

LIANZA Statement

The library and information sector: core knowledge, skills and qualities

Principle

The library and information sector encompasses a distinctive area of knowledge and skills that is required for effective professional practice. Library and information professionals must acquire relevant specialist expertise, demonstrate related personal qualities, and apply a code of professional practice. Given the rapidly changing nature of the information environment, it is also essential that these professional skills are kept up to date. In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, knowledge of Mātauranga Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi are also essential components of professional competence.

Professional context

Nearly 500 institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand deliver library and information services to their varied user communities. These varied communities have social, cultural, educational and commercial needs for accessing information, ideas and works of the imagination. Collectively New Zealand library and information services represent a trusted and credible national knowledge asset that:

- inspires independent lifelong learning and literacy
- fosters community identity and participation
- stimulates creativity and innovation for economic growth

The library and information profession in Aotearoa New Zealand serves the information needs of a society that is democratic, literate and technologically competent. That society is culturally diverse and has a strong sense of its indigenous culture and history consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi.

A key focus of the profession is to bring people together with the information they require in all aspects of their lives. The profession provides access to lifelong learning, personal fulfilment, improved decision making, knowledge development, innovation, imagination, creativity, and cultural continuity. It contributes fully to New Zealand's goal of becoming a 'knowledge society'.

In the wider New Zealand environment, library and information professionals must be able to work within the following contexts:

- **Digital information**
In the digital world, anyone can be a publisher. Our vocabulary is extending to include words that describe dynamic forms of digital information that complement traditional forms of information. The digital age has created opportunities by changing existing forms of information so that a wider audience can discover material previously rare and hard to find. The availability and volume of information is influencing what users expect and how it will be accessed, and affecting traditional approaches to collecting, describing, sharing, preserving and storing published knowledge.
- **Mātauranga Māori**
Māori have traditions of recording and preserving knowledge that continue to develop into the twenty-first century. The uniqueness of this knowledge only to

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Aotearoa New Zealand makes it an important part of our information environment and our national identity.

- Treaty of Waitangi
The Treaty of Waitangi is fundamental to LIANZA, reflected in its mission statement and partnership arrangements with Te Rōpū Whakahaui. In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, understanding the relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi in the delivery of library and information services is a core requirement.
- Societal change
The nature of society in New Zealand is changing rapidly, particularly in terms of greater ethnic diversity and recognition of the rights of people of all cultures, abilities and ages to participate fully in society.

Specialist knowledge and role

The library and information management profession is based on a distinct set of specialist knowledge and skills, which are necessary to design, plan, develop, manage, and evaluate the delivery of library and information services and meet clients' information needs.

The professional body of knowledge sets out those skills that library and information professionals need for roles within institutions where sound professional knowledge and judgement are required.

This body of knowledge has been derived from IFLA guidelines, and adapted to include recognition of indigenous knowledge paradigms specific to Aotearoa New Zealand.

The body of knowledge recognises the links between the information professions and relates library and information management to other professions such as archives, records and knowledge management. The body of knowledge also relates to the curricula of New Zealand education providers that specialise in library and information management.

Core elements of professional education: The body of knowledge

This body of knowledge sets out the core areas of competency which form the particular knowledge base of library and information professionals in New Zealand. All library and information professionals will be familiar with each area of competency as an outcome of their qualification, and will maintain this familiarity through ongoing practice and continuing professional development. In addition individuals will develop particular areas of specialisation and in-depth knowledge relating to this body of knowledge.

The following section indicates each core element of the body of professional knowledge and provides an explanatory note regarding scope and content of each element. Please note that these notes are indicative rather than comprehensive, and that some content may relate to more than one element. They are intended as a guide for registering professionals and to assist the Board in its assessments.

Education providers will not necessarily organise courses aligned to these elements, and some topics could occur in more than one place. However it is expected that these core elements will be covered in approved qualifications offered by the providers as part of their core programme. A more comprehensive list of course topics which could be covered is provided in the Appendix.

