

## ACCREDITING YOUR LIBRARY PROGRAM: what is it worth?<sup>1</sup>

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### **Abstract**

This paper considers the role of accreditation in education for librarianship and information studies. It outlines the elements of core knowledge required in library education and the types of programs generally available. The accreditation programs of three international library associations: the American Library Association (ALA), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)<sup>2</sup> and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)<sup>3</sup> are discussed. A case is presented for these associations to support the role of academic scholarship in librarianship. The paper concludes with a discussion of a number of the political issues involved in the accreditation process.

### **Introduction**

This paper is not solely about the processes and politics of the situation as they apply in Australia, though much of the discussion has been based on Australian experiences. Libraries are a global phenomenon and offer a sustainable information service to the many communities they serve. In order to prepare people to work in these libraries, educational programs in librarianship are offered in many countries. These programs vary in the training and education they offer. One way of monitoring and managing this variety is for professional associations to accredit the programs for their relevance to the profession they serve. In order for this to happen, the associations develop expectations for the content of such programs.

### **Educational programs in librarianship**

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) now provides *Guidelines for professional library/information educational programs*. The document recognises

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<sup>1</sup> The paper elaborates on material delivered at the Library and Information Science Education in Asia (LISEA) workshop, Singapore, 14 December 2002

<sup>2</sup> A new professional body in the United Kingdom (UK) formed following the unification of the Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) and The Library Association (LA). Vested 1 April 2002 with transition period ending December 2004.

<sup>3</sup> New name for the Library Association of Australia (LAA) and adopted in 1989.

Smith, Kerry. (2003). Accrediting your library programme: what is it worth? *Singapore Journal of Library and Information Management*. 32. 70-82.

the "long and distinguished history" of library education and that education programs are offered at the technical, graduate and professional levels, and also at the research and doctoral levels. The guidelines address the graduate and professional levels and acknowledge core elements which should appear in library education programs.

These are:

- the information environment, information policy and ethics, the history of the field;
- information generation, communication and use;
- assessing information needs and designing responsive services;
- the information transfer process;
- organization, retrieval, preservation and conservation of information;
- research, analysis and interpretation of information;
- applications of information and communication technologies to library and information products and services;
- information resource management and knowledge management;
- management of information agencies;
- quantitative and qualitative evaluation of outcomes of information and library use;
- + Practicum, internship or fieldwork. The program should incorporate appropriate means to allow students to appreciate the interplay between professional theories and their application in professional practice;
- + Transferable skills. (IFLA, (2000), np.

There is no comment in this IFLA documentation on accreditation or recognition processes for courses which follow these guidelines.

The IFLA Section on Education and Training is currently updating the IFLA directory of library schools around the world. The earlier publication, the *World guide to library archive and information science education* published in 1995, has been for the most part superseded by information located on the World Wide Web (WWW) and the sites include the *World List of Departments and Schools of Information Studies, Information Management, Information Systems, etc* located at: <http://informationr.net/wl/> and the ALA's *Directory of accredited Masters programs*, located at: <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/lisdir.html>

Educational programs in library studies range from introductory clerical certificates that familiarise students with library operations; library technician certificate and diploma programs which cater for technician and higher level library assistant appointments as recognised in many Commonwealth countries; undergraduate level qualifications which enable professional qualification as recognised in many Commonwealth countries and as are becoming more common in the United States

Smith, Kerry. (2003). Accrediting your library programme: what is it worth? *Singapore Journal of Library and Information Management*. 32. 70-82.

(US); post graduate professional qualifications at the graduate diploma level, another Commonwealth professionally recognised qualification; and masters level professional qualifications as available in the US and Canada and now in a number of other countries; as well as research programs at the honours, thesis masters and PhD levels. Like other professions, the library profession in many countries has sought professional recognition and/or accreditation of courses at the professional level.

### **What is accreditation?**

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines *accreditation* as furnishing with credentials; authoritatively sanctioning (p. 14).

Authoritative sanctioning can come in another way. The ALIA prefers to "recognise" library programs. *Recognition*, according to the same Oxford Dictionary has a number of meanings. That relevant to the context of this paper is: "the action of acknowledging as true, valid or entitled to consideration: formal acknowledgment as conveying approval or sanction of something. To *recognise* is to acknowledge by special notice, approval or sanction; to treat as valid, as having existence or, as entitled to consideration" (p. 1764).

