

U of A SLIS Employment Survey of 2006 Graduates

During the summer of 2007, the School conducted its 19th annual employment survey of graduates of the Master of Library and Information Studies program at the University of Alberta. In 2006, 29 students graduated with MLIS degrees, 22 of whom are represented in this survey (76%). The 2006 survey was conducted just over one year after spring class convocated.

Summary

All of the 2006 graduates responding to the survey said they had been employed in library and information studies at one time or another since graduation, echoing high placement rates during the past decade or so (on the order of 75% to 100%). However, half of them said they were still seeking more satisfactory employment; this is similar to the 2005 cohort, but substantially higher than was reported in 2004 and 2003.

The vast majority of 2006 graduates (86%) obtained their first position within three months of graduation, up from the previous year (63%). Half of all positions were found through electronic job lines and web sites, and one-third by word of mouth; this pattern is generally similar to the last 2 or 3 years.

The median salary reported by 11 graduates with full-time positions was \$48,000, an increase of \$500 or 1.1% over the previous cohort, and ranging from \$36,000 to \$58,000. Public and regional libraries accounted for half of all placements. Residency patterns varied from those of previous years, with only half of the 2006 graduates remaining in Alberta, compared to 71% among the 2005 cohort.

Placement

All 22 graduates represented in the 2006 survey were employed in library and information services at some time since graduation. In the previous four years, placements rates were 96%, 85%, 93%, and 100% respectively in 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002.

An important employment indicator is the nature of positions held. At the time of the survey, 19 of the 22 graduates had full-time positions, just over half of which were permanent (10 out of 19 or 53%). This is down marginally from 2005 and 2004 (62% and 64%), but very similar to 2003 and 2002 (58% and 54%); the rates were 71% in 2001 and 76% in 2000.

Of the 9 graduates (41%) with full-time temporary positions at the time of the survey, contracts ranged from 3 to 21 months; one had a renewal option and another the possibility of permanent appointment. The median duration of positions was 12 months.

Just over half of the 2006 graduates reported holding one or more temporary positions since graduation (56%); this was an improvement over 2005 (78%), but still higher than the 2004 cohort (41%). Four graduates reported having had one such position, 5 had two, 2 had three, and 1 had five. Among the 2005 cohort, 13 reported holding one temporary position, 2 had two, and 3 had three.

Current Placement Status	Number	Percentage
Full-time permanent	10	45%
Full-time temporary	9	41%
Part-time	3	14%
TOTAL	22	100%

Of the 3 graduates in part-time positions, one had a permanent appointment, one had one temporary position and another had two.

Salaries

Annual salaries reported by 11 graduates with full-time permanent positions ranged from \$36,000 to \$58,000, with a median of \$48,000 (mean \$48,200). These figures indicate a very modest median increase over 2005 of \$500 or 1.1%, similar to the percentage increase in 2005 over 2004. Salaries for 2005 ranged from \$37,100 to \$60,000, with a median of \$47,500 (mean \$48,500).

Among 7 graduates in full-time temporary positions, median earnings were \$3,700 per month (mean \$3,800), ranging from \$3,300 to \$4,700 per month. The median increase over 2005 was \$400 per month. Three graduates holding part-time positions were paid between \$22 and \$27 per hour, for placements ranging from 16 to 30 hours per week.

Employment Sector

Half of all positions were in public and regional libraries, echoing the 2005 cohort. But unlike that cohort, the 2006 graduates reported 7 special library positions (27%), followed by 4 positions in post-secondary libraries (15%), 1 in a school library and 1 in an archive; the special libraries served government, law, hospitals, and medical research units. Among 2005 graduates, 48% of placements were in public and regional libraries, 31% were in post-secondary libraries, and only 14% were in special libraries.

All Placements since Graduation	Number	Percentage
Public libraries	9	35%
Special libraries & research units	7	27%
Regional libraries & consortia	4	15%
Post-secondary libraries	4	15%
School libraries	1	4%
Archives	1	4%
TOTAL	26	100%

The most frequent titles and positions held by 2006 graduates at some point since graduation were 3 mentions of librarian and 2 mentions each of information services librarian, library intern or fellow, and reference librarian. All other position titles were mentioned once only: children's services librarian, youth services librarian, public services librarian, adult services librarian, technical services librarian, training and development librarian, consulting librarian, professional librarian, auxiliary librarian, school librarian, assistant director, branch librarian, project assistant, and research officer; two other respondents mentioned library assistant and program assistant.

The most frequently mentioned primary job assignments were reference/information services (8 mentions) and collections (4 mentions), followed by two mentions each for administration/management, systems/network manager, youth & children's services, and webmaster/web content manager. Mentioned once each were acquisitions, archival work, information literacy instruction, cataloguing, database management, systematic review searching, research & synthesis, and library programming. A few respondents indicated multiple task assignments.

