



Response to the ALIA Professional Pathways Framework Project Consultation Paper August 2022

Statement by the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL)

CAUL acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and that the Council Members are located across all of Australia. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, for all First Nations Peoples, wherever they are located.

Background

On behalf of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) we commend the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) for the Professional Pathways Initiative. CAUL member libraries provide significant employment in the Library and Information workforce. We note recent trends in the availability of courses in the sector, the changing nature of work and shortages/swings in the availability of staff and expertise. CAUL shares the concerns of ALIA and the profession at-large to ensure a “diverse, valued and supported Library and Information Sector (LIS) workforce with the skills, knowledge and ethics needed to deliver quality library and information services that anticipate and meet the needs of the community”.

In our environment we see significant changes in government and society expectations of Higher Education institutions. As University Libraries strive to support the changing strategies of our parent institutions, we require new knowledge and skills with a strong ethical and values-based underpinning. It is not what you do but how you do it, that counts! While we require and expect specialist knowledge and skills to support our unique areas of work, CAUL understands the broader environment, the importance of transferability of skills and the potential for a workforce that comes from non-Library backgrounds. We also seek opportunities for a workforce that can move between library sectors, in and out of academia, and indeed into other professions.

We congratulate ALIA on the detailed, well planned and consultative approach to this project, encouraging feedback in many formats and at specific milestones within the broader initiative. CAUL is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Pathways Advisory Board through our 2 representatives: Chelsea Harper and Philip Kent. We note that a number of staff from CAUL libraries attended the recent series of workshops across Australia and completed your online survey. We also welcome this opportunity to contribute in a structured manner against the 19 Proforma Questions issued with the Consultation Paper. Due to the iterative nature of the Professional Pathways Initiative, the input through this document is more granular and aggregates responses from our members rather than a single view from CAUL.

As the Professional Pathways initiative moves into a planning and implementation phase, CAUL welcomes ongoing dialogue with ALIA to ensure consistency in design and purpose, and opportunities for ongoing collaboration. Over the past 2 years, CAUL has conducted a Senior Leader Development and Networking Project. CAUL members provide considerable in-house training and development programs and we collaborate on regional and national horizons to develop and deliver new courses. We are eager to align with ALIA's initiatives to avoid duplication of effort and a quality outcome for all.

Summary of Input

- 10 core values:
 - Inclusion of the rights, culture and knowledge of First Nations peoples in value 5
 - Referring to specific principles in value 6 (e.g. Australian Privacy Principles).
- Foundation Knowledge Domains:
 - Broad in label and content – does this reflect the true value of librarianship?
 - Ethics and Values could be changed to Foundations of the Profession to include the history of librarianship
 - Inclusion of Critical Librarianship and Digital Fluency as critical foundations to the profession
 - Information Management could change to Information and Data Management to reflect the importance of business data analysis
 - Instructional Methodologies could change to Pedagogical Methodologies to reflect the need to align instruction/training with learning styles
 - Inclusion of other diverse community groups (LGBTQ+, other cultures) to reflect fully our user communities
 - Embed Indigenous Knowledges into all foundation domains, reflecting the need to include this perspective in all aspects of the profession
 - Leadership and Management could be changed as a label to include the specific requirements of the profession.
- Active Professionalism Domains:
 - Membership and certification requirements are too prescriptive
 - Further clarity needed regarding Mentoring and Coaching (receiving or providing?). Is this reflective of all roles in the profession?
 - Quality Research and Publishing requires a foundation in qualitative/quantitative research and analysis. Is this achievable for all roles within the profession?
- Conceptual Design:
 - Does the framework apply to LIS Professionals, or professionals working in a library environment? Further clarity is required, including expectations for each
 - Questions regarding the devaluation of the LIS Profession.
- LIS Courses:
 - Will be helpful to guide curriculum development in an ongoing capacity, to retain currency within the profession.
- Quality Assurance:
 - Should this framework guide quality when other frameworks (e.g. AQF) are available?
- Micro-credentials:

- Supportive of a Library 101 credential for professionals engaging in library work
- Supportive of credentials for LIS professionals moving within the sector (e.g. research support, metadata/acquisitions, local history)
- Ability to stack micro-credentials to replace ALIA accredited qualifications is positive but will require strong quality assurance and accreditation.
- Professional Recognition:
 - Serves as a standardisation mechanism for recruitment to assess candidates from broad educational and experience backgrounds
 - Should be based on a combination of criteria – academic performance, professional learning, certification and training (e.g. leadership programs such as DISC, Aurora, CAUDIT leadership)
 - Noted differentiation between LIS Professionals and LIS Workforce. Recognition should be aligned with LIS professionalism
 - Recognition should be tied to the attainment of qualifications and achievements, not membership of groups or CPD.
- Demonstrating Career Progression:
 - Should be mapped to career planning and skills attainment, not competence based.
- ALIA CPD:
 - Framework could be used to create specialisation CPD streams.
- Application:
 - PD progress and pathways and to recognise required certifications
 - Can the framework map to AQF attainment levels?
- Other:
 - The definition of LIS Professionals vs LIS Workforce is critical for the sector.