- 1. The information environment, information policy and ethics, and history of the field,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand the history and changing role of libraries and the information sector in the broader social, cultural and organisational context, and envision their future direction
 - Comprehend the legal, policy and ethical issues that are relevant to the information sector in a national and international context, including copyright and intellectual property, censorship, privacy, information policies
 - Understand the relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi to the development and delivery of library and information services and resources
 - Understand the purpose and content of professional codes of practice

- 2. Generation, communication, and use of information,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand how information is created, packaged, disseminated and used
 - Identify the impact and opportunities presented by changing information and communications technologies (ICT's) and media on the needs of information users
 - Understand the role of libraries in the information lifecycle including dissemination through digitisation and other avenues

- 3. Assessment of information needs and design of responsive services,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand the nature of the customer base and information needs of different user groups
 - Identify and evaluate information services and products to determine their relevance to the client base.
 - Design and deliver information services and products
 - Assess the effectiveness and value of library and information facilities, services and products

- 4. The information transfer process,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand the diversity of information seeking behaviours, especially in a New Zealand context
 - Facilitate the development of information and other literacies critical to the successful acquisition of information
 - Use reference and research skills to provide appropriate information to clients
 - Foster the joy of reading

- 5. Organisation, retrieval, preservation, and conservation of information,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Enable access and use of information, including digital information, through application of systematic and user-centred description, categorisation, storage and retrieval.
 - Understand the principles of preservation and conservation, and when and how they are applied, including digital preservation.
 - Design systems which enable the storage, description and retrieval of information

- 6. Research, analysis, and interpretation of information,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand the nature, methodology and practice of research, basic and applied
 - Undertake research by gathering and analysing data, and applying or communicating findings, in library and information management operational environments
 - Evaluate the quality and relevance of different information sources, including literature reviews
 - Demonstrate a commitment to the improvement of professional practice through a culture of research and evidence-based information practice and the generation of new knowledge

- 7. Application of information and communication technologies to library and information products and services,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand information and communication technologies and their developments, and their application to all aspects of the body of knowledge
 - Identify and evaluate information and communication technologies to determine their relevance to the client base.

- 8. Information resource management and knowledge management,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand and apply collection development and content management principles including evaluation, acquisition, licensing, and vendor relationships
 - Facilitate the creation of information products in a range of media and formats
 - Understand the knowledge environment within which information services are organised and delivered
 - Understand how knowledge is created, captured and managed and the application of different knowledge management systems
 - Apply knowledge sharing behaviours and tools

- 9. Management of information agencies,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Understand and contribute to strategic and business planning frameworks
 - Understand and apply financial, people and other resource management planning
 - Market library and information services
 - Research, report on and implement service developments, including the preparation of business cases
 - Understand governance structures and stakeholder relationship management

- 10. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of outcomes of information and library use,** demonstrated by the ability to:
 - Design and apply meaningful key performance indicators for effective measurement of information resources, services and technologies
 - Measure the efficiency and effectiveness of library and information facilities, products and services

- Identify and apply appropriate research methodologies for assessing the quality of information services and resources, including customer research, and interpret research findings

11. Awareness of indigenous knowledge paradigms, which in the New Zealand context refers to Māori, demonstrated by the ability to:

- Understand importance, diversity and structure of Māori knowledge frameworks (mātauranga Māori)
- Show awareness of the influence that tikanga and te reo Māori assumes in the development of Māori knowledge constructs and principles (concepts)
- Recognise the importance of kaupapa Māori methodologies in researching the needs of Māori clients

Personal qualities of the library and information professional

As well as studying the body of theoretical knowledge and applying it in the workplace, the library and information professional must demonstrate certain personal qualities to an appropriate level. These personal qualities are assessed as part of the revalidation of professional registration, and are expected to be at a level that reflects the professional role held.

The personal qualities are:

- Leadership – motivating, inspiring and guiding people to success
- Critical thinking – identifying and understanding problems and opportunities; being able to choose a course of action or develop appropriate solutions
- Communication – ability to clearly convey information and ideas to different audiences
- Project management skills – understanding of and ability to apply project management theory
- Commitment to lifelong learning

Code of professional conduct

Library and information professionals are expected to be aware of and to apply the Code of Professional Conduct that applies to their professional association.

The LIANZA Code of Professional Conduct can be found at:

<http://www.lianza.org.nz/about/governance/code/coppart1.html#11>

Appendix

This appendix sets out more comprehensive and specific examples of areas to be covered in each of the competency areas. Its purpose is to act as a guideline for education providers, and international bodies or peer reviewers accrediting courses or assessing course coverage.

The full appendix to the body of knowledge is available here:

http://www.lianza.org.nz/registration/files/Body_of_Knowledge_Appendix_Oct08.pdf

Appendices are also linked to the areas of the body of knowledge above.