.ⁱⁱⁱ⁻⁷

Then it was the intention to design a semi-structured questionnaire type survey, with which to gather information from sanctioning bodies in each country about the criteria that were used to bestow professional accreditation onto specific LIS courses. It was anticipated that this information would be collected for each country throughout the world and entered into a customised database. This then would provide valuable information which could be used to begin to compare professional qualifications across countries and to provide benchmarks for future comparisons.

Changes in Methodology

This initially seemed like a suitable approach. However, it was discovered through consultation with various associations, that professional accreditation of LIS courses, such as the model used in the UK, was extremely rare and occurred in only a few countries throughout the world. For this reason the investigation proceeded in a more general vein seeking to find out more about what happens in different countries.

Thus, a more open-ended letter asking about the ways in which standards of LIS qualifications were maintained in specific countries and what procedures were used to determine equivalency of qualifications from other countries, was sent out to professional bodies around the world. In addition, the letter also requested organisations to refer the research team to any organisation, formal or informal, that might be able to provide the relevant information, if the organisations approached were not the appropriate or major ones. Wherever possible, organisations selected were not sector or region specific. However, in some countries, due to the structure of the education system, sector or regional specific information was collected. The letters in English were translated into French, German and Spanish.

FINDINGS

Unfortunately the findings of this project can only be broadly indicative due to the poor response rate. Following the bulk mailing, there was remarkably little response and responses were slow to arrive. To date, following 145 letters, there were only 19 responses. Despite follow-up e-mails, the response rate remained disappointing, although it was possible to supplement the information collected through individual web pages. Perhaps, in some part, this can be attributed to changes of address of organisations or restructuring of the organisations themselves.⁸

In order to gather more information, the research team tried another approach. The team began to contact academic departments that ran LIS courses to find out how their courses were recognised and by whom. This approach was made via e-mail for speed and also only made in English since the multi-lingual approach had not seemed to be particularly advantageous before.

In addition, the research team also began to collect information about legislation that might be relevant. This focussed particularly on countries in the European Union where legislation has a major influence on the recognition of qualifications within the European Community.

Other Barriers to Data Collection

Another possible obstacle to data collection, was the understandable language barrier that the research team faced. Efforts were made to translate research instruments, but the translation resources available within the resources of the project were unable to cope with the abundance of non-English language Internet information and non-English language documents sent in response to the mail shot. This was further complicated by non-standard use of professional terms such as approval/accreditation/sanctioning, for example, often leading to confusion and misunderstanding.

RESULTS

With the above in mind, the findings which provide an indication of ways in which standards of LIS qualifications are maintained and how judgements of equivalency of qualifications are made will be outlined. There may be more examples,

but this paper will focus on those that emerged from the responses received.

Procedures to Maintain LIS Educational Standards

From the limited information available, three main procedures for maintaining standards of LIS courses emerged. In most cases these do not appear to be mutually exclusive.

1. Governmental Monitoring

From the responses received, the most widespread method of maintaining standards seems to be one of governmental or parliamentary monitoring. Such quality control tends not to look exclusively at any particular subject but instead assesses the standards of the higher education institution as a whole and provides a general 'stamp of approval' for that institution. Of the 19 countries examined in any detail, 9 fitted predominantly into this category offering this 'whole-institution' monitoring as the major means of quality control: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany and Mexico.

2. Formalised LIS Accreditation / Approval Processes

A few countries do operate a more formal process of 'accreditation' for LIS graduate/postgraduate courses. This accreditation procedure is carried out by an impartial professional body or bodies, which is often the relevant country's library association but this need not be the case. The UK, the US, Canada (in co-operation with the US), and Australia fall into this category. However, the processes in Croatia, the Czech Republic, New Zealand and Poland also belong in this category. These countries have their graduate/postgraduate level qualifications in all curriculum areas - including LIS - inspected by an independent body which happens not to be the LIS professional body. However, in the case of the Czech Republic, the independent committee looks specifically into the evaluation techniques used on courses and not into any other elements.