Additional Comments from One Member

Positive - Professional Knowledge domains are in separate sections.

- This would enable people coming from alternative pathways who wanted to focus on one area to choose the domains they'd like to upskill in, and not have to complete irrelevant domains. For instance, for someone coming from an IT background who wanted to work in systems, they could focus on digital technologies and potentially disregard areas of less interest (or at least not have to complete a university subject in that area).

Neutral - Splitting the framework into foundation and professional knowledge domains is an interesting concept.

- Theoretically this would reduce the barriers for entry level jobs if the foundation domains didn't require committing to a Graduate Diploma or Masters. One advantage is that those professional knowledge domains could be learnt in a combination of on-the-job training and learning (potentially in the form of micro credentials, or a practice-based curriculum.) A focus on on-the-job training such as rotations would be a great way for people to get broad skills in a range of areas.

Negative - continuing professional development isn't well dealt with in regard to alternative pathways.

- The current requirements apply only to people eligible for professional membership of ALIA. It doesn't ensure people with a LIS qualification ensure their skills are kept updated (unlike other professions such as law and teaching). If alternative pathways people choose to access LIS CPD, this could be a great way to assess their professional knowledge skills. This would help increase the diversity of the workforce, and assist underrepresented groups get their foot in the door.

Responses to List of Consultation Questions

Question	University	Response
Do you believe that the 10 core values remain relevant for the LIS sector today?	A	<p>They remain relevant. Just two comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. on value number 6) Adherence to information privacy principles. Since this is such a volatile topic in this digital era, should this reference a specific set of principles? Or perhaps Australian Information Privacy Laws? This might need to be more expansive to cover information and digital security principles. Is it also just adherence or as professionals should we be advocates in this area? 2. On value number 5) it may be important to call out recognition of the rights, culture and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
Do you agree with the range and scope of the proposed Foundation Knowledge domains?	A	Yes
Are there any elements that you would add, amend, or remove from the Foundation Knowledge domains?	A	The foundations are quite broad, and could feasibly encapsulate most, if not all, contexts.
	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend 'Ethics and Values' - I would like this FKD expanded to be something like ALA's "Foundations of the Profession". This would include values and ethics but extend these with a broader understanding of the foundational principles of the library and information profession including the history of libraries and librarianship. This is such a critical aspect of our professional identity, and it is important that colleagues have an awareness and appreciation of this. Articulating the "foundations of the profession" also helps to position the framework as being distinct in a professional context. I recognise that "wider information contexts" does encapsulate some of this, but I think the framework needs to articulate that we are a profession, we have a history, and to have that front and centre in the visual rather than buried in the fine print. • Add 'Critical Librarianship' - I would also like to see "Critical Librarianship" added as an FKD to reinforce the importance of taking a critical theory lens to our professional foundations, particularly in the context of First Nations knowledges.

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		<p>Juxtaposed with the “Foundations of the Profession”, including an “Critical Librarianship” FKD ensures that colleagues within our profession critically analyse the structure and theory of library work – bringing an important future focus to our profession.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add ‘Digital Fluency’ - Digital technologies underpins all that we do, and I can’t think of a library role that doesn’t require an adept understanding of technology.
Do you agree with the range and scope of the proposed Professional Knowledge domains?	A	Yes, these are good.
	B	The language/labels for the PKDs is quite generic. My concern is that it obscures what the real core of our knowledge and theoretical and discipline base is.
Are there any elements you would add, amend, or remove from Professional Knowledge Domains?	A	<p>There appears to be a bit of a gap in terms of evidence-based practice / business data analytics / methods of evaluating success of services and space design / measuring the user experience.</p> <p>In relation to literacies and learning, there is reference to “instructional methodologies”. Instruction is but one pedagogical approach. It may be better to reference “pedagogic methodologies” and cover a range of teaching and learning styles / approaches - problem-based, active learning, online instruction etc.</p> <p>There is a heavy focus on Indigenous knowledges, contexts, and issues but we don’t see anything around diverse, disadvantaged, or minority groups, e.g. LGBTQIA+, multicultural protocols etc. There is more that needs to be understood about these groups in the context of knowledge/information management than is covered under “community engagement”</p>
	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend “Information Management” to “Information and Data Management” - this better reflects the full scope of this domain in the context of LIS work • Merge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Contexts into the Foundational Domains – it makes more sense to position this domain as foundational for our profession • Amend Leadership and Management – the description is extremely generic, and should be tailored to a Library / non-profit context as we