Location

Edmonton continued to be the residence of choice for 2006 graduates, with 27% remaining in the city; this was down substantially from previous years: 42% in 2005, 55% in 2004, and 60% in 2003. Other job locations were Lethbridge, Calgary, Rocky Mountain House, and Spruce Grove. Altogether, Alberta provided just half of current locations, down from 71% and 75% among the 2005 and 2004 cohorts, respectively.

Other work locations were 5 in British Columbia (3 in Victoria, 1 in Vancouver, and 1 in White Rock), 2 in Saskatchewan (Saskatoon and Prince Albert), 1 in Manitoba (Winnipeg), 2 in Ontario (Ottawa and Renfrew), and 1 in the U.S.

One 2005 graduate went to the U.S., but none among the 2004 and 2003 cohorts; this contrasted with the earlier years 1999–2002, when on average 18% found work there.

Job Searching

The vast majority of 2006 graduates (18 or 85%) found their first position within three months of graduation; 3 graduates (14%) took longer than six months. Among the 2005 cohort, only 63% found their first position within three months of graduation, and another 14% took more than six months.

Position Obtained	First Position		Current Position*	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Before entering program	3	14%	---	---
Before graduation	7	33%	---	---
Within 3 months of graduation	8	38%	4	31%
3 to 6 months after graduation	---	---	---	---
More than 6 months after graduation	3	14%	9	69%
TOTAL	21	99%	13	100%

**if different from first*

Of the 13 graduates in 2006 who started out in a temporary placement before obtaining their current position, 4 (31%) took less than three months after graduation, while 9 (69%) took more than six months.

Source of Job Information — All Positions	Number of Sources (1 st & current positions)	Percentage
Listserve and job sites	17	50%
FLA job line	6	
BCLA web site	3	
U of A Human Resources web site	2	
CLA web site	1	
OLA web site	1	
general	4	
Word of mouth	12	34%
practicum supervisor, staff	2	
Professor	1	
SLIS classmates	1	
SLIS graduates	1	
work colleagues	1	
former employer	1	
initiated contact & submitted résumé	1	
Networking	1	
general	3	
SLIS job board	3	8%
Job ad, internal posting	3	8%
TOTAL	35	100%

Half of all positions in 2006 were identified through electronic sources, with the FLA job line (6 mentions) and the BCLA web site (3 mentions) leading the way. Word of mouth accounted for 34% of sources.

Among the 2005 cohort, 58% of positions were obtained through electronic sources and 30% by word of mouth; JEROME-L was mentioned 7 times and the FLA job line 3 times.

Library Work Experience

As in previous years, almost all of the 2006 graduates gained library work experience either before or during their MLIS program (91%). In the previous six years 2000–2005, graduates with work experience before or during their MLIS ranged from 82% to 97%. Thirteen graduates in 2006 (59%) worked both before and during their MLIS program, while among the 2005 cohort it was 42%.

Library Work Experience*	Number	Percentage
Either before or during MLIS - before (13 out of 22 – 59%) - during (20 out of 22 – 91%) Both before and during MLIS (13 out of 22 – 59%)	20	91%
Neither	2	9%
TOTAL	22	100%

* excludes for-credit field placements and practicums

A very high proportion of 2006 graduates worked part-time during their MLIS program (91%), similar to previous years: 96% in 2005, 82% in 2004 and 89% in 2003.

Demographic Profile

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Of the 22 graduates represented in the survey, 17 were women and 5 were men, 77% and 23% respectively. This was similar to the full graduating class of 29, which consisted of 73% women and 27% men. The average age at graduation for the class of 2006 was 32 years, which was within the range of the last two decades, 29 to 35 years of age.

Academic degree patterns were generally similar to previous years: 17 had the BA, 1 the BEd, 1 the BFA, 1 the MA, 1 the MMu, and 1 the MSc. Many disciplines were represented, among which the most frequently mentioned were English (6) and history (3). Other disciplines were English & religious studies, religious studies, history & French, comparative literature, German literature, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, visual arts, music, and biology.

Future Prospects

An important employment indicator is graduates' satisfaction with their present situation. Eleven of the 22 graduates in 2006 (50%) said they were seeking more satisfactory employment at the time of the survey. This was slightly lower than the rate registered by the 2005 cohort (57%), but substantially higher than in 2004 and 2003 (35% and 54%). Few graduates in 2006 indicated a preference for a specific type of library: academic library (1 mention), corporate or academic library (1 mention), and archive (1 mention). Annual salary expectations ranged from \$42,000 to \$80–\$100,000, with a median of \$50,000; among the 2005 cohort still looking, salary expectations had been \$43,000 to \$70,000.

Thanks to all who responded to the annual survey and trusted us with personal data, particularly salary and wage information, for this aggregate analysis that preserves individual privacy.

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