Is there a difference between these two levels of authorisation? Since accreditation means credentialing, this brings with it a formality in the process and implies that a person or body with the acquired and required knowledge and standing would be assessing the program or person(s) against known standards, and awarding the necessary credentials should the program pass tests and benchmarks. Recognition does not credential, rather it validates a program or person(s) as relevant to a set of criteria it is assessed against.

Parr (1991) acknowledged a similarity between the recognition of courses by ALIA and accreditation, "since (ALIA) assesses courses in library and information science schools against certain criteria and then admits their graduates without further examination or qualification to its professional register" (p. 100). Parr believed that "(t)he real difference between accreditation and recognition in the Australian context comes down to one of authority and intention" (p. 100). Perhaps these issues are minor, however as will be revealed, the processes for each are not.

### **Why accredit?**

Like other professions, the library profession is generally keen to have its members recognised in the workplace as well prepared and educated for the tasks and

challenges ahead of them. This recognition carries with it the imprimatur of the relevant profession regarding the educational programs in which their future professionals have successfully participated. It should stimulate improvement in standards and in educational institutions and programs (Flowers, 1979).

The development of professions received considerable impetus from the scientific and technological advances of World War 2 when it became apparent that many areas of expertise were required in the emerging and changing workforce. These levels of specialisation are generally recognised under a general professional title, e.g. medicine can include physicians, urologists, oncologists, anaesthetists, obstetricians and gynaecologists. The natural sciences are even more specialised: geologists have their sub-groups of petroleum geologists, minerals geologists, petrologists, exploration geologists, geophysicists, palaeontologists, etc.; and there are the botanists, physicists and biologists for example that also have their sub-groups.

There is a complexity of professional identity in librarianship. Members of the profession can take advantage of the number of specialisations it offers and these specialisations are usually achieved either after first professional qualification or after post professional continuing professional development or educational programs. These specialisations contain professionals who work in certain specialities as well as those who work in special types of library environments. The first category includes, for example, cataloguers and indexers and within this category can be found those who specialise in certain types of cataloguing and indexing, e.g. music, languages, subject and the like; those who work with rare materials, and database builders. The second category includes those who work in special, theological, geoscience, law, medical, academic, public and school libraries.

Librarians have been in existence for centuries. Today, the professional identity of librarians is considered necessary by many of the members of the profession and is reflected in the activities of its professional associations. These activities include for some associations, accrediting the teaching programs which produce library professionals, to ensure each meets the requirements of the profession. However the academic endeavour and scholarship of the discipline does not command the same attention from associations and professional peers as it does in many of the earlier mentioned professions. In the natural sciences, practice is informed by research process, academic scholarship and by practical know-how. The members of the natural science academies (and geoscience is one example) are still considered members of their profession even though they have moved away from

general/corporate practice. It is they who for the most part contribute to the extensive professional literature and their work and writings are closely followed by those in the workplace (Smith, in prep). Is this the same in librarianship? There is a professional literature in library and information studies, but much of it contains reports of practice. Some journals demand a refereeing process and few are recognised in academia as being of a scholarly nature.<sup>4</sup> What of the library and information studies (LIS) academics? Do the same patterns of membership and scholarship apply? Those LIS academics who meet the criteria for professional membership of their association(s) are able to join, As well there are other categories of membership which can be used so that the academic can keep in touch with professional matters. The professional interplay is, in my view, another story. It seems that just as librarians categorise their work, so too they categorise their networking and professional activity. Established groups tend to network together (e.g. the special librarians, the cataloguers, the university library community). It also seems that in some countries a definite practitioner/educator divide exists. It might be argued that so, too, do the academic community network amongst themselves. However, because of accreditation /recognition demands on their LIS programs, they must also be participants in the LIS communities they serve.

The professional recognition and accreditation process is a considered set of events. It is generally taken very seriously by the associations which practice it , by the professionals who are members of those associations and by the academic community whose programs are under examination. The process for library programs is best illustrated by considering the processes involved for some of the major professional associations.