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		have some very specific challenges that need to be understood
Do you agree with the range and scope of the proposed Active Professionalism domains?	A	<p>Feels overly prescriptive, particularly around membership and certification.</p> <p>The Mentoring and coaching item is also unclear. Is this to say the person needs to be mentoring and coaching others, or being mentored or coached? Is this required or even appropriate in all roles?</p> <p>Active professionalism 1 - research and publishing in the professional literature. This is an interesting one. A student can do a basic undergraduate degree and a professional Masters LIS qualification and never have learned quantitative or qualitative research and analytical methods, so it would be hard to expect them to produce quality research publications without the required skills.</p>
Are there any elements that you would add, amend, or remove from the Active Professionalism domains?	A	As above
Are there any ways you feel the conceptual design of the draft Framework could be enhanced or changed to articulate the knowledge, skills and values for the LIS sector?	A	NA
	B	<p>We need to be clear on what constitutes an 'LIS professional' versus a 'professional working in a Library' (eg. IT professional, accountant, Curator) vs a 'non-professional working in a Library' and be very clear on what the expectations are for each of those categories of our workforce. Currently, the professional Pathways Project has not sufficiently addressed this, and it is unclear which roles the framework relates to. We are at risk of devaluing and de-professionalising currently designated LIS professional roles.</p>
How could the draft Framework support LIS courses at the higher education and/or the VET level, for example in course development or ALIA accreditation?	A	<p>The professional knowledge domains, in conjunction with the AQF, would help to guide curriculum development. In addition, there is often a sense that curriculum development is not keeping pace with the changing needs of the institution which can often see very different skills or roles becoming a requirement within quite short timeframes (within 2-3 years rather than 10-15 years as we have seen historically). This framework if used well could help the continual refresh of graduate attributes for LIS students.</p>

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To what extent do you feel that the draft Framework could serve as a resource to guide quality assurance in accrediting LIS courses?	A	I'm not sure it can, or even if it should guide quality assurance. It can certainly lead to greater consistency in covered content within LIS curriculum. There are already instruments like the AQF for quality assurance in higher education.
What opportunities do you see for micro-credentials in the LIS sector?	A	Library principles 101 for people who come into libraries from other sectors due to the growing need for specialist skillsets in libraries such as marketing, IT, customer service etc. There is also a need for individuals who are changing roles within the library sector who need to improve their knowledges in those areas, for example, someone in the academic sector looking to move from a role in research support to metadata and acquisitions, or a Librarian in a public library looking to move into local history.
	B	Micro-credentials provide significant opportunities for CPD and to enable professionals to update their knowledge and skills in targeted areas. If the proposal was to enable people to stack micro-credentials to replace ALIA-accredited academic qualifications, we would need to have strong quality assurance and accreditation processes in place to verify achievement.
In what way is LIS professional recognition important to you, as an individual or as an employer? What might make professional recognition have more value and/or use in the LIS sector?	A	LIS professional recognition would certainly provide employers with a standard by which to measure the extent of knowledge / learning / experience of potential candidates. This would make it much easier when assessing candidates from a range of educational and professional backgrounds. In recent years, there has often been a decision to employ individuals without LIS background because they possess the skills such as customer service team management as we are unable to find applicants with both a library background and strong customer service management experience. It would be good to see the versatility we need in the modern library sector reflected in the LIS qualification.
	C	Professional recognition is important in that it creates a shorthand mechanism for expertise or knowledge to be understood. Areas such as research knowledge gives library staff credibility with the academic community.
What should professional recognition be based upon? For example, the attainment of ALIA accredited academic qualifications, experience in the LIS sector, demonstrated skills and/or knowledge gained	A	A combination – academic qualifications, on-the-job professional learning and experience (with standardised assessment in some form) and demonstrated skills gained through certification via other professional training (eg. leadership training could be demonstrated by DISC profiling and training, Aurora or CAUDIT leadership programs etc).

