Building Strong Library and Information Science Education (BSLISE) Working Group

- a working group within the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), devoted to strengthening the international quality of library and information science education (LIS), and as a result, the excellence of LIS professional practice.
- emerged out of deliberations at the 2016 IFLA Satellite Meeting (Dublin, Ohio, USA) on quality assessment of LIS education programs, among the IFLA Education and Training Section (SET), LIS Education in Developing Countries Special Interest Group (LISEDC SIG), and Library Theory and Research (LTR) Section.
- The BSLISE is working towards the development of an international quality assessment framework that promotes quality in LIS education programmes, and is inclusive of regional and national contexts and recognizes the LIS education needs arising out of such geographical and cultural contextuality.
International Survey: Methodology

- International survey on qualification requirements (education, certification and individual credentialing system) for library and information ‘professional’ practice toward a better understanding of the equivalence of credentials and the role of LIS education
- available in six languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish)
- administered online in March-May, July 2017
- multiple choice and open-ended questions, examined: (1) LIS qualification and certification requirements; (2) the definition and meaning of an LIS “professional”; and (3) agencies responsible for determining professional entry requirements.
- 706 responses from 101 countries
## Action Plan: Key Findings and Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Finding</th>
<th>Recommended Action</th>
<th>Change Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A formal undergraduate or graduate degree is required in many countries; however, there is no correspondence/equivalence among degrees; for many programs, there is no international or recognized standard against which they can be benchmarked for transferability or reciprocity.</td>
<td>1. Identify core and other competencies for transferability and reciprocity.</td>
<td>1. IFLA BSLISE Working Group and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Certification is required in many responding countries; these are local certifications that are not internationally recognized, that is, there is no correspondence/equivalence among certifications; hence, reciprocity becomes an issue, and the local certification practices do not have an international or recognized standard for QA.</td>
<td>2. Develop an International framework for the assessment of quality standards in LIS education.</td>
<td>2. IFLA BSLISE Working Group and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Many countries have formal local structures/systems for QA (i.e., governmental or higher education accrediting body; professional association; professional charter/council/union, etc.) or regulatory mechanisms; however, other countries may have none.</td>
<td>3. Create a local structure where there is none, building on local strengths.</td>
<td>3. Local LIS professionals, associations, and other stakeholders; government agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Different LIS professional qualification structures are in place; however, there is insufficient international knowledge about them and they may not always be recognized or understood.</td>
<td>4. Develop an international resource that identifies local structures.</td>
<td>4. IFLA BSLISE Working Group and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Most responses from around the world indicate that certification is not needed for the broader LIS field. In Europe, the situation is mixed.</td>
<td>5. Develop a “system” of qualification/accreditation inclusive of the areas in the broader LIS field.</td>
<td>5. Relevant stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The library field and the broader LIS field may have been, at one time, understood as separate disciplines; however, the evolving nature of librarianship has blurred the boundaries in terms of scopes of practice, skills, and knowledge.</td>
<td>6. Define and understand what the broader LIS field means and its implications for LIS education and professional development.</td>
<td>6. IFLA BSLISE Working Group and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Action A: Develop an international resource that identifies local structures** *(Recommended Action 4)*

With funding and infrastructure support from IFLA, the BSLISE Working Group, will build on the existing databases of LIS programs worldwide to develop a regularly updated, international database and asset map, capturing information about LIS schools and programs and local structures, organizations, and procedures that address the issues of professional qualifications, accreditation, certification, and registration for professional practice.

**Team members:** Clara M. Chu and Chris Cunningham [co-leaders, USA], Nuria Bautista Puig (Spain), Anna Gruzova (Russia), Albina Krymskaia (Russia), Felipe Martinez (Mexico), Fatih Oguz (USA), Virginia Ortiz-Repiso Jimenez (Spain), Monica Peres (Brazil), Ana María Talavera Ibarra (Peru)

**Action A Outputs (Target dates)**

1. **Survey** to identify/document LIS programs* (informal data collection at IFLA, collect data in September 2019; data clean up until November 2019)
2. **Map** LIS programs, as well as the items below (map by January 2020)
3. **National professional qualification*** - a definitive national response (see 1 (data collected via survey) and 2 (data mapped))
4. LIS professional national association - NOT collecting data at this time
5. LIS **accrediting organization*** (of programs) or **professional qualification organization*** (of individuals) (see 1 (data collected via survey) and 2 (data mapped))