### **Accreditation and recognition processes**

Accreditation is the preferred route of the ALA and CILIP. Both associations have produced comprehensive documentation for their accreditation procedures. The ALIA recognises courses. The processes and patterns of these procedures for the three associations are summarised in Table 1 at Appendix 1. The information in Table 1 reveals that:

- there is a history of commitment by the three associations to LIS education;

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<sup>4</sup> This issue is a paper in itself. As an example of the "scholarliness" of the information studies literature, as at October 2001 there were just ten titles listed by ISI in their Information Science and Library Science Journal List. These were *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, *College & Research Libraries*, *Information & Management*, *Information Processing & Management*, *Information Systems Research*, *Journal of Documentation*, *Journal of Information Science*, *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*.

- they all base their accreditation/recognition process on formally adopted and rigorous procedures;
- while the three associations recognise that course design is the prerogative of the institutions, they also set prescriptive criteria on which course assessment by them will be based;
- these course criteria are closely aligned with the IFLA guidelines for library education programs;
- there is an important role for senior professional members of each association in the process;
- visitations to institutions are commonly required;
- accreditation is approved by the ALA and CILIP by an accreditation board. In the case of ALIA, the recommendations of the recognition committee are considered by that association's Board of Directors who make the final judgement;
- each association's form of accreditation varies in levels of complexity;
- the ALA and ALIA generally accredit for 7 years, CILIP for 5 years;
- administrative support is given by all associations;
- various review strategies are employed by the three associations;
- it appears that only the ALA levies charges to the institution for the procedure.

### **Accredit or recognise?**

When we consider the work involved in the accreditation and recognition processes, we wonder why ALIA, which undertakes almost as much work as those associations which accredit their programs, does not accredit. This has been partly explained as the ALIA not wanting to interfere too much in the political climate of the host universities. This issue does not prevent other professions from seeking accreditation of programs at Australian universities. In 1979, Flowers, echoing the thoughts of others in Australian librarianship at the time, asked whether schools or courses should be accredited. Flowers believed that "(t)he question of recognition/accreditation must be resolved soon" (p. 324).

Parr's (1991) later paper ponders this and other issues. Parr laments what he perceived as a falling away in interest in the early 1990s by ALIA in its educational policies and contends that the need for reinforcement of professional standards is of prime importance to the development and growth in membership of the Association. In formally surrendering its own registration examinations which it recognised as anachronistic in 1981, the LAA, as it was at the time, chose the path to recognise courses and not certify the individual on completion of formal examination. Parr draws our attention to the differences in educational processes at the government

Smith, Kerry. (2003). Accrediting your library programme: what is it worth? *Singapore Journal of Library and Information Management*. 32. 70-82.

levels between those practised in the US and in Australia at that time, remarking that Australian universities are self-accrediting and that ALIA had no warrant, unlike the ALA, to accredit courses on behalf of state authorities. This is still the case. As Parr says:

failure to receive recognition may be unfortunate and reflect badly on a school, but it would not prevent it from being accredited to teach and graduate students. It would only mean that graduates of its courses would not be admitted without further qualification to the professional register of the Association [ALIA] (Parr, 1991, p. 100).

At that time the Library Association (LA) in the UK approved courses, however graduates of those courses had further steps to take before being eligible to appear on the LA's professional register. This separates out academic achievement from professional training and Parr saw this as giving the LA control to maintain professional standards while still retaining influence amongst UK library schools (1991, p. 101). Parr believed that the "maintenance of professional standards cannot be left to schools" (p. 104) and argued for an even stronger approach by the ALIA, since its recognition and administrative procedures were less demanding than those of the ALA and the LA. Parr then suggested a more demanding process and based his thoughts on those of others, by recommending a three tiered model for preparation and readiness for professional practice. While some changes were made to the ALIA Board of Education's procedures since that time, none of these ideas was formally adopted.

Whether an association decides to accredit or recognise must take into account the cost of the process. In the early days of the LAA course recognition process, charging institutions for the work undertaken was considered. At the time of Flower's paper, there were views that some institutions would close their doors if they were made pay for the experience. It can be seen from the data in Table 1 that the costs to institutions as levied by the ALA are considerable. ALIA does not levy direct charges to the institution and CILIP appears not to either. Even the costs borne by each of these associations, whilst variable, would be considerable.