Example A: The United Kingdom

In the UK, an individual may study librarianship at the undergraduate level (Bachelor's level 3 years full time, 4 years sandwich, at least 4/5 years part-time course) or at post graduate level (Master's level 1 year full time or 2/3 years part time).

Upon completion of the course, an individual will receive the award of BA/BSc or MA/MSc approved by the higher education institution at which the course was taken. However, most of these courses are also accredited using criteria agreed jointly by the two major professional bodies, the Library Association (LA) and the Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) and outlined in the 'joint accreditation instrument'^{iv}. In this document, the criteria by which courses are assessed include the following categories:

- Information Generation, Communication and Utilisation
- Information Management and Organisational Context
- Information Systems and Information and Communication Technologies
- Information Environment and Policy
- Management and Transferable Skills

In order for a UK course to be thus accredited, each course must meet certain criteria and standards set down in this joint agreement and assessed by the professional bodies. The aim is to provide graduates with a recognised professional qualification, based on core areas of knowledge. Successful graduates of all courses will be academically qualified, but will not be recognised formally by the professional associations unless the course undertaken has been approved by the professional associations. These standards are intended to ensure that an accredited LIS practitioner will have obtained an education which meets required professional standards (regularly revised), supplemented by approved post-course education worthy of professional status. To become an Associate of the Library Association (ALA), which confers full professional status, an individual who has completed an accredited course has to provide evidence of continuing professional development, through the chartering process, which is rigorously assessed by a Library Association panel.

Therefore, in the UK it would be theoretically possible to obtain a Bachelor's or Master's qualification in librarianship that does not provide the individual with the opportunity to join the Library Association and undertake education to become a professionally chartered librarian. In such a case, the course studied would not have met the

accreditation criteria set down in the joint accreditation document, therefore would not be professionally recognised in the UK. However, it is also worth noting that not all employers insist on accredited qualifications or chartered status for recruitment of professional level library and information staff members.

It should also be noted that the UK provides an example of a country where a formal process of accreditation operates alongside a form of government monitoring. In addition to the formal accreditation process outlined above, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has produced benchmark standards for librarianship and information management, which provides a means of government monitoring of LIS courses.¹⁰

The accreditation / recognition processes vary between countries. This highlights further complications surrounding the precise terminology used, and the problem of translating such terms between countries. For example, in Australia, in contrast to the United Kingdom, there operates a process of 'course recognition' by the ALIA (Australian Library and Information Association). There is not, however, an additional requirement that upon completion of a course recognised by the national professional body an individual must then fulfil additional requirements (e.g., a process akin to chartering in the UK) in order to become a recognised professional. Therefore, in Australia, ALIA officially recognises courses that it considers provides graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills to move into professional practice and grants the associate status. Such courses conform to the guidelines, such as: The Library and Information Sector: core knowledge, skills and attitudes.^v

3. Individual Course / Departmental Standards.

Most LIS departments operate their own quality control measures to ensure that the standard of their education is as high as possible and that their courses remain attractive to potential students and to employers in the field. Ideally, such quality control measures will be based on changing local or national employment opportunities and requirements, as well as global changes, for example technological change. This process can operate alongside the

other procedures mentioned here. However, in some cases, this process seems to be the only one in operation, i.e., no other accrediting/approving body is involved. In New Zealand, there are only two major higher education institutions which offer LIS qualifications.

The Open Polytechnic runs such annual moderation procedures in co-operation with LIANZA (Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa) – the professional body - which they regard as providing them with "approval and unofficial accreditation." The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand is also validated through the Open University Validation Services, which sets requirements for quality assurance. In Albania, there is only one LIS institution - the National Library - which is sanctioned in this role by law. The standards are monitored by the Director of the National Library.

In addition, there are some examples of co-operation between higher education institutions' LIS departments. Such fora serve to provide informal support to institutions in the Flanders area of Belgium and also in New Zealand. In the case of New Zealand, the professional body – LIANZA - also contributes to this forum as well as Victoria University and The Open Polytechnic. Usually, this co-operation will be targeted towards some specific aspects of LIS education, e.g., relating course content to the needs of the LIS profession.

