

Name: Anonymous

Feedback provided from:
An individual

Organisation Name (if providing on behalf of an organisation):

1. Do you think the conceptual design of the Draft Framework works? What would you change?

No, the conceptual design of the Draft Framework does not work as Foundation Domains sit apart from the professional knowledge domains. It feels like foundation domains are an afterthought. Foundation Domains should include LIS-specific skills and knowledge, such as the accredited LIS qualification which should cover these specific skills and knowledge. The current Foundation Domains are too generic and could be apply to any job or sector. There are also basic areas of expertise that every librarian, regardless of area of employment, should have. These basic areas of expertise (or skills and knowledge) differentiate the LIS profession from other generic jobs and administrative industries and makes the LIS profession unique – it makes librarians and library technicians professionals.

2. Are there any elements that you would add, amend, or remove?

An ALIA-accredited qualification should be the main point in Foundation Domains. It should be made known to all and understood by all that an ALIA-accredited qualification encompasses “Sector and organisational contexts”, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country”, “Wider information contexts” and “Ethics and values”. An ALIA-accredited qualification should cover all these things. If an ALIA-accredited qualification currently does not cover the Foundation Domains (or cover them well), work should be put in by ALIA to engage LIS course coordinators to rectify this issue.

Librarians, library technicians and people working in supporting roles in libraries have different roles and expertise. The draft framework is trying to do everything, accommodate everyone and accomplishing nothing in the process.

3. Would a Framework along the lines of the draft Framework be useful to you in your career or workplace? How could you see it being used?

The draft Framework in its current form is not useful to me as the ALIA-accredited qualification is not included in the Foundation Domains. The lack of an ALIA-accredited qualification in the Draft Framework will signify to my workplace that my role is not a professional one, which will impact my salary and benefits (see my answer to the next question).

4. Is LIS professional recognition valuable to you? What changes would you like to see to professional recognition?

People who work in libraries but do not have accredited LIS qualifications should NOT be recognized as an LIS professional. It does not matter if they work in managerial or leadership roles – they are NOT LIS professionals and should be seen as such. If they want to be seen as an LIS professional, they should complete the accredited LIS qualification.

Professional recognition by way of an ALIA-accredited tertiary qualification is very valuable to me as a librarian in a hospital setting. It allows me to be seen and classified as a professional by the hospital/organisation. This consequently allows me to draw a higher pay due to my classification under the EBA for allied health professionals in Victoria. This, in my opinion, is right because of the time and effort we have spent in obtaining a higher qualification and the unique skillset that we have obtained as a result of the training. When I see that someone has completed an ALIA-accredited qualification, I know that they have had quality training and we both have the same base level of understanding of the wider knowledge, skills, values, issues and trends in the industry.

Professional recognition as a librarian or library technician should be based on ALIA-accredited qualifications in the first instance. Microcredentials should only be used as a supplement for continuous professional learning after having obtained a first ALIA-accredited qualification. Microcredentials should not replace an ALIA-accredited qualification.

5. Any other comments?

1. It is especially disheartening to see the quote on the Professional Pathways website, “Who is even a librarian in the 21st century?”, which immediately puts librarians on the backfoot. With this quote, librarians are being questioned about their purpose and their value. The reality is that libraries are already constantly trying to justify their value to the community or their parent organisations. This sort of remark being featured front and centre on the Professional Pathways website of the peak body organisation in Australia representing LIS professionals is a slap to the face and another nail in the coffin for the LIS industry. ALIA and the professional pathways board should be seeking to advocate for LIS professionals by championing the fact that we are a profession with accredited tertiary qualifications, we have specific skills and knowledge unique to our industry and that the work that LIS professionals do benefits their community and parent organisations. Do not dumb down or put down LIS professionals by featuring such quotes as it is disrespectful to all LIS professionals. One would expect that the peak body organization for LIS professionals in Australia to be on our side, not against us.