It also appears that in North America and in the UK there are some library schools which do not seek accreditation. This is not yet the case in Australia. Whether this decision is based on the cost of the process or other matters<sup>5</sup> needs to be borne in mind.

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<sup>5</sup> Parr (1991) mentions that at the time of his paper, "formerly prestigious schools have failed ALA re-accreditation as parent universities decline to provide the resources to meet standards" (p. 104).

### **Is accreditation a political process?<sup>6</sup>**

Until recently, the professions, and there are an increasing number whose educational programs are offered at the university level today, were recognised as without peer in their areas of expertise. Experiences of more than the library profession in some university circles have indicated a desire by some university senior managers to remove professional recognition from university processes. This desire has not been widespread, though it has contributed to a general deprofessionalisation of some courses in universities in the Western world.

When the LAA began its recognition process, library associations were held in high esteem by Australian university administrators and educators and the associations' input to the educational process was valued (Flowers, 1979, Parr, 1991). This may still be the case particularly in the US, where the role of the ALA in accreditation has a wider administrative role than just satisfying the membership and general library profession on educational standards. Parr recalls an LAA driven by the primary object of improving the standard of library and information personnel and fostering their professionals interests and aspirations (1991, p. 101), at a time when it wanted to graduate its professionals when many, if not most, did not have a university undergraduate degree. The steady growth in library schools in Australia from the mid 1960s was followed by an increasing mix in programs in the 1970s. Since the Dawkins higher education reforms of 1988<sup>7</sup>, library schools have steadily declined in number around the country (Pawley, Willard & Wilson, 2001).

The ALIA is currently undertaking a review of its role in the education of its members. The Library and Information Science Education for the Knowledge Age (LISEKA) initiative is an enquiry driven by an Association undergoing change and a perceived need to review the Association's approach to educational practices in Australia for formal and less formal LIS education<sup>8</sup>. The need for continuing professional development (cpd) is a particularly strong theme of the LISEKA deliberations. Among the questions being asked by the professional members of

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<sup>6</sup> In outlining some of the political factors below, the author has drawn heavily from her own experiences in the knowledge that, as discussed with international colleagues in library education, situations are similar in a number of overseas countries.

<sup>7</sup> In 1988 the then Federal Minister for Education, John Dawkins instigated major structural reform for the Australian university system, abolishing the tripartite structure of universities, institutes and colleges and establishing a "unified national system" of only universities. This reform included a restructuring of the fee structure for university education (Pawley, Willard & Wilson, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> This is not the first instance of corporate change for ALIA. In 1986 the LAA undertook, through a Corporate Plan and Review Committee, a profound examination of all association matters including its role in the education of library professionals.



Smith, Kerry. (2003). Accrediting your library programme: what is it worth? *Singapore Journal of Library and Information Management*. 32. 70-82.

ALIA are whether it should continue its involvement in the recognition of formal professional library educational programs. Indications to date are for continued and strong support for this involvement.

There are some who work in Australian universities who appreciate the role of ALIA in the course recognition process and there are those who appear not to. As can be deduced from earlier descriptions, considerable preparation is required by both the educators and ALIA. Some university library educators are of the view that their university has adequate processes in place which ensure the quality of their library programs. This point was made much earlier by Foskett in 1978 (as quoted in Flowers, 1979) who highlighted

a surfeit of accreditation that some of our library schools suffer from: '...in each state there is now an accrediting body, which reviews the institution and decides whether it has the necessary facilities to teach at a tertiary level and also reviews individual courses, employing for that purpose panels drawn from the profession, and from other schools teaching in the same subject area. The present Library Association accreditation policy would seem to be a direct duplication of this procedure, and to serve very little purpose' (Flowers, 1979, p. 318).

Although circumstances have changed since the late 1970s, such panels as mentioned by Foskett continue to exist as the universities conduct internal reviews of courses and schools, often using external reviewers.

It also appears that library educators do not wish to be encumbered by the restrictions of the "library" program in their move to embrace the wider information environment and the electronic information age. Others, while undertaking similar educational directions, still see value in the recognition of relevant programs by professional associations.