Example B: Croatia

Croatia provides an example of a country in which the professional national body has become less formally involved in maintaining standards of LIS education than formerly. Up until 1977, there was no formal academic education in Croatia in the LIS field. The education of librarians had been organised by the Croatian Library Association, and involved attendance at seminars on a variety of topics in order to prepare individuals for the professional examination. In order to become a professional librarian it was necessary to take the professional examination after completion of an undergraduate degree in another subject.

In light of the genesis of formal LIS education in Croatia, provided through the Universities of Zagreb and Osijek, standards are now academically maintained by these institutions themselves with the national

library body no longer providing standards for LIS education which is now done at university level. However, it must be noted that many of the lecturers involved in the provision of LIS education are strongly involved in the work of the country's professional bodies, so informal input from professional bodies exists in this way.

Procedures to Recognise Overseas LIS Qualifications

These procedures necessarily focus on countries from which the main responses were received: the United States, Europe, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

1. Recognition of Qualifications by Countries With Formal Accreditation Processes.

Responses from national professional organisations about the recognition of overseas qualifications revealed much geographical variation. Within those countries whose library organisations operate a formal process of accreditation, there appears to be total co-operation and recognition.

Example C: Reciprocal Arrangements Between the USA, UK and Australia

Australia and the USA have similar accreditation systems to the UK, where the national professional association accredits LIS courses. They have also done work to create reciprocal arrangements to recognise qualifications accredited by each other's national bodies. Recent policy changes at the American Library Association (ALA) emerged as a result of a need to review how to respond to requests for evaluating foreign qualifications. ALA policy now states:

The Master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association or from a Master's level program in library and information studies accredited or recognized by the appropriate national body of another country is the appropriate professional degree for librarians.

ALA Policy #54.2^{vi}

It would appear that by this arrangement any LIS professional who has completed an accredited course at Master's level in, for example, the UK or Australia would be automatically deemed an accredited professional in the United States. This would allow individuals with the appropriate LIS qualifications gained in the

USA, UK or Australia some degree of free movement between these countries providing all other legal requirements, such as residency and work permit arrangements, were met.

However, this policy is problematic. It would appear to exclude holders of UK and Australian Bachelor level degrees and postgraduate diplomas from professional recognition in the United States. Using the indicator of 'level' of a qualification is problematic. The ALA appears to assume that all Master's degrees are of a similar level. This does not take into account any equivalencies which may exist between a Master's degree and those awards gained in other countries which might be of a comparative level, but are not nominally Master's degrees. It is clearly the case that qualifications are not always of equal academic rigour in every country throughout the world. Thus, for example, the present ALA model of reciprocal recognition may not be ideal. Indeed some of the anecdotal evidence collected by the research team suggested that individuals trying to move from the UK to the USA had problems getting professional recognition if they had an undergraduate degree gained in the UK.

In addition, beyond countries that have formal accreditation procedures, the issue of what constitutes recognition by 'the appropriate national body of another country' is not straightforward. In a world with many diverse systems of LIS education, this would appear to have limited applicability as in many countries, at the present time, there appears to be no form of recognition for courses by a national LIS body.

In the case of Australia, for example, LIS workers who hold qualifications which are not eligible under reciprocal arrangements (as outlined above) or are not recognised by ALIA may be eligible for professional recognition under ALIA's 'Widened Eligibility Criteria.'^{vii} This process involves an individual wishing to make an application to be recognised by ALIA as an accredited professional producing documentary evidence of qualifications and attending an interview with a panel comprising an educator and a practitioner. The panel reports to the ALIA Board of Education, which decides whether a candidate is eligible for associate

membership or whether further study or work experience is recommended.

Further complications arise when examining reciprocal arrangements. If for example, an individual with a degree accredited by ALIA or ALA wishes to be recognised as a professional in the UK, it should be noted that the reciprocal arrangement satisfies only the academic requirement for recognition in the UK. In order for such an individual to be a fully recognised professional in the UK, he or she would, in addition, have to complete the chartership training and submit evidence of continuing professional development during this period.