*=data to be collected
An LIS Academic Unit may offer a variety of degree programs: Non-Degree, Undergraduate, Specialist or Professional, Master’s, Post Master’s Certificate, Doctorate.
Definition

Library and information science (LIS) is the study of information in all its formats and processes, technologies used to interact with information, and the nature of human interaction with information and technology in all society. It is also a professional field that engages all aspects of the information life cycle, that utilizes appropriate technologies, in order to connect people to information anywhere, and is practiced in public or private cultural heritage institutions (e.g., libraries, archives, museums), information centers, workplaces, among others. LIS education and research are conducted in universities or other academic institutions, offering degree (undergraduate and graduate) and non-degree programs, in units that are the level of a school/college/faculty, a sub-unit such as a department, or an organized degree program within a department or school.

Survey: https://tinyurl.com/bslise-programs-plus

Sample Mapping Infographic

Action B: Develop an international framework for the assessment of quality standards in LIS education *(Recommended Action 2)*

The BSLISE Working Group will engage the IFLA leadership and constituents to address the need for this framework (or related mechanism) and its role in developing and managing this assessment mechanism. Aligning this framework with IFLA’s Global Vision is necessary. Based on these deliberations, the BSLISE Working Group will work with the IFLA leadership, staff, and units, as well as other appropriate LIS entities, to move this action forward.

**Team members:** Anthony Chow (United States) and Jaya Raju (South Africa) [Co-leaders]; Theo Bothma (South Africa); Keren Dali (Canada/United States); Dick Kawooya (United States/Africa); Ekaterina Shibaeva (Russia)
Approach & Methodology

Approach: Engagement with representatives of IFLA, regional/national professional bodies and other relevant constituencies with the aim of collecting contextual information on the need for an international quality assessment framework or related mechanism

Methodology:
Qualitative Survey questions & consent forms (open-ended questions) – Collected mostly via email IRB ethics clearance via the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Purposive sample: representatives of 15 organisations/constituencies Timeline 2019: February-March (instrument design); April-July (data collection); July-August (data analysis) Return rate: as at 18 August 2019, 15 out of 17 responses (88%); 2 pending Qualitative data analysis using content analysis of responses per question and use of summaries to ascertain trends and patterns Group B slides that follow present broad findings to be considered by the wider BSLISE Working Group in taking forward White Paper Action B on the matter of the development of an international quality assessment framework or alternative mechanism

Responding organizations/professional bodies/constituencies

American Library Association (ALA)
African Library and Information Associations (AFLIA)
The Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)
Russian Library Association
Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T)
The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) - Latin America and the Caribbean Section (LAC)
The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) representative for Europe
The Belorussian Library Association
Middle East (represented via a University Library Director)
Asia & Oceania region (represented via an LIS educator/professor)
### LIS education standards in countries/regions - preliminary findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/country</th>
<th>Traditional LIS (7 Yes, 1 No)</th>
<th>Non-traditional LIS (7 Yes, 3 No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA/North America</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Not aware of</td>
<td>Not aware of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>No (yes - EUCLID Project)</td>
<td>No (yes - EUCLID Project)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LIS education standards in countries/regions (cont’d) - preliminary findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/country</th>
<th>Traditional LIS</th>
<th>Non-traditional LIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Yes (national educ standards)</td>
<td>Yes (national educ standards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Countries/regions with core competencies
- Preliminary findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/country</th>
<th>Core competences? (6 yes, 1 no)</th>
<th>Traditional? (5 yes, 1 no)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA/North America</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Yes (CILIP)</td>
<td>Yes (CILIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Viability of international standards and their alignment with IFLA Global Vision (Preliminary findings)

**Do we need international standards? n=10**
- 2 responses (20%) - standards unnecessary or not feasible
- 8 responses (80%) - supportive of standards, noting challenges of implementation

**Should these standards be aligned with IFLA Global Vision? n=8**
- 1 responses (12%) - alignment impossible or impractical
- 7 responses (88%) - supportive of the idea, suggesting ways of moving forward

