National training package: how it all comes together

The review of the national training package and the development of CUL11Library, Information and Cultural Services Training Package has been a significant project for ALIA and the LIS industry.

The new package (CUL11) sees library and information services coming together in a single set of qualifications with museums, galleries, record keeping and archives. Recent research and anecdotal evidence both support the value of this convergence of related disciplines. Certainly LIS employers are looking for a current and future workforce that has a variety of relevant skills that offer optimal flexibility and adaptability in an environment that is heavily influenced by rapid technological change, diminishing resources (budget, staffing, time) and continuing high client expectations. We are really pleased that new technologies and the digital information environment have been a key focus in the development of the new package.

The Diploma in Library and Information Services remains as the library technician qualification, but refreshed and updated to meet the requirements of the current and future LIS workplace. The diploma also includes units suitable for those wishing to work in cultural centres such as museums and galleries and so offer so valuable knowledge and skills for these graduates and their future employers.

ALIA accredits only the diploma level qualification in this training package. The purpose of ALIA course accreditation is to set a standard for the skills and knowledge expected of LIS professionals across Australia. This is valued by both graduates and employers as an assurance of the quality in their education. For the first time a range of skill sets will be offered in the Training Package.

Following negotiation with Innovation and Business Skills Australia and the registered training organisations, the base standard for library technician education students will require completion of at least seven of the library and information services elective units. This will be a criterion of ALIA accreditation.

ALIA, the registered training organisations (RTOs), our industry employers, and practitioners all provided feedback to Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) to ensure the most relevant qualifications and skills were identified for inclusion in the training package. As is probably the case in other industries, opinions in our sector vary widely about the roles and responsibilities of LIS staff. The lines between unqualified and qualified staff can get rather blurry in some workplaces. The value placed on some skills (for example customer service, over more traditional skills such as cataloguing) also inspired much debate.

ALIA would like to acknowledge the extensive work of the RTOs and IBSA in this project, and thank everyone involved for their input and dedication to this complex and lengthy process, including our fellow associations and industry stakeholders. This project has succeeded only because of very positive collaboration between committed professionals.

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THE EDUCATION OF THE INDUSTRY

The new National Training Package prepares Diploma of Library and Information Services students for a number of vocational roles, including library technician, museum technician and gallery technician. Only three of the core units are specific to the LIS industry (marked in the table below with an asterisk). The electives are chosen from a broad range of knowledge and skills: library and information services, administration, collection management, information management, IT, and exhibitions and visitor programs.

No matter where they do their course in Australia, graduates of an ALIA-accredited diploma should have the required knowledge and skills that a Library Technician needs to work in all LIS sectors. ALIA Library Technician membership is an employer's immediate assurance of professional knowledge and skills for graduates of the CUL05111 Diploma of Library and Information Services. Alternative verification can be made through reviewing academic transcripts.

Core units
BSBCUS501B Manage quality customer service
BSBOHS509A Ensure a safe workplace
BSBWOR402A Promote team effectiveness
CULIND401A Consolidate and maintain industry knowledge*
CULINL601A Extend own information literacy skills to locate information*
CULRSK501A Monitor compliance with copyright and licence requirements*
TAEDEL401A Plan, organise and deliver group based learning

Elective units: Library and information services
CULICM601A Contribute to collection management
CULINL501A Promote literature and reading
CULINM401A Complete a range of cataloguing activities
CULINM502A Provide subject access and classify material
CULINM503A Use and monitor advanced functions of integrated library management systems
CULINS402A Obtain information from external and networked sources
CULINS403A Search library and information databases
CULINS501A Research and analyse information to meet customer needs

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