

## U of A SLIS Employment Survey of 2007 Graduates

During the summer of 2008, the School conducted its 20<sup>th</sup> annual employment survey of graduates of the Master of Library and Information Studies program at the University of Alberta. In 2007, 34 students graduated with MLIS degrees, 31 of whom are represented in this survey (91%). The 2007 survey was conducted just over one year after spring class convocated, with a small number of fall 2007 convocants also included.

### Summary

Thirty of the 31 graduates in 2007 responding to the survey said they had paid work in library and information studies at one time or another since graduation, echoing high placement rates during the past two decades, on the order of 75% to 100%.

However, at the time of the survey, more than 1 in 3 said they were still seeking more satisfactory employment, which is fewer than reported by the 2006 and 2005 cohorts (50% and 57%) but similar to 2004 (35%).

About 3 in 4 of the reporting graduates found their first position within three months of graduation, down from the previous year at 85% but higher than among the 2005 cohort at 63%. More than half of all positions were found through electronic job lines and web sites, and word of mouth accounted for the remainder; these patterns are generally similar to those of the previous 3 or 4 years.

Median salary reported by 14 graduates in the 2007 cohort with full-time positions was \$49,700, an increase of \$1,700 or 3.5% over the previous cohort, and ranging from \$38,000 to \$72,000. Public and regional libraries accounted for 1 in 3 placements. By far the most frequently mentioned primary job assignment was reference/information services. Edmonton as residence of choice increased dramatically for 2007 graduates, with 6 in 10 staying in the city compared to only 27% the year before; however, earlier ratios were 42% in 2005, 55% in 2004, and 60% in 2003.

### Placement

All but one of the 31 graduates represented in the 2007 survey were employed, or self-employed (1), in library and information services during the year or so since graduation (97%), and in fact were still working at the time of the survey. In the previous five years, placements rates were 100%, 96%, 85%, 93%, and 100% respectively in 2006 back through 2002.

An important employment indicator is the nature of positions held. At the time of the survey, 25 of the 31 graduates (83%) reported full-time status. Over half of them had permanent positions (15 out of 25 or 60%). This ratio is somewhat similar to the pattern of the previous five years, ranging from 53% in 2006 to as high as 64% in 2004; however, the rates were 71% in 2001 and 76% in 2000.

Of the 10 graduates (40%) with full-time temporary positions at the time of the survey, contracts ranged from 7 to 24 months, with a median of 12 months, the same as reported for the previous year.

<b>Current Placement Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Full-time permanent	15	50%
Full-time temporary	10	33
Part-time	4	13
Self-employed	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99%</b>

Four graduates reported part-time positions at the time of the survey, three of whom were permanent and one of those also had a temporary position. One graduate held two part-time temporary positions.

Some 20 out of 30 graduates (67%) in 2007 reported holding one or more temporary positions since graduation, up somewhat from the previous year at 56%; for 2005 graduates the rate was 78% but only 41% for the 2004 cohort.

Among 2007 graduates, 10 reported holding one temporary position, 7 had two, 1 had three, and 1 said “too numerous to mention.” The 2006 cohort included 4 holding one temporary 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.

### Salaries

Annual salaries reported by 14 graduates with full-time permanent positions in the 2007 cohort ranged from \$38,000 to \$72,000, with a median of \$49,700 (mean \$51,400). These figures indicate a median increase of \$1,700 or 3.5% over 2006 (mean increase of 6.6%), substantially higher than what previous cohorts experienced at around 1% or 1.1% in 2006 over 2005 and in 2005 over 2004.

Median earnings reported by 9 graduates in full-time temporary positions were \$4,367 per month (mean \$4,231). They ranged from \$2,700 to \$5,777 per month. The median increase over 2006 was \$667 per month. The median increase in 2006 over 2005 was \$400 per month.

The 4 graduates holding part-time positions, permanent and temporary, were paid between \$20.00 and \$34.25 per hour, for placements ranging from 13 to 22 hours per week.

### Employment Sector

One-third of all positions were in public and regional libraries, echoing the 2006 and 2005 cohorts. But the 2007 cohort reported 7 post-secondary library positions (30%), compared to 15% the previous year. Five graduates (22%) worked in special libraries such as business and law, followed by 1 position in records management, 1 in archives, and 1 in university external relations. These patterns are broadly similar to those for the 2006 and 2005 cohorts.

<b>All Placements since Graduation</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Public (6) & regional (2) libraries	8	35%
Post-secondary libraries	7	30
Special libraries	5	22
Records management	1	4
Archives	1	4
University external relations	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>99%</b>

Most frequently reported titles and positions held by the 2007 graduates were 11 in public services (variously described as public services, reference, virtual reference, or research librarians), followed by 2 each of adult fiction librarian, community and outreach librarian, and director. Titles mentioned once only were librarian, sessional librarian, multicultural services librarian, manager, library consultant, archivist, law librarian, digital asset manager, records and information management analyst, prospect research analyst, and technician.