**Should these standards extend to ‘non-traditional’ areas? n=8**
- E.g., CIO, Records Manager, Entrepreneurial Information Specialist
- 4 responses (50%) - supportive and 3 responses (38%) - unsure (concerned about implementation)
- 1 response - a resounding “no”
Standards and non-traditional LIS environments
- preliminary findings

Certification for framework of "non-traditional" LIS environments
❖ Responses differed widely
❖ Potentially highly relevant because of globalisation, internationalisation, and mobility
❖ "Non-traditional" is becoming crucial in current technological environments
❖ Less optimistic because of possibility of complex paperwork
❖ Misunderstandings about the concept of "non-traditional" LIS environments

Relevance of IFLA certification for "traditional" and "non-traditional" LIS environments
❖ Responses differed widely
❖ Very important for benchmarking and improving standards, especially for smaller/less developed countries
❖ Would not support such certification
❖ Differentiation between required and optional components and standards
❖ Complexity and possible cost benefit should be researched

Group B concluding observations

❖ Preliminary findings only - useful contextual information/detail collected - ongoing with responses from some organisations/professional bodies still to come in
❖ While regional or country LIS standards exist in some parts of the world, they do not in others (especially developing regions) - potential exists for filling this gap with an international framework
❖ Reaction to viability of establishing international LIS standards is mixed: largely supportive but also acknowledging challenges of implementation; also, a significant response of it being unnecessary or not feasible. Some association leadership felt the idea, despite the challenges, have merit and should be explored further.
❖ While there were misunderstandings/ambivalence around the concept of 'non-traditional' LIS environments, it is evident that LIS standards need to consider these as they are critical to current digital information environments
❖ IFLA adoption of international framework for quality assessment of LIS education and certification of programs received differing responses ranging from "would not support such certification" and too complex to implement, to very important for international benchmarking and improving quality of LIS education
❖ Important to distinguish and differentiate between standards and guidelines for LIS educational programs vs. certification for individuals
**Action C:** Identify core and other competencies for transferability and reciprocity *(Recommended Action 1)*

The BSLISE Working Group will work with the IFLA SET and LTR, and the LIS Education in Developing Countries SIG to incorporate an examination of existing competency standards, developed by professional associations and regulatory bodies, into their strategic plans. Support to carry out the project will be solicited by IFLA sections from the Professional Committee (PC) Project funds. Relevant IFLA sections will introduce and obtain support for their strategic work on LIS education from IFLA Divisions 4 (Support of the Profession) and Division 5 (Regions).

**Team members:** Kendra Albright (United States) and Primoz Junic (Slovenia) [Co-leaders], Helen Emasealu (Nigeria), Barbara Marson (United States), Anna Maria Tammaro (Italy)

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**Review of Existing Frameworks**

To understand the skills, knowledge and attitudes of LIS professionals, some existing frameworks were collected from broad, recognized professional organisations including:

- ALA
- ALIA
- CILIP
- EUCLID

These were analyzed and mapped to the IFLA Guidelines.
IFLA Guidelines

1. The Information Environment, Societal impacts of the information society, Information Policy and Ethics, the History of the Field
2. Information Generation, Communication and Use
3. Assessing Information Needs and Designing Responsive Service
4. The Information Transfer Process
5. Information Resource Management to Include Organization, Processing, Retrieval, Preservation and Conservation of Information in its Various Presentations and Formats
6. Research, Analysis and Interpretation of Information
7. Applications of Information and Communication Technologies to all Facets of Library and Information Products and Services
8. Knowledge Management
9. Management of Information Agencies
10. Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of Outcomes of Information and Library Use
11. Awareness of Indigenous Knowledge Paradigms