At Curtin University of Technology, for example, the Town Planning and Social Work programs are two of a number which are regularly professionally accredited and each of the areas involved in these programs works diligently to meet the established criteria for accreditation. Nevertheless, the library program at that same university has had its challenges in the last 10 years and has at least once been threatened with closure. These events have ostensibly been because of the perceived small size of the program when compared with other areas and disciplines<sup>9</sup> in a university which now has a total student population of approximately 25,000. It is the view of the library studies academics involved in this and similar events, that the weight of professional support and accord with relevant programs has influenced the

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<sup>9</sup> This situation is Australia-wide (see Pawley, Willard and Wilson, 2001).

continued existence. This support was not always evident. A major threat to close the program occurred in the early 1990s when, although the teaching programs were recognised by ALIA, general professional support for the school was low. Things have improved considerably since then, but the area is constantly monitored by a University hierarchy which is necessarily driven by wider agendas.

Fundamental to university management issues are those of funding for Australian university education. Funding for undergraduate teaching to Australian universities is supplied by the federal government and students are now expected to contribute to this through a government "loan scheme": the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). This scheme is administered through the Higher Education Funding Act 1988 and began with a modest undergraduate fee (since increased considerably) contribution in 1987. Before this, Australian university education at all levels was generally free (Pawley, Willard & Wilson, 2001). The current federal government funding model means that undergraduate places in all disciplines at all Australian universities operate on a quota system. The allocated quota, even when managed internally by the host university, might not be enough, or is taken by prospective students in other related streams to the LIS programs which operate under the same quota umbrella. Or, the quota is so low that it pushes entry scores or entry criteria far higher than can be reasonably expected for many incoming LIS students<sup>10</sup>. Very few universities in Australia offer full fee paying undergraduate places at the moment.

At the Australian post graduate coursework level, educational programs are now "user pays" and today the fees can be offset by the Australian government's Post Graduate Education Loan Scheme (PELS) which offers low interest for student loans. As a significant number of the professional LIS educational programs in Australia are at the post graduate level, the new PELS scheme should assist student numbers in these programs. There was an interregnum of a few years between the demise of fully government funded post graduate coursework education and the introduction of PELS from 2002 when some Australian library programs experienced a decrease in enrolments. Most programs have picked up considerably since the introduction of PELS, particularly as there is no quota for places, or it is set by the university, or limited only by the resources available to offer the programs. Anecdotally, university academics are wondering how long the Australian government can sustain the PELS scheme and what will happen next.

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<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, a new LIS student with a high entry score should perform well during the program and make a significant contribution to the profession, once graduated.

Aligned with issues of funding are the ever increasing number of new degree streams now being offered at Australian universities. Parr (1991) referred to moves in the UK at that time to offer LIS streams in other degrees. This is now occurring in US undergraduate programs. It is also occurring in Australia though some LIS schools are fighting to retain their LIS identity by offering their named programs in flexible ways. The issue of quota at the undergraduate government funded level can also be a factor in this milieu. A new degree stream is normally begun because of a perception of demand. It needs students and therefore quota if offered at the undergraduate level. This quota might come as extra to the university as part of a federal government initiative to encourage studies in certain areas (e.g. the Australian government's recent resurgence of interest in science and technology), or through state government funding incentives (e.g. in Western Australia the State government is offering nurses financial incentives to upgrade their qualifications and return to hospitals); from the university's discretionary quota (if it has any), or by the university taking quota from perceived or real, unsupported areas. It is in this last category that LIS undergraduate programs in Australia see most threat. There is one positive factor in the post graduate fee paying environment: none of these quota politics usually applies.

Flowers (1979) refers to an earlier work by Selden: "(t)he issue of control over admissions is extremely important to any profession, This is especially true in the formative stages of a profession as it fights for recognition and struggles against the superior attitude of the established professions" (p. 316). It could be argued that the LIS profession in a number of countries is now mature. But is it? What is the basis of a mature profession? Surely not one still struggling for recognition of its professional worth in the new information age? Surely not one with a struggling body of knowledge which is being rapidly cloned by other newer and more modern<sup>11</sup> professions? Flowers take another tack. He comments on the need to be concerned about the quality of the intake into professional courses; the need to be concerned with professional image and that a profession will be judged by the people in it. This matter has never been of concern to this author, but it is often discussed in professional newsletters. There may be some library schools which can govern their intake. This was the case in Australia in the 1970s and 1980s when it was possible to interview potential students before accepting them. It may be possible to do this in other countries. But as Flowers also asks: is there a danger of typesetting a profession if we do not, at best, randomly choose those who wish to enter into it? Random choice in the Australian context is based on entry scores and a preparedness to pay at the undergraduate level, and academic eligibility and the ability to pay at the

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<sup>11</sup> dare I say, "sexy"?

post graduate level. Yet the profession continues to attract middle-aged females in great numbers.