Putting aside all of the factors referred to earlier that have an impact on the original methodology (i.e., trying to discover the criteria that professional associations used to accredit courses and then drawing a comparison of these criteria), there is a further factor which makes this approach untenable. Even in the few countries that do accredit LIS courses this approach would appear to be unsuitable as the criteria that an accredited course has to meet in order to be accredited does not appear to be explicit enough to allow comparison on a database. For example the ALA states:

that there was no single way to identify school or program excellence; there are many different kinds of schools achieving excellent results in different ways^{viii}

The difficulty in defining exactly what makes good practice in LIS education can be concluded from the ALA's flexible enforcement of its own standards:

Accreditation is based upon an evaluation of a program's totality; thus, failure to meet any particular component of a standard may not result in failure to meet the standard. Similarly, failure to meet a single standard may not result in failure to achieve accredited status for a program.^{ix}

Thus there would appear to be a great deal of flexibility and interpretation involved in deciding on professional accreditation of particular courses. Such information would arguably not be explicit or exact enough to be included in a database.

2. Recognising Master's Level Qualifications

ALA has recently introduced a liberal policy of recognising all qualifications resulting from Master's level programs in other countries, so long as they are recognised or accredited by that country's appropriate professional body

3. The European Situation

Within the European Union (EU), there is complete freedom of movement of workers. This is unrestricted for unregulated professions and recent legislation has made it much easier even for those professions which do have a register of practitioners. Courses are examined for duration and content and compared with the locally offered equivalent. If inconsistencies are discovered, there may be some additional conditions such as language fluency tests or an aptitude test but on the whole, LIS professionals seem to have their qualifications recognised throughout the Union.

It would seem that for those with the necessary working permits who wish to enter the EU with qualifications gained outside the EU, reference would be made to the NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) service which evaluates and compares the standard of academic study throughout the world. If the foreign qualification is deemed comparable to that particular country's "home-grown" qualifications, then the candidate has his/her qualifications recognised and is able to work (and usually to become a member of that country's professional organisation).

Non-EU Members

Countries in Europe that are not EU members, such as Switzerland, usually recognise European qualifications. The Swiss professional library organisation, however, refers to laws which make it difficult for companies to engage foreigners. A similar policy operates in Canada where priority has to be given to a Canadian national.

Some Non-EU Data

There are some countries, such as Austria and Cuba, which look to a Government department to examine and validate overseas qualifications (of course, as a member of the EU, Austria is bound by EU legislation in the case of EU nationals).

European Initiatives

Some of the initiatives that support freedom of movement and equivalency of qualifications in Europe were examined. The research team considered that these might provide indications of good practice which might be used through out the world.

NARIC

The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) has been set up by national government departments within the EU, e.g., the Department for Education and Employment in the UK, to provide information and advice on the comparability of international qualifications. It has a unique interface for each country, so, for example, there is a UKNARIC and a NARIC database for each country in the European Union.^x The database allows users to discover the equivalency of qualifications across all curriculum areas in terms of their own countries qualifications. For example, if a librarian from Peru applied for a job in the UK, with a Maestro/Magister level qualification, the employer could find out using UKNARIC that this was equivalent to a 'British Master's Degree Standard'.

The database is extensively researched, taking into account details such as the difference in level of qualification awarded by different institutions. In some countries the degree awarded from one university may not be considered the same level as one from another university. Although the database is only available to EU countries, the coverage it provides about qualifications is world-wide. The database is intended for use by employers who have job candidates from overseas and also by academic institutions which have potential student candidates approaching them with foreign qualifications. Access to the database is provided through payment of a yearly subscription.

EU Directive

Another pre-existing situation within the European Community is the legislation to allow complete freedom of movement for workers. The only restrictions to this are found where individual member countries choose to regulate certain professions. For regulated professions within the EU - which in some countries may well include librarianship - there is the Directive 89/48/EEC which encourages freedom of movement for workers whilst also offering some protection for professional standards

within member states. In order to enforce this protection, each country has a designated competent authority which is responsible for assessing each individual's claim for professional recognition of his/her qualifications. Such recognition is not automatic and does insist on some parity with education in the host country and the home country in terms of course duration and course content:

The competent authority will compare the professional education which you received in the home Member State with that required in the host Member State. If it finds that there are significant differences in terms of either length or content it may, subject to certain conditions, make recognition conditional on the fulfilment of additional requirements.^{xi}

Such additional requirements might include either proof of experience or the completion of an adaptation period or an aptitude test.