Table of Mapped Competencies (Core = yellow) (examples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IFLA</th>
<th>ALIA</th>
<th>CILIP</th>
<th>ALA</th>
<th>EUCLID</th>
<th>Other descriptive lists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Information Environment, Societal impacts of the information society, Information Policy and Ethics, the History of the Field</td>
<td>Knowledge of the broad context of the information environment</td>
<td>Ethics &amp; Values</td>
<td>Foundations of the Profession</td>
<td>Information Society Barriers to Free Access to Information in a Library in multicultural information society</td>
<td>Knowledge and professional ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Information Needs and Designing Responsive Services</td>
<td>Information seeking, Ability to fulfill client needs/customer service</td>
<td>Provision of information services</td>
<td>Reference and User Services</td>
<td>Information seeking and Information Retrieval</td>
<td>Interacting with diverse communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A commitment to lifelong learning</td>
<td>Literacies &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information Literacy and Learning</td>
<td>reflective practice grounded in diversity and inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate pedagogical information literacy skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reference interview/question negotiation Saunders 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table of Mapped Competencies (Important = blue) (Examples)

**Table 1 Comparison of frameworks and competencies lists (cont’d)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IFLA</th>
<th>ALIA</th>
<th>CILIP</th>
<th>ALA</th>
<th>EUCLID</th>
<th>Other descriptive lists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Generation, Communication and Use</td>
<td>Information services, sources and products</td>
<td>Information, governance &amp; compliance</td>
<td>Information sources</td>
<td>Digitalization of Cultural Heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications of Information and Communication Technologies to all facets of Library and Information Products and Services</td>
<td>Information architecture</td>
<td>Technological Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>Administration and Management</td>
<td>Library management</td>
<td>Technological Skills: skills related to the use and application of technologies in library or information work (e.g. computer skills, internet skills and programming skills) Bronstein &amp; Nebanzhal, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Information Agencies</td>
<td>Employability skills and attributes</td>
<td>Strategy planning &amp; management</td>
<td>Administration and Management</td>
<td>Library management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; advocacy</td>
<td>Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table of Less Frequently Mentioned Competencies (Examples)

**Table 1 Comparison of frameworks and competencies lists (cont’d)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IFLA</th>
<th>ALIA</th>
<th>CILIP</th>
<th>ALA</th>
<th>EUCLID</th>
<th>Other descriptive lists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Information Transfer Process</td>
<td>Research skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information skills: skills related to information retrieval and providing information services Bronstein &amp; Nebanzhal, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation and Conservation of Information in its various presentations and formats</td>
<td>Records management &amp; archiving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research, Analysis and Interpretation of Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Search skills, evaluating and selecting information resources Saunders 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crafting the Existing Framework Across Professional Organisations

From the table, we created a tree structure of competencies (next slide)

After creating the tree structure, we were able to develop a “wheel of competencies” visual of that tree structure

Creation of a Tree of Competencies (Example)

- Professional values and ethics
  - Information environment
  - Mission of the profession, Professional ethical standards, Social responsibility
    - Information Society
    - Information Society and Lifelong learning, Information policy, Mediation of culture
    - Free access to the information
    - Barriers to access
    - History of the field
    - Information and libraries in historical perspectives
- Information resources
- Information generation and communication
  - Information resources management
  - Organization of information, knowledge and information management, Digitization
  - Information preservation and curation
  - Conservation of information in various presentation and formats
  - Analysis and interpretation of information
  - Cataloguing and classification, Evaluating and selecting information resources
Wheel of Competencies – Draft of Framework

Group C Concluding Remarks

1. The existing competencies are many, but they are not different; instead, they are rather similar.
2. Collaboration to develop a common framework has so far failed because it has not been done in this way.
3. This shared framework, if agreed, could become a draft tool to facilitate the equivalence and reciprocity of professional qualifications.

Suggested next steps are to expand and build on the Wheel of Competencies.
THANK YOU!

Connect with us:
Website: https://bslise.org/
Social media: https://www.facebook.com/bslise/

Invitation to participate in pilot of survey:
https://tinyurl.com/bslise-programs-plus
Send feedback to Fatih Oguz f_oguz@uncg.edu

Instructions for Group Discussions

Please join a table to discuss (1) why a particular qualification framework/approach will work internationally, (2) its challenges, (3) who will manage it, (4) what are the resource needs, and (5) what elements need to be in place for its successful implementation worldwide.

Table Facilitators and note takers (framework/approach):
1. Anna Maria, Barbara and Albina (open exploration)
2. Dick, Ana Maria (certification)
3. Jaya and Theo (other, local models and how to scale up)
4. Clara and Saif (Declarative/Procedural Knowledge Approach)
5. Kendra, Diljit (accreditation)