The Library and Information Sector: Core Knowledge, Skills and Attributes

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Preamble

The library and information sector has a distinctive area of knowledge and skills which is required for effective professional practice. Library and information specialists need to acquire the relevant disciplinary expertise, demonstrate employment related skills and be prepared for a challenging and dynamic future in many diverse environments.

Core Knowledge Statement

The library and information specialist must ensure a high standard of library and information practice through education and training, while continuing to evolve and develop with the overall framework of core knowledge, skills, attributes and encompassing the changing nature of the discipline to ensure a flexible, adaptable and innovative profession.

Library and Information Sector Objectives

- Ensure comprehensive professional standards within library and information sector education

- Promote and improve the services within the library and information environment

- Ensure the high standard of personnel engaged in the library and information sector and foster their professional interests and aspirations.

Statement of Intent

The library and information sector in Australia serves the information needs of a democratic, progressive, technologically sophisticated and culturally diverse society. A key focus of the sector is enabling people to connect with the world of information, interacting with and utilising information in all aspects of their lives. The sector fosters lifelong learning, personal fulfillment, improved decision making, knowledge development, innovation, imagination, creativity and cultural continuity.

People who work in the sector will have specialist industry knowledge and skills as well as employability attributes. The level to which individuals have requisite knowledge, skills and

attributes depends on their formal qualifications, work experience, professional development, and the role/s they perform.

Library and information sector professionals (librarians, information specialists and library technicians) require knowledge gained through education to deliver quality library and information services. By meeting the information needs of their clients and encouraging them to acquire information literacy skills to seek, locate and use information they also facilitate knowledge creation.

All library and information professionals require sound practical knowledge and skills in order to effectively support the delivery of these library and information services. Experienced library and information specialists provide additional support by supervising staff, planning, implementing and evaluating services and systems and providing strategic thinking, innovation and leadership.

The library and information sector is characterised by a diverse workforce that is successful in:

- promoting and defending the core values of the library and information profession

- understanding and responding to cultural, social, information and learning needs of clients/stakeholders and customers

- managing the storage, organisation, access, retrieval, dissemination and preservation of information and enabling free access and use of information

- developing, delivering and evaluating information facilities, services, sources and products in response to client needs

- envisioning and planning future directions for the sector

- advancing library and information science in its adaptability, flexibility and autonomous application to information services

- engaging with clients, community and other industries.

CORE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Knowledge of the broad context of the information environment

Library and information specialists must be able to:

- understand, analyse and interpret the contexts in which information is originated, described, stored, organised, retrieved, disseminated, modified and used

- understand the ethical, legal and policy issues that are relevant to the sector

- discuss future directions and negotiate alliances for library and information sector development aligned with corporate, social and cultural goals and values

- respectfully acknowledge, learn about and understand the important contribution of our first peoples, especially in their role as the inheritors and the custodians of the longest living human culture on earth.

Information seeking

Library and information specialists must be able to:

- understand and investigate how information is effectively sought and utilised

- identify and investigate information needs and information behaviour of individuals, community groups, organisations and businesses through creation, collaboration and partnerships.

Information architecture

Library and information specialists must be able to:

- understand the importance of information technology and architecture to determine the structure, design and flows of information

- analyse information flow and user needs to develop systems and interfaces that adhere to recognised usability and accessibility guidelines

- work collaboratively with information technology service providers.

Information organisation and access

Library and information specialists must be able to:

- enable information access and use through systematic and user-centred description, categorisation, digitisation, storage, preservation and retrieval

- provide and promote free and equitable access to information and client services

- facilitate the acquisition, licensing or creation of information in a range of media and formats

- create accurate and standards-driven metadata for enhanced and persistent access to information resources in an online environment.

Information services, sources and products

Library and information specialists must be able to:

- design and deliver customised information services and products

- assess the value and effectiveness of library and information facilities, products and services

- market library and information services

- identify and evaluate information services, sources and products to determine their relevance to the information needs of users

- use research skills to provide appropriate information to clients

- use information and communicate knowledge

- deliver information literacy education

- understand the need for information skills in the community

- facilitate the development of information literacy and the ability to critically evaluate information

- facilitate the promotion of reading and literacy across all sectors by understanding the use of online resources, databases and relational databases.

Information Management

Library and information specialists must be able to:

- forecast, plan, facilitate and evaluate appropriate resource management to library and information services

- identify ethical and legal aspects and distribution of information

- manage the environment, physical and digital assets under the control of the library, including collection building, preservation and capacity planning.

Generation of knowledge

Library and information specialists must be able to:

- expand knowledge according to the state of research and practice in information behaviour

- continue lifelong learning through a professional development scheme

- systematically gather and analyse data and disseminate the findings to advance library and information science theory and its application to the provision of information services

- demonstrate a commitment to the improvement of professional practice through a culture of research, evidence-based information practice and knowledge retention

- demonstrate effective and appropriate research skills

- demonstrate effective and appropriate taxonomy and metadata creation and management skills.

Employability skills and attributes

The generic skills and attributes for library and information professionals include:

- effective communication skills

- professional ethical standards and social responsibility

- ability to fulfil client needs/customer service

- project management skills

- critical, reflective, and creative thinking

- problem-solving skills

- marketing

- accounting

- human resource skills

- ability to build partnerships and alliances

- effective team relationship skills

- self management skills

- a commitment to lifelong learning

- relevant information and communications technology and technology application skills

- appropriate pedagogical information literacy skills

- general knowledge

- supervisory skills.