In the case of the UK, which does not have a regulated register for the LIS profession, any candidate - if successful in applying for a post - could work as a LIS professional. However, there is nevertheless, a Competent Authority, namely the Library Association. In the absence of a professional register, the Library Association maintains its own register of Chartered Members which it oversees in much the same way and which, to some employers, has great status. In line with NARIC recommendations, the Library Association recognises any mainland European librarianship qualification which is comparable to the UK qualification. In most cases, this will be very straightforward, but in some cases, the Library Association may seek additional clarification or demand additional requirements similar to those raised by any other Competent Authority before accepting people into their regulated profession.

Within the European Union, when looking at candidates who are EU nationals but have studied outside the EU, slightly different criteria apply. Such candidates must have their qualifications recognised by an EU member state, e.g., using their NARIC service, and (if appropriate) be eligible for acceptance into the regulated profession. Candidates must also demonstrate that they

have two to three years of work experience in their home country before attempting to move elsewhere within the EU.

ECTS – European Credit Transfer System

This system, unlike NARIC, operates at graduate and post-graduate level only. It was introduced to assist the free movement of students between higher education institutions throughout the EU. The European Commission established a procedure by which academic qualifications would be recognised more widely by:

creating curriculum transparency and facilitating academic recognition.^{xii}

Under ECTS regulations, overseas students study alongside local students and are fully integrated onto the course. ECTS works by providing transparent curriculum details and information about the relevance of specific courses to a degree programme. Recognition of such courses is agreed in advance between participating institutions who accept this agreed equivalent study at a participating institution in the place of similar study at the student's home institution. Indeed, the transfer can be put onto a more permanent footing if all parties agree. ECTS operates in a modular fashion by allocating credits to each course of study. These credits are recognised throughout the expanding network of participating institutions.

To join the ECTS scheme, institutions must annually submit details of courses that they offer and of their institution itself. Such details must include : location, student accommodation, details of course content, course prerequisites, assessment methods, teaching and learning methods, study time, etc.

The European Commission overcame the problems of localised grading systems by introducing an ECTS grading system which operates alongside the local systems in order to allow students to move more freely between different participating institutions. Following the course, thorough records are kept of the number of ECTS credits allocated to that course, the local grade assigned to that student and the ECTS equivalent of this grading.

The key to the widespread acceptance of ECTS has been the transparency of curricula

and of the learning achievements of the course which are set out for each student in a 'learning agreement'. These procedures allow these study experiences to be internationally accepted and recognised.

CONCLUSIONS

This project has brought to light the complexities and absence of systematic regulation on a global scale and often on a national scale too. The original intention of exploring and comparing the criteria used for accrediting LIS courses throughout the world has proved impossible to achieve. Below is a summary of the research findings:

- The research demonstrated the difficulty of conducting large-scale data collection, in a multi-lingual world-wide context.
- There was a low response rate for this piece of research. It is likely that this was partly due to translation difficulties, problems in conveying the concepts involved, e.g., accreditation and changes in the system of LIS education and organisations involved in the education process throughout the world.
- The low response rate may also reflect lack of interest in the subject area by some of the organisations contacted. This lack of interest may stem from:
- Countries which do not feel that this is a big enough issue to pay attention to, because there may not be a lot of international movement in or out of the country
- Countries which may be at a different stage of development in terms of LIS education, i.e., they have newly established library schools. Their concern may be with educating professionals with the intention that the skills remain within the country.
- Issues surrounding the quality of education of LIS professionals which may not be as obvious in countries which do not have library schools.
- There are no worldwide standards for LIS education and there is no standard method for determining the equivalency of LIS qualifications between different countries.
- Many variations exist between the systems of LIS education throughout the world. This includes; number of institutes

providing education in each country; the extent to which education for work within particular sectors is segregated; the level at which LIS education is provided; variations in the level or status of qualifications awarded from different institutions within the same country. Such variations compound the issues of deciding equivalency of qualification.

