

Revised Conditions for Professional Membership of the LAA

At its meeting during 5-6 September 1987 General Council endorsed a proposal for the introduction of revised conditions for professional membership of the LAA, which was put forward by the Board of Education.

In future, the Board of Education will assess two categories of applicants for Associateship:—

1. Applicants who have completed a course recognised by the LAA at an Australian college or university or a course accredited by a recognised sister association overseas such as the Library Association. Admissions of Associates in this category is relatively routine being based on the submission of documentary evidence of successful completion of a recognised course. The overwhelming majority of applicants for Associateship will fall into this category.
2. Applicants who have completed local or overseas courses in library and information studies which have not been assessed through LAA or recognised sister association on-site visit or failed to be recognised following on-site visits by the Association or a recognised sister association. These might be:
 - undergraduate or postgraduate courses offered by schools of library and information studies in Australia or overseas, ie courses designed specifically to educate beginning level professionals for information work.
 - courses designed to provide, inter alia, a foundation for beginning level information work such as management information systems, media and public relations, communications, records management, computing studies.

To be considered under this category, the course of studies completed by the applicant should include a substantial component of information studies eg a major within a bachelor's degree or (UG2) diploma, or the greater part of a graduate diploma or higher degree. In the case of overseas qualifications, the studies should be equivalent in time to the normal time for preparation of professional-level library and information workers in the country in question.

Procedures for applications under Category 2.

A. Applicants should provide:

- i details of degree or diploma studies, including:
 - course content
 - requirements for entry to the course
 - normal duration of course
 - dates of commencement and completion of course.
- ii details of any further study undertaken and awards received since completion of the primary degree.
- iii details of employment history, including duty statement of the applicant's current (or most recent) position in library and information service.
- iv details of relevant publications or professional reports.
- v membership of and/or activity in relevant professional groups and organisations.
- vi details of any continuing education courses or programs attended/completed which relate to the field of

library and information science.

- vii the name of a person familiar with the applicant's work who may be referred to for advice as to the nature and level of the applicant's work experience, in the information service field.
- viii any other relevant information or documentation which the applicant considers demonstrates that he/she meets the criteria for Associateship.

In addition, applicants who have completed their library and information studies overseas should include:

- i details of:
 - recognition of course by the relevant national library of information science association.
 - an outline of the pattern of education for professional level information work in overseas country.
- ii attachments such as:
 - a certified copy of the original award.
 - a translation of the award if the language of the original is not English.
 - a transcript of results.
 - a copy (in translation if appropriate) of the course syllabus, including details of coverage of individual subjects, and reading lists if possible.

The Course Recognition Committee of the Board of Education is responsible for the assessment of applications. A member of the Committee, in association with another local member of the Association of recognised standing and experience shall be deputed to make this assessment. One member of the panel will usually be a practitioner, the other a library educator. When a member of the Course Recognition Committee is not available to act as an assessor, another member of the Board of Education, or a former member of the Course Recognition Committee or of the Board of Education as a whole will be asked to serve.

Following the assessors' interview with the applicant, recommendations will be made, through the Course Recognition Committee, to the earliest possible meeting of the Board which is responsible for recommending formally the applicant's acceptance for professional membership of the Association. The Board also has a responsibility for monitoring the consistency of applications of the criteria to Category 2 applicants.

Appeals

In the event of an appeal from an applicant whose knowledge and capability have been rejected by the assessors as being insufficient to warrant acceptance as a professional member of the Association, this will be directed to the Board of Education which may, if it deems it appropriate from the documentary evidence adduced by the applicant, resolve that the application be reviewed. The Board will arrange for a select committee drawn from its professional members to review the assessors' report and seek to obtain such further documentation and information as will be required to consider specific objections to the decision.

The select committee, in reviewing an appeal, will seek to establish whether all relevant facts were placed before the assessors, and whether the Association's criteria for professional membership were correctly applied.

The Board will not consider any appeal based on a challenge to the actual criteria

against which the eligibility for membership is assessed.

Copies of the Board of Education Paper 'Conditions for Professional Membership of the Association' are available from Louise Lansley at Head Office, on request.

Louise Lansley
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LETTERS Cont'd

Women's issues — a central issue?

At the LAA:50 celebratory non-conference, Ms Carmen Hannaker delivered a paper dealing with women's status in the profession. The paper covered many important points of which we should all be mindful. Amongst them were the following:

- Our profession is predominantly female in gender.
- Senior administrative positions are predominantly occupied by professionals who are male in gender.
- Women in the profession are discouraged from applying for senior positions because they are women.

These points do not reflect the contents of the paper as a whole, which discussed them in the context of a range of social issues that have a bearing on our profession, however the fact that they were mentioned at all causes increasing concern upon reflection and the profession as a whole should give them some thought.

Implied by these points are the following suggestions:

- Because few women in our profession occupy senior administrative positions, they are victims of a male conspiracy, and therefore, all men in librarianship are responsible for the oppression of their female colleagues.
- Because men in the profession have influenced the course of events over the last 50 years and because few senior positions have been occupied by women thereby enabling them to do the same, men in librarianship are responsible for the socio-historical circumstances in which our profession finds itself, vis-a-vis the above themes.
- Because there are more women in librarianship, they should be selected in preference to men to occupy senior administrative positions, irrespective of their capabilities in order to redress the imbalance created by the practices of the past.

I would like to answer these issues as a male in the profession, who became a librarian by first choice, and whose principal motive and prime goal in remaining in the profession is to work with my colleagues towards providing a more professional library service.

The first proposal is a travesty of reasoning. Gender may well influence behaviour both at the social and at the work level. I am sure there are many examples of sexual oppression not only in society at large, but also within our selected ranks. However not all males are responsible for these acts of oppression, and they do not have to accept responsibility for them. Of course such statements are intended to be generalisations, but they are damaging because those less capable in the art of reasoning do not understand the tactic of introducing a generalisation into the argument.