Compare this with the Music Therapists Association’s website

(http://url3643.alia.org.au/ls/click?upn=pk0AJzMt12xiMHH1B7keoX6bd1vqVSpLzZbDxNxJvZKdrDp5G8OrJ2CdFc6pzNzdn1As_vqCbYQNGDCzyUDcyALbK66QyKW3UVpMe-2FCEt4ByLrfgQ5zp822ozvyBBlfGqxe9XJ7EUkt2wnDy5lpz-2Bhlc2wxHQAagc78KN8m4JoowhUhrVik30iRuox8nWSFDgJ-2FUpfUZy6BpeEg9ihOr1c6IQPkqBzVHoPsGzOHWTmgISkVO5-2FXaLR7YCIOT92KBE7fEFK9PANnjMnCpF0ZYCTaC2ta6dFB6zDErJ09GA8Ebl0jJUz19tJhB2Z-2BGOIAzQ5Oh) where the first thing you see is “Registered Music Therapists have recognised university degrees”.

The Music Therapists Association (MTA) does not question the professionalism of its members. Instead, the MTA is doing a great job of championing and raising awareness about the professional status of qualified music therapists instead of disparaging them. This is something that the Professional Pathways board and team should keep in mind when you engage LIS professionals and develop a new framework.

2. There is no information that this framework will achieve the “diversity” that the ALIA and professional pathways team suggest it will. What are the measures of success? As someone working in the industry, I am 100% sure that if ALIA does not champion for the need for accredited LIS qualifications in order to be considered an “LIS professional”, many libraries will not hesitate to replace library staff with non-professional staff and will re-classify professional library staff to

administrative award rates. With a professional degree comes the expectation of higher pay, many employers will choose the potentially unqualified, less expensive employee. Employers may not know anything about libraries, but they understand qualifications. Employers also understand that a worker with a higher qualification will demand a higher pay (it will also be something that the worker can leverage on to demand for higher pay). Health libraries aren't short staffed because of a lack of qualified staffed, they're short staffed because the organisation doesn't recognise the value of a librarian. We're fighting for that professional recognition - taking away that required qualification might make us seem even LESS important.

3. If the LIS qualification is not being respected by employers, what evidence is there that this framework will be respected? Currently, ALIA is the gatekeeper of the professionalism of the LIS workforce. Some jobs require that their staff have an accredited LIS qualification and some simply mention that the staff needs to be able to qualify as an ALIA professional member. The benchmark to being an ALIA professional member is qualifications. If ALIA goes ahead with this framework (where LIS qualifications are not mentioned or required), LIS qualifications for LIS roles will be made redundant, and it will de-professionalise the LIS workforce.

4. STOP segregating health libraries and health librarians from other library sectors such as public or academic. Health librarians are librarians first and foremost. Many current health librarians have spent decades in public, academic, government and other special libraries before making the jump to health libraries. Many ex-health librarians are now in either public, academic or other special libraries. Librarians make the jump between each sub-sector more often than you think. The LIS qualification creates a common understanding of the skills required by the employer and the employee. It is not right to say that if you want to be a health librarian, you need qualifications and if you want to be a public or academic librarian, qualifications are optional.

5. If the cohort of current LIS students are already working in the sector, that is actually good news. People who are currently or have been working in the LIS sector should be encouraged to upskill themselves by pursuing the LIS qualification. This should be the way to encourage diversity, NOT the removal of the requirement for LIS qualification in order to entice other people to join the LIS industry. The latter dilutes the industry with people who may or may not even be committed to the LIS profession, and are clearly not LIS professionals!

6. All LIS professionals (ALIA and non-ALIA members) should be given the opportunity to vote for the new framework as it concerns the future of the entire LIS workforce.

7. We are turning ourselves inside out unnecessarily when our profession is not the issue. We do have a structure that is working. This is an industrial relations and advocacy issue. We need to be proud of and militant in upholding our professional qualification (Unfortunately, this is NOT the message I am getting from ALIA or the professional pathways team. Extremely disappointing.)

8. As a new graduate of the MIM course at RMIT University, this draft framework feels like a slap in the face. 3 years ago, I was told by ALIA that I needed to have a qualification in order to get a job as a librarian. So I did it. Only to be told that the qualifications are not needed anymore. Having completed the qualifications, I have a much more holistic understanding of the entire LIS industry, including trends and issues such as open access, copyright, ethics and privacy. The LIS qualification will only add on to the experience of a non-professional who has been working in a LIS workplace for a long time, not take away from it.

[Redacted sentence.]