There are other matters at play in the equation, not the least of which is the need to further intellectual enquiry in matters of information studies and science; something best done at universities though severely compromised by the practice-based professional orientation of librarianship. The CILIP documentation specifically mentions a prime concern with course relevance to current and developing practice in librarianship and information science, rather than purely academic issues. If the practical nature of the profession overrules other scholastic achievement, an underlying outcome will be that courses in library studies will eventually lose their place at the university campus, at least in Australia, since it would be argued that there are other institutions where trainees can learn library practice. As discussed earlier, academic advancement and research inquiry provide a sound and respected professional base from which to operate. They also guarantee a wider pool from which to select new academics. The popular and often professionally accredited LIS coursework masters route is not a pathway to academia. Research is. Yet the library academic community in many countries struggles to encourage promising students to pursue higher research studies. The graduates from first professional qualification courses all seem to want a job, and students who do follow a research masters or PhD route can find that higher management positions in libraries are much better paid than those in academia. Perhaps these positions are not as intellectually rewarding as those in academia.

### **What is accreditation worth?**

In basing his model of recognition/accreditation on readiness for professional practice, Parr states:

(w)hen the Association (ALIA) admits a graduate from a recognised school to professional membership it is in effect assuring the community that it has satisfied itself as to that person's professional competence. Of course, that is part of the fiction I referred to ... The Association has no way of judging his or her professional competence in the field, it knows only that the applicant has met certain academic criteria (Parr, 1991, p. 109).

Is this what the recognition/accreditation process is all about? If so then in order to assure the Australian library community that a graduate from a library school program was ready for professional practice, ALIA would need to take further steps in its recognition procedures.

Is it time to ask some hard questions. These include:

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- how do we measure a true profession of librarianship?
- How do we encourage fruitful nexus between LIS scholarship and practice?
- What is the role of a professional library association in the library education process?
- how might an association demonstrate its responsibility for standards of entry to a profession?
- if an association adopts an interest in the education of its future professionals,
  - should that association leave it to the relevant educational institutions to manage educational standards for professional preparation?
  - Should that association monitor or inspect courses?
  - Should re-accreditation be regarded as merely a formality if certain standards are met?
  - Should the emphasis be on practical preparation?
  - Should there be a recognition of the need to push the intellectual rigour of the discipline?
  - If there is a Board to govern these matters, should its members be elected or appointed using relevant criteria?
- Given the politics of education today, should associations demonstrate more awareness of these situations and how should they do this?
- Is size and number of schools in a country an issue and how should we address this matter? Is this a matter for professional associations to address? (see Pawley, Willard & Wilson, 2001).

Parr asked in 1991:

- have the library schools delivered on the contract?
- are they producing graduates capable of performing as professionals without further training or experience in the field?
- do/should library schools increasingly react to their educational milieu rather than the professional body? and in 1979, Flowers requested that:
- the nexus between academic qualification and initial and continuing membership be resolved, although this issue is being discussed under the ALIA LISEKA initiative.

## **Conclusion**

Many wiser professionals have gone before the author in discussing the pros and cons of accrediting library programs. Yet in those earlier times in Australia, the stakes were different. Professional associations operated at a time of professional belief and focus and at a time when university education was more stable. They were indeed the

Smith, Kerry. (2003). Accrediting your library programme: what is it worth? *Singapore Journal of Library and Information Management*. 32. 70-82.

"heady days" of which Flowers (1979) writes. This paper has outlined a number of the issues at play in the complex relationship between LIS professional associations and education for future LIS professionals. Instability is a sign of today: instability in the role of the profession, its association(s) and in the education for it. How we decide to handle all of these matters and the shifting political nuances we cannot afford to ignore, will be a challenge to us all. It would be helpful if our professional purpose was more focussed and we regained pride in our professional turf. Then we could move forward flexibly to enhance the education and academic standing of our worthwhile profession.