- Education systems change over time and judgements of equivalency cannot be static, as they have to reflect this.
- Terms such as accreditation and approval may prove problematic to translate or prove incomprehensible to countries that have no tradition of approving/accrediting LIS qualifications.
- Three main procedures for maintaining LIS educational standards were identified:
 - Governmental monitoring
 - Formalised accreditation
 - Course/departmental standards
- Recognition of overseas LIS qualifications was carried out through reciprocal accreditation arrangements or through other methods, for example, the NARIC database.
- Monitoring of LIS courses by professional associations is far from universal and, where it does occur, there is a variation in the level of involvement. Few national professional bodies formally accredit LIS courses.
- Support for the introduction of an accreditation procedure appears to be limited.
- Many professional LIS organisations do not appear to see monitoring of LIS professional education as part of their role; instead, they emphasise other concerns such as library resourcing in their country.
- The roles of professional bodies vary between countries. Many professional bodies view themselves more as a support service or pressure group for the profession and do not expect to intervene in any aspect of academic or professional education or training.
- To introduce universal recognition /accreditation of LIS courses would be an ambitious project and would prove

extremely challenging, especially to those national professional organisations who have no tradition of intervening in the education field.

- Even where reciprocal accreditation agreements do exist they are not entirely unproblematic
- Using the indicator of 'level' of a qualification to determine equivalency is far from straightforward. Master's qualifications are not of equal academic rigour or level everywhere in the world. Thus, for example, is the ALA's insistence on Master's level qualification appropriate as a model to be followed elsewhere?
- Similarly, the indicator of duration of a course can also be misleading since qualifications can take a long time to achieve, not because they are difficult or demanding but because of lower levels of achievement amongst the new first year students. A four to six-year course of study in Austria leads to a qualification which the UK NARIC service equates to a UK BA (Hons) (usually of three years' duration).
- The proliferation of roles that have emerged in the information sector beyond traditional LIS work, with hybrid roles which may include multimedia and culture, for example, do not fit neatly into the traditional LIS education systems. In countries which operate an accreditation system by a professional body, such hybrid courses may not meet the criteria for accreditation. Such roles, however, should be considered, as they reflect the evolving nature of library and information work.
- It must be borne in mind that initiatives to support international LIS workforce mobility must be considered within the context of other factors which might be at play in particular countries. In some countries, for example, there may be policies which discourage movement outside or into the country.
- Despite the difficulties identified above, there exists in certain quarters, a high level of support to discover ways of more effectively determining the equivalency of LIS qualifications between countries. This support comes from a variety of sources: Library associations and professional bodies, including IFLA; LIS

professionals; and LIS employers. Any initiatives that address the issues of judging equivalency of qualifications worldwide will contribute to reducing restrictions to international workforce mobility and co-operation and sharing of ideas and practices internationally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following examines some of the implications that arise from the research and includes some recommendations and suggestions that IFLA SET might consider:

1. IFLA SET should establish the role it wishes to play in improving standards of LIS education and ensuring equivalencies of qualifications. Is it an advisory role or a formal regulatory role?
2. Further research should be undertaken to discover exactly how important the issue of equivalency is to individual countries. It may be that for some countries the work required in order to determine equivalency, which may require extensive administrative input or even funding, may not be considered justifiable, if, for example, they receive only a few enquiries on this issue each year.
3. If IFLA SET were to pursue the assessment of accreditation standards throughout the world, it would need to encourage and ensure the introduction of accreditation /recognition as an approved procedure at national level within individual countries, through professional bodies or government departments. This will be extremely difficult to initiate and maintain, as it may not be a priority for certain countries. If IFLA were to pursue this course of action, IFLA SET should develop and produce comprehensive guidelines on accreditation, to ensure consistency, at least on a national level.
4. A database of all professional LIS qualifications offered around the world might be constructed, however, there are many practical issues which make this a problematic approach to take. Such a database should include details about all courses at all institutes offering professional level education throughout the world. Such information, once collected should be entered in list form

onto a database and be capable of being accessed by country, institution, course etc. Such a database could then be used as a tool to contribute to making judgements about the level or extent of an individual's LIS education and training, regardless of country of origin.

