

Employment prospects for library technicians

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What are my chances of getting a job?' would be one of the most-asked questions at enrolment sessions at the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE. Although we have no crystal ball to predict the future, statistics from past years mean we can be quite positive in our response.

Graduate surveys

In May each year we survey our graduating students. For each of the last three years, eighty-seven to ninety per cent have paid employment in libraries within six months of finishing the course. They are most likely to be employed by university or public libraries.

Positions vacant

Each week I collect and display the para-professional library and related job advertisements from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, local newspapers and the Internet. Local libraries also contact us to advertise casual or temporary vacancies.

'Related' positions are those which require skills gained in our course, for example: audio visual operator, information officer, copyright researcher. However, these are not included in the annual library total.

In December each year I collate the statistics and present a report to local libraries. Totals for the last few years are shown on the attached graph (note that in 1991 and 1992 only *Sydney Morning Herald* advertisements were counted). I also keep statistics by grade of staff and type of library.

Trends

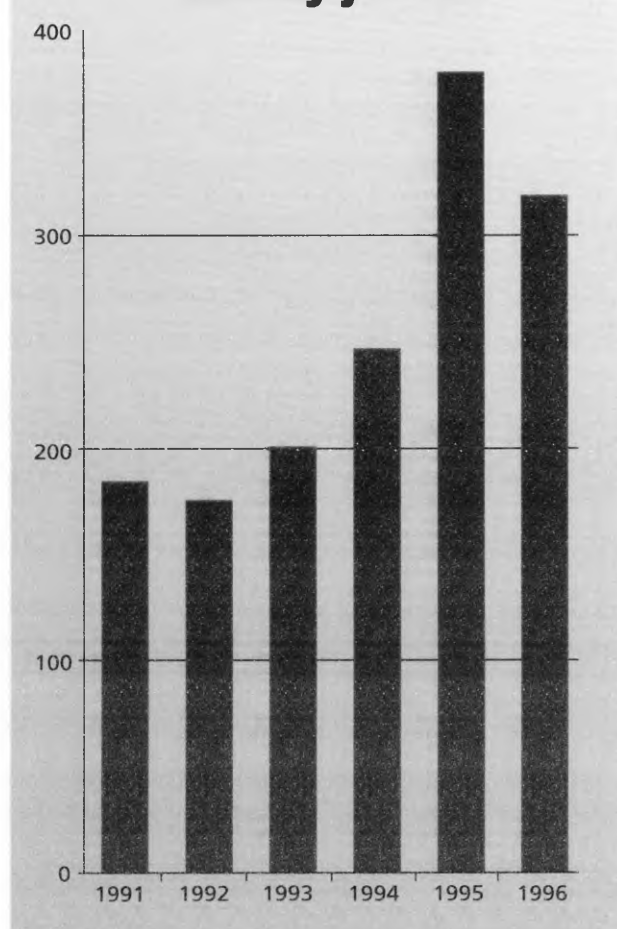
The number of positions vacant for libraries has grown consistently over the years, with the exception of last year, when university positions halved. Already the figures for this year are on the up.

Part-time positions represent at least twenty-five per cent of the total. The highest proportion, thirty per cent, was in 1996, an interesting increase in a year of downturn.

Positions where the minimum educational qualification was the Associate Diploma comprise on average thirty-nine per cent of these library advertisements.

Few senior library technician positions appear (between two and nine each year); however this might simply indicate that few such positions are advertised outside their organisation.

Library job ads



As not all of our graduates will work in Sydney's Greater West, I would be interested to hear from others who may be compiling similar information in other areas and states.

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