

Editorial

Driving Change in the Profession: Papers presented at the Section on Education and Training Workshop during IFLA 2002, Glasgow, Scotland, August 2002

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The aim of the papers presented at the workshop was to assess the recent change in library and information education in the United Kingdom and to give the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues from education and training backgrounds around the world. The workshop was hosted by the University of Strathclyde and had about 45 delegates from some 20 countries.

Higher Education in the UK

There are approximately 170 universities and institutes of higher education in the United Kingdom. All universities are legally independent of Government and accountable through their own governing bodies for all aspects of work in the university. There is no substantial tradition of private higher education.

The separate Higher Education Funding Councils for England (HEFCE), Scotland (SHEFC), Wales (HEFCW), Northern Ireland (DENI) administer and allocate funds for teaching and research in higher education, with (in England) some funding for teaching in the health sector coming through the National Health Service and for teacher education through the Teacher Training Authority.

Currently about one third of young people in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and half of young people in Scotland, continue after school to higher education, with a Government target of 50% of all school leavers continuing to higher

education by 2010. All universities offer a variety of courses up to degree, postgraduate and research degrees. Currently about 11% of students are international students. There is a growing number of mature students in universities; both those coming to higher education later in life and those changing careers or requiring re-skilling. In a climate of Lifelong Learning, the idea that people will move in and out of higher education throughout their lives is increasingly common.

All educational courses for library and information professionals operate within this framework, although there is no common pattern as to where such courses might be located: independent schools/departments; or within business, computing, informatics, and media departments.

The Higher Education Funding Councils, as the major funding bodies, have been involved in a range of quality assurance initiatives over recent years. The key initiatives are introduced in the following papers. Some of these, such as the Research Assessment Exercise, are operated jointly by all four funding councils and cover the whole of the UK; others vary slightly from country to country.

It is within the following quality assurance framework that all library and information science courses operate. Papers presented at the workshop and published here are:

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the assessment of teaching quality as seen from the point of view of the assessor (Dr Judy Broady Preston, University of

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Wales) and the assessed (Janet Harrison, Loughborough University).

- Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and the assessment of research quality by Professor Judith Elkin, University of Central England.
- QAA and benchmarking, identifying the nature and extent of the Library and Information Management discipline and the underlying subject knowledge, skills

and understanding required by Marion Huckle, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

- Merger of two professional bodies: The Library Association (LA) and the Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) to form CILIP (The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals). This is followed by a paper on the future of LIS education in the UK by Professor Peter Enser, University of Brighton.