

U of A SLIS Employment Survey, 2001 Graduates

The School is pleased to announce the findings of its 14th annual employment survey of graduates of the Master of Library and Information Studies program at the University of Alberta. In 2001, 30 students graduated with MLIS degrees, 21 of whom are represented in this survey (70% compared with 89% of the 2000 graduating class). The 2001 survey was conducted in July and August 2002, just over a year after the spring convocation.

Summary

All 21 graduates represented in the 2001 survey were employed in library and information studies at the time of the survey. This echoes the high overall placement rates of MLIS graduates during the past decade or so, in the range of 75% to 90%. And employment prospects for 2001 graduates remained positive compared with graduates from 1999 and earlier years: some 71% of 2001 graduates had permanent positions compared with 76% of 2000 graduates and around 50%-60% in earlier years.

Comparison of first and current placements shows that 65% of 2001 graduates changed jobs at least once during their first year after graduation, the same rate as with the previous year's cohort. In both graduating classes, the vast majority had obtained their first position within three months of graduation: 80% of 2001 graduates, 90% of 2000 graduates.

As well, only 5 graduates in 2001 (25%) indicated they were still seeking more satisfactory employment at the time of the survey; among the 2000 cohort, it was 4 graduates (13%). These patterns are in marked contrast to the experience of 1999 graduates, of whom 48% were still looking when surveyed. The most common ways in which the 2001 graduates learned about their positions were the FLA jobline, word-of-mouth, and the SLIS job board.

The most frequent employers of the 2001 graduates were special libraries, supplying one-third of current placements, followed by public and academic libraries at 28% and 24% respectively. Two-thirds of the 2001 graduates were employed in Alberta, up from 48% of 2000 graduates; most of those remained in Edmonton in both years. Emigration patterns were similar to previous years: 14% of 2001 graduates went to the U.S. for work, while the rate was 17% for the 2000 cohort and 20% for the 1999 cohort.

All but two of the 2001 graduates gained library work experience either before or during their MLIS program, generally similar to the experience of the 2000 cohort, with almost all (95%) working during the MLIS program even if they had prior experience--also echoing the 2000 cohort but contrasting with the 1999 graduates of whom only 83% worked during their MLIS program.

Placement

All 21 of the 2001 graduates represented in the survey were employed in library and information services at the time of the survey. The overall placement rate for 2000 graduates was similar at 91% and for 1999 graduates the rate was 86%.

At survey time, 19 or 90% of the represented 2001 graduates held full-time positions, comparable to the 2000 cohort (93%). However, only 15 out of 21 (71%) had permanent placements, which was the same as for 2000 graduates (76%) but much higher than for graduates in earlier years when the rate hovered around 50%-60%. Two of the 2001 graduates were working part-time when the survey was conducted.

Only nine of the 21 graduates (43%) had worked in a temporary position at some point since graduation; three had held 1 temporary position, five had 2, and one had 3. Among graduates from 2000, 52% had worked in a temporary position at some point, and among 1999 graduates it was still higher at 60%.

Four of the 2001 graduates (19%) held full-time temporary placements at the time of the survey, ranging in duration from six to 12 months. These patterns were similar to the 2000 graduates, but more promising than for 1999 graduates of whom 32% were still in such positions at the time of the survey.

Current Placement Status	Number	Percentage
Full-time permanent	15	71%
Full-time temporary	4	19%
Part-time	2	10%
TOTAL	21	100%

Employment Sector

Special libraries (including government) were the most frequent employers of 2001 graduates (33%). Public libraries ranked second and academic libraries third. Among 2000 graduates public and regional libraries had been the most frequent employers (39%), while special libraries ranked second (21%) and academic libraries a distant third (14%). Among 1999 graduates, special and academic libraries supplied one-third each of the placements and public and regional libraries accounted for only 20%.

Current Placement Setting	Number	Percentage
Special libraries	7	33%
Public libraries	6	28%
Academic libraries	5	24%
School libraries	1	5%
Other agencies	2	10%
TOTAL	21	100%

Current job titles and positions reported by the 2001 graduates were diverse: three said librarian and one each said librarian/manager, library manager, assistant librarian, librarian/researcher, library media specialist, resources assistant, information services librarian, client services and systems librarian, information services coordinator, library and information coordinator, project coordinator-information resources, information associate, education and content specialist, research consultant, bibliographer, youth services librarian, and children's services librarian.

