

Learning about competencies

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Several years ago, when I first heard about competency standards, I placed what information I had in the 'too hard' basket. Gradually, as more and more information began to filter through, the confusion and frustration began to grow — here was something that would impact on all areas of the library workforce and I could barely understand it. When the first draft of the competency standards was sent to libraries asking for feedback, panic set in — how could I offer constructive criticism of a document I could not understand. Requests to unions and other libraries for further information also seemed unrewarding as most people seemed to be taking a 'wait and see' approach. It almost seemed an anti-climax when I heard the Library Industry Competency Standards had been launched by Arts Training Australia (now CREATE).

When I happened to glance at an advertisement in *inCite* for a series of workshops on Competency Standards and the Library Industry I was greatly

relieved — maybe now I could begin to understand competency standards.

I have now completed two workshops *An insight into competencies and competency standards* and *An introduction to levels of competency and the library industry competency standards*. One of the greatest strengths of the workshops is that they are offered as self-paced learning. There are no deadlines to meet — so if work is extremely busy or you want to go to the movies, you do not have to feel guilty about not studying.

The workshops are well set out. They include necessary background information as well as all the information you need to complete the workshop activities. In addition some readings are included. At the end of each section, questions are asked and activities are set. The workshops frequently ask the participant to draw from their own work situation which can enhance the knowledge gained and put competency standards in a practical situation. Although there is no formal assessment, it

is still possible to complete the activities and feel confident that you have mastered the workshop. A certificate is available to all ALIA members on completion of each workshop and this can be a valuable addition to your CV.

When working alone, however, some difficulties can be encountered when interpreting the activities. Doubts can occur — is this really what is required? Have I answered this question correctly? What if I'm wrong? I raised the question, with ALIA National Office, of providing a support person who could help the participant overcome the feeling of being entirely on their own. Marie Murphy has now taken on this role and is available to help you with queries you may have about all aspects of the workshops. Marie can be contacted by phone (06) 285 1877, fax (06) 282 2249 or by e-mail: marie.murphy@alia.org.au.

Although I still have a lot to learn about competency standards, thanks to ALIA's workshops, I now feel that there's a light at the end of the tunnel. ■



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA continuing professional development initiative

COMPETENCY STANDARDS AND THE LIBRARY INDUSTRY

Be prepared for implementation of library industry competency standards! Participate in a series of workshops considering issues relating to library competencies. Developed as self-paced learning packages, the workshops offer information and practical exercises and are suitable for individual or group study.

For further information about the workshops contact the ALIA National Office, telephone (06) 285 1877, fax (06) 282 2249, or e-mail enquiry@alia.org.au

AVAILABLE NOW...

- Workshop 1: *An insight into competencies and competency standards*
- Workshop 2: *An introduction to levels of competency and the Library Industry Competency Standards*
- Workshop 3: *Linking the industry competency standards to your organisation*
- Workshop 4: *Workplace assessment and the Library Industry Competency Standards*
- Special offer:** Purchase Workshop 3 and *Library Industry Competency Standards* published by Arts Training Australia as a package.

Order forms are available from Australian Library and Information Association, PO Box E441 Kingston ACT 2604. Telephone (06) 285 1877, Members line 1 800 02 0071, fax (06) 282 2249, or e-mail enquiry@alia.org.au