The information gathered in order to construct a database would need to be uniform (as designated by IFLA SET) and include course title, module titles, descriptions of modules. Other information to be included might include learning outcomes, specific module detail, any other criteria which a course must meet, e.g., criteria for professional accreditation. In order for such a database to be useful for comparative purposes, the level of detail collected would have to be high (more than the level of detail included in the World Guide to Library, Archive and Information Science Education^{xiii}).

Whilst having many positive merits being LIS specific, construction of such a database poses a number of problems, as does its use. Firstly, it is unknown until further research is undertaken whether such information would be readily available in all institutions concerned in all countries or whether it would be available in a form that provided a degree of compatibility necessary for comparison. It would secondly, still ultimately rely on an interpretation and value judgement being made by the user of the database. Such value judgements may be difficult, if it is not possible to determine the exact content and level of the courses undertaken and of the LIS context of each country involved.

Classification skills for example, may be nominally the same, but entail a difference in the skills and competencies taught and classification schemes referred to. As the research has demonstrated qualifications cannot easily be compared by nominal title or level for example, considerations about the context in which the qualification exists need to be taken into account. In addition, the process of compiling such a database would be extremely labour intensive not only to set up the database, but also to ensure it is updated as each

course is changed. It would also be necessary to keep information about a course over time to ensure continuity.

Details of qualifications undertaken prior to the date at which the database was set up, might be different than those entered onto the database as the specifics of the course may have changed. Collecting enough details to make the database valuable would be a difficult task. The problems of large-scale data collection and issues of translation of material demonstrated by this piece of research would apply to such an initiative. It might be possible to designate certain professional bodies throughout the world to co-ordinate the activity for a particular region, however, the issues of collecting timely data would still apply.

5. A generic database, such as the NARIC system which operates successfully within the EU could be extended world-wide, although many countries outside the EU have an equivalent form of database. This would allow library associations and potential employers to establish whether a Master's level qualification is actually to the level that they believe it to be. There is no attempt to look closely at course content or learning outcomes but NARIC does help academic institutions and employers to quickly get a rough idea of which qualifications are comparable with their own national ones. It is questionable whether countries with formal accreditation procedures would be comfortable using just a generic qualification approach and as demonstrated there are many other problems with doing this.

The shortcomings of NARIC, i.e. the lack of specific LIS information, is often supplemented by use of the IFLA [World Guide to Library Archive and Information Science Education](#), in determining equivalency. This directory is subject specific and does provide some course details. An updated version would be a helpful tool. While all the reservations made above still apply (including differences in the way institutions present their course details), this directory supplements this data with information about whether courses are

approved by an appropriate body, i.e., the government, the university, a professional body. What this directory cannot give is the criteria for such approval, since this research shows that often there are no formal, transparent criteria. The use of such tools at present are often the best means of obtaining data to make judgements about equivalency.

6. The non-standard use of professional terms such as accreditation / approval, which might have contributed to the poor response rate in this research may underline the need for SET to reconsider some simple glossary of terms, which can be used by library and information professionals and recruitment agencies and employers.
7. IFLA might investigate the production of a series of benchmark standards, or agreed criteria, against which to judge the standard of LIS qualifications. Such benchmarking would contribute to reducing the problem of subjectivity. Such standards or benchmarks would be useful for countries which are currently developing their own LIS education systems as they would be able to adopt them at the outset of the programme.

With the differing professional status of librarians /information scientists in different countries of the world, complete freedom of movement may never be achieved. However, a start can be made between countries which desire such reciprocity and whose citizens share common perceptions of this importance to the future of librarians and information professionals.

The very nature of our field, both as guardians and gate-keepers of information, requires us to be outward looking and to have international awareness and involvement. This should be enough to demonstrate that we must develop the issues raised by this research. Funding will need to be provided, but clearly interest, motivation, enthusiasm and co-operation are core pre-requisites, if information workers are to harness the vision of IFLA, and move and work freely among the nations of the world.

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