

All about FOLIOz

Wish to keep studying in the library profession, but for reasons of time or money find yourself unable to commit to higher university education? Would you like to be part of the ALIA CP (certified practitioner) scheme but think that a minimum of 30 points per year is unachievable and means a lot of paper work? Read on.

Since 2006 ALIA has had a partnership with the University of Sheffield delivering FOLIOz courses. FOLIO stands for Facilitated Online Learning Interactive Opportunity and has been running at the University of Sheffield (UoS) since 2002. The Aussie version has been dubbed FOLIOz and on August 4th 2008 the 5th programme gets underway. Programmes so far include: Designing and delivering information skills training courses (twice); eFolioz (An introduction to e-learning); Knowledge Management; and Evaluating Information Skills Training (the latest offering).

So, what are the benefits? For starters, the financial commitment is minor: \$195 for an ALIA member (includes Institutional members) and \$295 for a non member. A second benefit is the short time commitment. You are only committing for 6 weeks. While there are set start and finish dates and regular times throughout the programme by which you need to produce work, the lecturers are very understanding about the fact that participants are juggling issues such as families, unexpected illnesses, work and more. As such they are flexible where possible in allowing participants to alter the set schedule.

For those wanting to comply with ALIA CP requirements by undertaking a FOLIOz course, you set yourself up with 30 points, the minimum requirement per year. So if you undertake one FOLIOz course a year you would not need to commit much additional time to CP to ensure that you reached the magic mark of 120 points over each 3 year period.

A further benefit I see for those that did their original LIS qualifications in traditional educational environments is that this gives you a taste of what is now possible and what is now being delivered by educational institutions embracing new technologies. Obviously as the UoS is in England and most ALIA members are in

Australasia, this is a correspondence course, but it is vastly different from the correspondence that many of us (including me) are used to. When I did my qualifications by correspondence, a pack arrived in the post containing readings, course notes and assignment requirements. You were then expected to pace yourself, do your readings, find additional references and complete and submit assignments without any further



input from the teaching staff unless you approached them by phone or snail mail and without ever learning who your fellow students were or how to contact them for support. Compare this to the way that FOLIOz works. You receive a welcome email with instructions about contacting FOLIOz staff and outlining the programme. Over a 30 day period, you then receive daily (week days only) emails with instructions about what you need to do for that particular day. While each course is slightly different, this is a general outline to the way they all work.

As a normal part of FOLIOz you are put into a buddy group with 2 or 3 others. This is a group of other FOLIOz students with whom you are required to make contact, share experiences, ideas and at times complete components of the course. For those that do not wish to be part of a buddy group, a self study option is also provided. I have never taken the self study option though in one course a fellow TAFENSW employee and myself requested to be in a solo buddy group so that we were able to share our common experiences and problems. Other buddies that I have had, have worked in medical libraries, private enterprises and government departments. In each FOLIOz course you also need to complete a portfolio, (a supplied Word document template), and this forms all or a major part of your final submission. With all but one FOLIOz course I have undertaken, you also had to submit an 'assignment' – a sample information literacy module for your organisation was the requirement for one.

The daily requirement of input by the student is only around 40 minutes. In the middle of the course you get a week of 'reading time' which is a great opportunity to catch up if you have fallen behind. During this week there is also some light hearted fun (non compulsory) in the form of a series of questions on a common theme with the first drawn successful entry winning a prize. Once the course content is completed you have about a fortnight to submit your portfolio and any other requirements. In the second half of the course you need to log onto a secure website and complete a quiz (and record your answers in your portfolio).

Throughout the course, as well as having email contact with teaching staff and support staff always available, there is also the PBwiki (peanut butter wiki) where copies of past email content can be found, links to downloads, notice boards, discussion and chats with fellow students and teaching staff and more. At the end of the course you must log into a secure survey site and provide feedback about the course.

I really enjoy this method of eLearning and hope the partnership between ALIA and the UoS continues – I'm hooked. Why don't you sign up for the next FOLIOz – we might be buddies!

ShirleyAnn Summers
shirleyann.summersmorrow@tafensw.edu.au

PD opportunities for October

Jan Fullerton, Director-General of the National Library of Australia, will be our guest presenter at the next **ALIA/RMAA** breakfast in Canberra to be held at University House on 13th November.

For more information and to register contact RMAA at **admin@rmaa.com.au**

CAVAL - for a list of training courses please visit the CAVAL 'Course Calendar' at **http://www.caval.edu.au/calendar-courses.html**

For more information on these and other PD Opportunities go to **http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/** or contact ALIA PD Officer **pd@alia.org.au**