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**About the author:**

Kerry Smith began her career in libraries as a corporate librarian for the mining sector in Western Australia in the 1980s. She joined Curtin University of Technology as a lecturer in information studies specialising in library management, special and one person librarianship in 1991. She has lead the information studies program and the University's School, now Department, of Media and Information. She continues to teach and her areas of interest now include knowledge management and information policy, the latter being her primary research interest. In 1997 she was elected national president of the Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA). She is editor-in-chief of the electronic journal LIBRES (<http://libres.curtin.edu.au>) and Chair/Treasurer of the IFLA Library Theory & Research section. She is an elected member in local government for the Town of Cambridge, WA. She has a B.AppSc (Library Studies), Western Australian Institute of Technology; MA, Murdoch University and is completing her PhD at Murdoch University.

**Table 1: Summary of Accreditation processes for ALA, CILIP and ALIA**

<b>ASSOCIATION/ CRITERIA</b>	<b>American Library Association (ALA)</b> (from ALA WWW documentation 1 September 2002)	<b>Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)</b> (from CILIP WWW documentation 2002)	<b>Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)</b> (from ALIA web page 2002 and various documents)
History	<p>ALA created Board of Education for Librarianship 1924, became Committee on Accreditation (CoA) 1956. CoA a standing committee of the ALA - enables single agency accreditation;</p> <p>CoA - 12 members appointed from personal membership of ALA by ALA President-elect (4 year staggered terms): 2 members from public at large to represent the public interest (2 yr term, renewable); Chair appointed by President-elect - 1 year term with one renewal. Quorum - 7 of the 12 members; accreditation requires affirmative vote of at least 8 voting members. Usually balance between practitioners &amp; educators.</p> <p>accredits LIS programs in US its territories and, by agreement with Canadian Library Assn, in Canada.</p>	<p>CILIP continues the work of the LA and the Institute of Information Scientists. "By March 2003 CILIP will: agree the principles and plan the implementation of the CILIP Framework of Qualifications, including a CPD scheme for Chartered Members, a certification scheme for Affiliate Members in para-professional roles and access routes for Members from non-traditional backgrounds."</p> <p>accredits;</p> <p>maintains a Professional Register for which an accredited academic award is normally an entry requirement;</p> <p>appoints Board of senior members of the profession drawn from professional practice and education. Visiting Parties drawn from members of Accreditation Board + 1 CILIP staffer - make recommendations to Accreditation Board. Official report submitted for information to CILIP Council.</p>	<p>1944-1980: LAA Registration examinations - licence to practicum, brought with it control by the then LAA; also required work experience;</p> <p><i>Minimum Standards for Recognition of Courses in Librarianship</i> first issued 1964; move to library education in universities in 1961+ – University of NSW Diploma in Librarianship.</p> <p>early course recognition guidelines based on ALA</p> <p>Accreditation Sub-Committee became Course Recognition Committee</p> <p>1976 first meeting of LAA Bd of Education. Twelve members: 3 x professional members elected by Professional Council; 7 members of whom at least 4 must be professional members, elected by the membership-at-large, the President, ex officio, and the Executive Director, as a non-voting member. Board elects its own Chair - rarely an educator.</p> <p>Bd of Education dissolved 2001 with responsibilities incorporated with those of ALIA Board of Directors.</p>