Location

Alberta provided two-thirds of the current placements for 2001 graduates (14 out of 21), higher than the patterns in 2000 at 48% and in 1999 at 58%. Three graduates in 2001 (14%) went to the United States for work, somewhat similar to 2000 graduates (17%) and 1999 graduates (20%). Another graduate went to Australia. Other work locations reported by 2001 graduates were British Columbia (2) and Saskatchewan (1). Most of the Alberta placements were in Edmonton (10 out of 14 graduates or 71%), somewhat similar to 2000 at 86% and 1999 at 79%.

Salaries

Eleven of the 2001 graduates with full-time permanent positions in Canada reported annual salaries, ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000, with a median of \$41,000 and a mean of \$39,350. This represents an increase of \$3,000 over median salaries reported by 2000 graduates (ranging from

\$23,700 to \$48,000), and a further increase of \$2,500 over median salaries reported by 1999 graduates. The median reported by 2001 graduates with full-time permanent positions in the United States was \$36,000 US, up \$1,000 from 2000 graduates and a further \$2,400 from 1999 graduates.

Three graduates in 2001 holding full-time temporary positions in Canada reported earnings of \$2,800 to \$3,200 per month, up \$30 per month from 2000 and a further \$820 per month from 1999. Three part-time positions paid between \$16.00 and \$23.00 per hour.

Job Searching

Some 30% of 2001 graduates found their first position before graduation (6 out of 20), and 80% within 3 months of graduation. More 2000 graduates had positions before graduating (76%), and 90% had found their first position within 3 months of graduation. The 1999 graduates were similar in that 77% had found their first position before graduation, and 81% within 3 months of graduation.

Comparison of first and current placements shows that 13 of the 20 graduates represented in the 2001 survey (65%) changed jobs at least once during their first year after graduation. This was identical to the experience of both the 2000 graduates and the 1999 graduates.

Position Obtained	First Position		Current Position*	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Before entering program	1	5%		
Before graduation	5	25%		
Within 3 months of graduation	10	50%		
3 to 6 months after graduation	3	15%	2	29%
More than 6 months after graduation	1	5%	5	71%
TOTAL	20	100%	7	100%

**if different from first*

Source of Information	Number of Sources Mentioned (first and current positions combined)	Percentage
FLA jobline	6	25%
word-of-mouth	4	17%
SLIS job board	3	13%
Newspaper	3	13%
JEROME-L	2	8%
Listserv	1	4%
ALA website	1	4%
CALL mailing list	1	4%
CAPS website (UofA)	1	4%
GSA newsletter (UofA)	1	4%
internal posting	1	4%
TOTAL	24	~100%

Three-quarters of the 2001 graduates found their positions through the FLA jobline (6 mentions), word-of-mouth (4 mentions), the SLIS job board at the University of Alberta (3 mentions), newspaper advertisements (3 mentions), or the JEROME-L listserv (2 mentions). Among 2000 graduates, three-quarters mentioned word-of-mouth, the SLIS job board, the FLA website, JEROME-L, and the ALA annual conference job fair. Graduates from 1999 also mentioned word-of-mouth and the SLIS job board as their most frequent sources of information.

Future Prospects

All survey respondents were asked about job satisfaction with their current work situation. Only five graduates in 2001 (25%) indicated they were still seeking more satisfactory employment; among 2000 graduates, it was four (14%). These patterns are in marked contrast with graduates in previous years: 48% of 1999 graduates and 43% of 1998 graduates reported to be still looking for better positions at the time of the surveys.

Library Work Experience

All of the 18 graduates providing library or archives work experience data indicated that they had obtained experience either before or during their MLIS program. This was generally similar to the experience of 2000 graduates and 1999 graduates.

Library Work Experience*	Number	Percentage
Either before or during MLIS	18	86%
- before (11 or 52%)		
- during (18 or 86%)		
No response	3	14%
TOTAL	21	100%

** excludes for-credit field placements and practicums*

Demographics

Of the 21 graduates represented in the survey, 20 were female and 1 was male, 96% and 4% respectively, a ratio similar to the full 2001 graduating class of 30 students consisting of 93% females and 7% males.

The average age for the graduating class of 2001 was comparable to the norm for recent years, which has ranged between 29 and 34 years of age at graduation. Among the 2001 graduates, the average age was just over 33 years; among 2000 graduates it was 32.5 years, and among the 1999 cohort it was 34.1.

Academic patterns for degrees earned prior to the MLIS for 2001 graduates represented in the survey were as follows: 13 held the BA, 2 the BEd, 2 the BSc, 1 the BMus, 1 the BComm, 1 the MA, and 1 the MSc.

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