

Graduate Destination Survey 1990

Summary

The survey questionnaires were sent to 15 library and information schools, and 367 completed questionnaires were returned. These were coded and analysed by the University of Melbourne Institute of Education Centre for Program Evaluation. The coding by the Institute did not include any of the text answers, so that where the questions included 'Other' the database does not specify what; unfortunately nor does it include the respondents' suggestions for course improvement.

The numbers of returns from individual schools ranged from 58 down to 5. The median age of respondents was 30-35, and 85 per cent were female. When they first enrolled in their course, more than half had a bachelors degree or higher and over 70 per cent had more than 1 year's experience in an information environment. Some 34 per cent said they were working in the library and information services (LIS) sector at the start of the course, but their answers to later questions imply that by the time they completed their questionnaires there were up to 74 per cent. Nearly half applied for positions in the LIS sector after starting their course, and nearly 70 per cent after completing it.

Most were in permanent employment, two thirds of them full-time. Of those working in the LIS sector, most (43 per cent each) described themselves as 'professional librarian' (mainly in public or higher education libraries) or 'teacher-librarian'. Of those who responded to the question on 'how long did it take you to find this position', most (69 per cent) said 12 weeks or less and one in three took less than 4 weeks.

The motivation for study was mainly idealistic. A new career, interesting work, upgrading qualifications and obtaining skills in IT appeared more important to the respondents than well-paid employment or promotion. These emphases were apparent both in their perceptions at the beginning and towards the end of their course (but both were measured *after* they completed the course), and in their statements on 'how the course had helped them'.

Their principal occupations, in order, were reference/information services, classification/cataloguing, teaching, circulation, collection development and administration/management. Most had learnt about their present position from press advertisements, with internal information sources and word of mouth also important sources. Most (95 per cent) were satisfied with their work, but one in

five were unhappy with their pay. The median salary range was \$25-30 000; none earned over \$40 000. Of the hundred or so not employed in the LIS sector, 56 said that they had applied for positions in the sector and 40 that they had not; about a third had now given up trying.

The elements of the courses given highest priority were practical skills, information skills and 'computer literacy'; theory, intellectual content and background studies had low ratings. Specifically, reference/information services, IT/computers, information retrieval, administration/management, classification/cataloguing and collection building were seen as most important; community information and archives were rated least important. Only ten out of the 367 felt 'unprepared for the first job'.

Almost 80 per cent said that their employer had *not* encouraged them to undertake further study. At least 40 per cent planned to undertake further qualifications, with a slight preference for part-time external study; most aimed at a Masters degree by course work or a graduate diploma. Over 70 per cent intended to undertake some further professional development, and almost all would like formal recognition for courses organised by ALIA. *Peter Judge*

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