**Table 1 (cont'd)**

ASSOCIATION/ CRITERIA	American Library Association (ALA)	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)	Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
Characteristics	<p>voluntary and collegial process of self and peer review;</p> <p>two goals: to ensure that post-secondary educational institutions and their units, schools core programs meet appropriate standards of quality and integrity, and to improve the quality of education that these institutions offer;</p> <p>current standards are outlined in the document <i>Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies, 1992</i>.</p>	<p>accredits undergraduate and postgraduate library and information courses in universities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland;</p> <p>Courses range from first degree to post-experience courses, where candidates are expected to have previous library and information experience at professional level; specifically designated pathways through multidisciplinary degree schemes eligible for consideration;</p> <p>follows <i>Procedures for the accreditation of courses</i>, approved October 1999, revised March 2002;</p> <p>primarily concerned with course relevance to current and developing practice in librarianship and information science, rather than purely academic issues. Does not stipulate course content though expects substantial piece of individual work, exposure to professional practice. Has set Criteria for Assessment with 5 main categories: Information generation, communication and utilisation; Information management and organisational context; Information systems and information communication technologies; Information environment and policy; Management and transferable skills.</p> <p>substantial documentation required from teaching department prior to accreditation;</p>	<p>since 1981 ties in professional qualification with eligibility for membership to the Association, though professional membership is incidental to graduates, most of whom do not join the Assn;</p> <p>must be invited to visit the institution and alerts schools when their accreditation/renewal is due;</p> <p>delivery of suite of educational policies: the ALIA statements on education and on The library and information sector: core knowledge (<a href="http://www.alia.org.au/">http://www.alia.org.au/</a> );</p> <p>assesses first award courses only;</p> <p><i>Procedures and guidelines for the recognition of first professional courses in library and information studies</i>, outlining the necessary steps is sent to the library school.</p> <p>substantial preliminary documentation required from teaching department. Documentation viewed by assessors only;</p> <p>undertaken either by documentation and now by a one day visit. Until recently, visits were 2-3 days; two external validators to the school, being senior members of the profession - one an educator and the other a senior professional; accompanied by senior ALIA administrator.</p> <p>final decision on recognition of any course is made by the ALIA Board of Directors for whom a copy of the validators report is tabled.</p>

**Table 1 (cont'd)**

<b>ASSOCIATION/ CRITERIA</b>	<b>American Library Association (ALA)</b>	<b>Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)</b>	<b>Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)</b>
Levels of accreditation /recognition	<p>6 categories of accreditation:                      precandidate - lasts up to three years with the option of a further three year extension;</p> <p>candidate begins a two year process that culminates in a program presentation, comprehensive review and accreditation decision by ALA. A permanent full time Dean must be in place before this status can be reached. Onsite review carried out. Lasts 2 years with one year extension possible;</p> <p>initial - for programs already accredited and seeking accreditation for additional program(s). File application 2 years before anticipated date of comprehensive review. Status lasts 2 years with possible one year; extension;</p> <p>continued - review normally scheduled 7 years after last comprehensive review;</p> <p>conditional - indicates need for significant and immediate action to maintain conformity with the 1992 standards. Removal of conditional status is an accreditation decision;</p> <p>withdrawn - can occur only after comprehensive review, or can occur voluntarily.</p>	<p>Max 5 years. Failure to comply can lead to withdrawal of accreditation</p>	<p>full - 7 yrs                      limited                      denial</p>
Administrative support	<p>Office for Accreditation - provides the planning, leadership and secretarial functions for the process.</p>	<p>Membership, Careers and Qualifications department of CILIP</p>	<p>At least one full time senior administrator, + clerical assistance.</p>

**Table 1 (cont'd)**

<b>ASSOCIATION/ CRITERIA</b>	<b>American Library Association (ALA)</b>	<b>Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)</b>	<b>Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)</b>
Review processes	In some instances, the COA schedules a progress review for either a conditionally accredited program or an initially accredited program three (3) years after the last comprehensive review.	Reviews are undertaken though period not stated.	There is a right of appeal against decisions made;  Annual course returns;  Revisits if necessary;  Additional documentation if necessary;  Under the LISEKA initiative from 2001, ALIA is reviewing its core knowledge statements and work level guidelines and its recognition processes.
Costs	pre-candidate: USD1000, plus annual fee of USD2000;  candidate: USD1000 application fee, + USD750 p.a. fee and institution billed for any office of accreditation travel expenses;  initial - No application fee, though USD1000 required for off-cycle review.	none stated	None levied by ALIA;  normal administrative and hospitality costs for visits supplied by host institution;  panel members do not receive fees or honoraria though air fares and accommodation whilst on visits is met by ALIA.
Other Comments	Standards for accreditation are developed through consensus building involving communities of interest which include educators, students and professionals in library and information studies		criticised as inspectorial in earlier times;  documentation is required in advance though some institutions can be late in sending it;