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<p>from other training, or other career opportunities.</p>	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional recognition should be primarily achieved through the attainment of an ALIA-accredited academic qualification OR extensive experience working in a professional LIS role. In the latter case, it is vital that the person is able to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of our foundational and professional knowledge domains (which makes this framework very valuable). Academic qualifications remain a critical part of our professional identity and standing. We need to maintain clear professional boundaries and set high expectations for people seeking to enter the profession. • There is a difference between LIS workforce and the LIS profession – and that difference is professional recognition. We should not be afraid to maintain those professional boundaries.
<p>What distinctions do you think are important for professional recognition? Should there be distinctions between:</p> <p>a. People with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications or experience?</p> <p>b. Librarians and teacher librarians?</p> <p>c. People at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional expertise?</p> <p>d. People who invest in ongoing CPD and those who don't?</p>	A	<p>If a robust micro credentialling program was in place, the distinctions between these groups would be functionally irrelevant.</p>
	B	<p>a. people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications or experience? – it would depend on a case-by-case basis, and the nature/type and length of experience we are talking about. As per above, we should expect people entering the profession based on experience alone to be able to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of our foundational and professional knowledge domains</p> <p>b. librarians and teacher librarians? – Yes, they are different roles requiring different training and expertise</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional expertise? - Potentially d. people who invest in ongoing CPD and those who don't? – Yes
	C	<p>There was some question about the intent of this question. The option d) of people who invest in ongoing CPD or not, the question was whether this referred only to ALIA scheme CPD or external CPD as well. Regardless, the main distinction that people felt was necessary of those four proposed in the question was d) because the nature of librarianship is that it requires lifelong learning and currency, so people who are doing this should be distinguished from those who are not.</p>
Would you support a program of professional recognition for those working in the LIS sector?	A	<p>Yes, but it should be tied to attainment of recognised qualifications rather than membership of groups or ongoing CPD.</p>
	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program of professional recognition would, if implemented well, have the potential to strengthen our profession and professional identity. • The LIS workforce includes professional and non-professional roles. They are all important, but we have to be clear on what defines the professional roles and ensure that these roles are appropriately accredited and recognised. ALIA can certainly be inclusive of all LIS workers through its membership options – but it should not be at the expense of being clear that there is a difference between LIS professionals and ‘people who work in libraries’ – they are not, and should not be, the same thing.
	C	<p>Yes, the staff here would support a program of professional recognition, mainly for the reasons outlined above.</p>
Would the draft Framework be suitable to underpin a professional recognition program?		
Would you support a system where those working in the LIS sector can demonstrate their career progression?	A	<p>Yes. As an optional system, rather than something that becomes a measure or demonstration of competence. If this were tied to career planning and skills mapping it would be an invaluable tool for individuals to plan out their CPD to achieve their career goals</p>

Question	University	Response
Are there ways for the draft Framework to provide a new structure for the ALIA CPD scheme?	A	The framework may be useful in creating specialisation CPD streams to enable staff to plan a career focus, retrain to follow a change in career direction, and potentially provide more mobility for sector workers. One example is a Rare Books and Special Collections specialisation stream which would provide access to the necessary training and development to allow a Librarian to develop specialist skills and change career directions
How do you see the draft Framework being applied in either your personal career or in your organization?	A	We could potentially use the framework to plan professional development programs / pathways for our staff and identify relevant certifications that we could direct staff towards at certain points in their career progression. It would also be extremely useful to have the framework mapped to various AQF attainment levels to help identify skills gaps and plan CPD with individuals / teams.
Any other comments or feedback?	B	The LIS workforce is diverse and necessarily includes a mix of LIS professionals, other professionals, and non-professionals. They are all important, but we have to be clear on what defines an LIS Professional and ensure that these roles are appropriately accredited and recognised.

About CAUL Inc.

The [Council of Australian University Librarians Incorporated \(CAUL\)](#) is the peak leadership organisation for university libraries in Australia and New Zealand. CAUL Members are the University Librarians or equivalent of the 39 institutions that have representation on Universities Australia and the 8 members of the Council of New Zealand University Librarians (CONZUL). CAUL makes a significant contribution to higher education strategy, policy and outcomes through a commitment to a shared purpose: To transform how people experience knowledge – how it can be discovered, used, and shared. CAUL's vision is that society is transformed through the power of research, teaching, and learning. University libraries are essential knowledge and information infrastructures that enable student achievement and research excellence.