

WHERE TO LOOK TO LEARN

Library and information professionals in smaller regional universities sometimes feel isolated from wider trends. It does not have to be this way. The opportunities for professional growth have never been greater. Whether you prefer distance education or self-directed study, the choices are almost endless.

ONLINE LEARNING

Universities and TAFEs offer courses that equip qualified librarians and library technicians with new skills. The choices extend from newer specialisations (such as project management) to more traditional library-related subjects, like legal research.

THE ONLY LIMIT IS YOUR IMAGINATION.

Opportunities for self-directed study include online, self-paced tutorials and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Resources come in many forms: podcasts, YouTube videos, TED Talks, blogs, wikis and webinars.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

Most library associations in this country actively support professional development. ALIA is a prime example. Along with many other initiatives, ALIA offers a structured Professional Development Scheme. Membership of one of the dozens of ALIA Groups is an excellent way to stay abreast of changes in your area of special expertise.

The national and state associations serving research libraries are active on different levels. The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) specialises in leadership. Its annual Leadership Institutes are targeted at library middle management. State-level bodies – such as the Queensland University Libraries Office of Cooperation (QULOC) – provide a range of choices. Participation in a QULOC working group is an excellent way to build skills. These groups use the latest video conferencing tools, so staff from

regional institutions can fully participate. Attendance at regular workshops, conferences and seminars held in capital cities and major centres is another way that associations such as QULOC can assist your professional development.

TERTIARY SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS

There is an alphabet soup of tertiary sector bodies: the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-Learning (ACODE), the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascelite), the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) and the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA). These organisations all host webinars and regional conferences, issue bulletins, and publish refereed journals. They also sponsor mentoring programs and accreditation schemes. Library and information professionals can benefit from their activities.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE

Look out for relevant conferences and other events. Turn your latest project into work-based research. Write a journal article or give a conference presentation. These are forms of professional development that get you noticed. If you lack confidence, start small and write a book review.

Do not ignore the support that more experienced colleagues provide. Share your growing knowledge with peers. This ensures increased benefit from your library's professional development budget and your own efforts. If opportunities in your library seem limited, talk to a member of your staff development committee. Raise the possibility of an outside trainer if other colleagues have similar needs. The only limit is your imagination.

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ALIA's PD Scheme promotes excellence in the library and information services sector and enables you to demonstrate your value to employers and the broader community.

ALIA's MyPD online tracking tool is the convenient way to keep a record of your learning and professional development. You can use your MyPD records to help with assessment and performance management, to support your CV and to comply with ALIA PD Scheme requirements.

For more information, visit www.alia.org.au/professional-development.