By far the most frequently mentioned primary job assignment was reference/information services (16 mentions), followed by two mentions each for all functions and information literacy instruction. Mentioned once each were administration/management, database management, marketing/outreach/public relations, systems/network manager, youth & children's services, web manager, functional classification system development, regional consultant, clinic and research support, and donor research. Secondary job assignments mentioned by 3 graduates were collections, marketing/outreach/public relations, information literacy instruction, and reference/information services. Mentioned twice were all functions, and once each were acquisitions, administration/management, archives, cataloguing, database management, multicultural services, bibliographic software support, programming, and training.

### Location

Edmonton as residence of choice increased dramatically for 2007 graduates, with 19 (61%) remaining in the city. While the year before only 27% stayed, the ratio was 42% in 2005, 55% in 2004, and 60% in 2003. Other job locations were Strathcona County, Camrose and Red Deer. Altogether, Alberta provided 84% of current locations (26 graduates), in contrast to 50% in 2006, 71% in 2005, and 75% in 2004. Other work locations were 2 in Ontario, 1 in British Columbia 1 in the U.S., and 1 in Italy.

In 2006 and 2005, 1 graduate each year also went to the U.S., but there were none among the 2004 and 2003 cohorts; this contrasted sharply with the earlier years 1999–2002 when on average 18% found work there.

### Job Search Time Period

The majority of the 26 reporting graduates in 2007 (19 or 73%) found their first position within three months of graduation; 5 graduates (19%) took longer than six months. Among the 2006 cohort, 85% found their first position within three months of graduation, and another 14% took more than six months. In 2005, only 63% found their first position within three months of graduation, and 14% took more than six months.

Position Obtained	First Position		Current Position*	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Before entering program	3	11%	---	---
Before graduation	8	31	---	---
Within 3 months of graduation	8	31	---	---
3 to 6 months after graduation	2	8	3	30%
More than 6 months after graduation	5	19	7	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	26	100%	10	100%

*\*if different from first*

Of the 10 graduates in 2007 who reported changing positions before obtaining their current employment, 3 (30%) took three to six months after graduation, while 7 (70%) took more than six months.

### Job Information Sources

More than half of all first and currently held positions in 2007 were identified through electronic sources. Word of mouth accounted for 44% of sources. These patterns were somewhat similar among the 2006 and 2005 cohorts.

<b>Source of Job Information — All Positions</b>	<b>Number of Sources (1<sup>st</sup> &amp; current positions)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Listservs and job sites	14	56%
JEROME-L	2	
FLA job line	1	
SLIS job board	1	
Arcan-1	1	
Alberta government job site	1	
Unnamed listserv or job site	8	
Word of mouth	11	44%
employer	3	
practicum	2	
staff member	2	
SLIS classmates	2	
work colleagues	1	
General word of mouth	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Library Work Experience

As in previous years, 27 of the 31 graduates (87%) in 2007 reported having library work experience by the time they graduated). In the previous seven years 2006–2000, graduates with work experience before or during their MLIS ranged from 82% to 97%. Just over half of the 2007 graduates worked both before and during their MLIS program, while among the 2006 cohort it was 59% and 42% in 2005.

<b>Library Work Experience*</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Either before or during MLIS	11	35%
- before (16)		
- during (27)		
Both before and during MLIS	16	52
Neither	4	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* *excludes for-credit field placements and practicums*

A very high proportion of 2007 graduates (87%) worked during their MLIS program or in the summer(s) before graduation, similar to the previous four years: 91% in 2006, 96% in 2005, 82% in 2004, and 89% in 2003.

### Demographic Profile

Of the 31 graduates represented in the survey, 26 were women and 5 were men, 84% and 16% respectively. This was similar to the full graduating class of 38 with 76% women and 24% men. The average age at graduation for the class of 2007 was 33 years, which was within the range of the last two decades or so, 29 to 35 years of age.

Academic degree patterns were generally similar to previous years: 18 had the BA, 4 the BEd, 3 the BSc, 1 the BScE, 1 the LLB, 4 the MA, and 1 the MSc. Other degrees represented the year before were the BFA and the MMu. Also similar to previous cohorts, many disciplines were represented by identified by the 2007 cohort: 7 in English, 5 in History, 3 in Science, 3 in Sociology, 2 in Political Science, and 2 in Linguistics; others with 1 each were in Music, Philosophy, Psychology, Health

Sciences, Human Geography, Modern Languages, Classics and French, Germanic Studies, Linguistics, Physiology, and Theatre Studies.

### **Future Prospects**

An important employment indicator is graduates' satisfaction with their present situation. Eleven of the 30 graduates in 2007 (37%) said they were seeking more satisfactory employment at the time of the survey. This was lower than the rate registered by the 2006 and 2005 cohorts (50% and 57%); in 2004 and 2003 the rates were 35% and 54%. Preference for type of employment reported by 2007 graduates ranged from academic library (2 mentions), public library children's services (2 mentions), special or corporate library (2 mentions), and archive (1 mention). Annual salary expectations ranged from \$50,000 to \$84,000, with a median of approximately \$55,000; among the 2006 cohort still looking, salary expectations had been in the range of \$50,000 (\$42,000 to \$80,000-\$100,000), while the 2005 cohort still looking had been seeking salaries between \$43,000 and \$70,000.

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

Alvin M. Schrader, PhD  
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