



UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA

May 2023

# School of Library and Information Studies **2021 Employment Survey Summary**

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Summary of University of Alberta MLIS  
Graduate Employment Survey





# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

## School of Library and Information Studies Employment Survey of 2021 MLIS Graduates

Cheryl Trepanier  
May 2023

### **SURVEY BACKGROUND**

In November and December 2022, the School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) conducted its 33<sup>rd</sup> annual employment survey of graduates of the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) program at the University of Alberta. The phrase '2021 graduates' includes graduates who convocated in the Fall (November, 2020) or Spring (June, 2021) semesters.

The survey was sent to 58 potential respondents with 35 responding for a response rate of 60%. Seven respondents indicated that they had not been employed in the LIS sector since graduation and another respondent exited the survey after two questions. Effectively, 34 respondents answered the demographics questions and 27 remained in a position to answer questions about their employment. Not all respondents answered all of the questions; therefore, the number of responses for a particular question may be less than 27.

Graduates were queried about their job search; job specifics including employment classification, salary, responsibilities, and employer type information; their preparedness for the job market; and job satisfaction. All respondents were queried about their *first* Library and Information Studies (LIS) related positions post-graduation. The focus of this survey is to understand graduates' experiences in finding employment after graduation; however, the time lag of 18-24 months between graduation and survey administration provides an additional opportunity to consider additional employment data from those respondents who have moved on to subsequent employment opportunities. Where applicable, respondents who have changed jobs were queried about their *current* Library and Information Studies (LIS) related positions. Any use of this data is clearly identified.

This survey follows the same format as the 2016-2020 surveys, although sample sizes vary from year to year. The ability to differentiate between online and on-campus teaching and learning streams was introduced with the 2018 survey. For context and to facilitate identification of trends, a five-year history has been included where relevant.

This survey of 2021 graduates is the first to cover a time period when a significant portion of the students' MLIS experience took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was declared in March 2020, eight months prior to November 2020 graduation (graduates would have completed their last class in June or August 2020) and more than a year before June 2021 graduation (graduates would have completed their last class in December 2020 or April 2021). The survey does not specifically ask about the impacts of the pandemic on employment experiences; however, interpretation of results should consider the possible consequences that pandemic-related measures may have had on preparatory experiences, employment opportunities, and employment-related decisions.

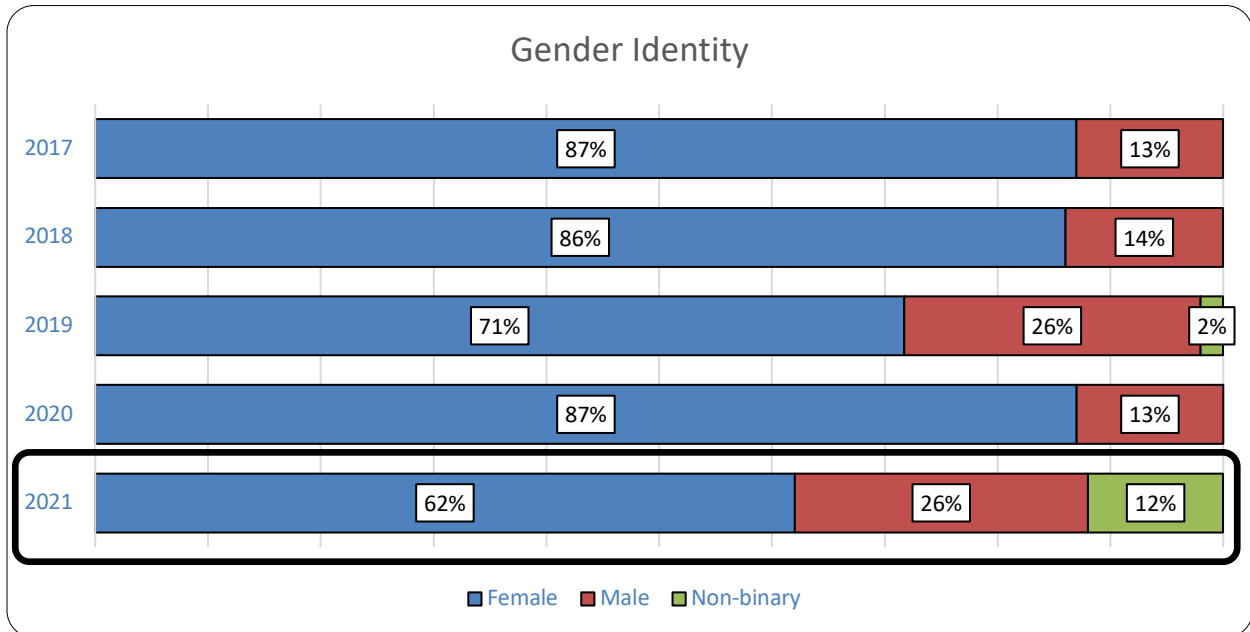
## **KEY FINDINGS**

- 93% of interested respondents secured LIS-related employment at some time since graduation.
- 55% of respondents indicate an Arts degree is their last prior degree.
- 76% of entrants to the MLIS program came with prior library, archives, or other information agency experience; this level of experience was similar for both the online and the on-campus teaching and learning streams. Also evenly distributed between streams, 74% of 2021 respondents participated in LIS-related employment during their degree.
- Previous LIS employment experience was the most important experience in securing first jobs post-degree. When responses for the two streams are examined separately, the on-campus stream rated all of the LIS-related experiences more important to securing first-job employment than the online stream.
- 83% of the online stream respondents entered the program with post-degree LIS-related employment secured. This compares to 40% for the on-campus stream. At the time of program completion, an additional 10% of on-campus respondents had secured employment.
- Public libraries were the largest employers of MLIS respondents post-graduation. Together, academic libraries and public libraries accounted for 86% of first-time respondent jobs.
- 62% percent of respondents have changed jobs since their first employment experience, with a net shift into full-time permanent employment and to academic institutions. (A job change can include change in job status for the same work, a different position with the same employer, or a change of employer.) At the time of the survey, academic libraries and public libraries accounted for 86% of jobs
- 81% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their work.
- 57% of respondents indicated they are seeking more satisfactory work.
- 'Programming – Library', 'Circulation', 'Collections', 'Information Literacy Instruction', and 'Research/Consultation' were all identified by at least 1/3 of respondents as being relevant to their first job.
- 'Critical thinking, analytical capacities, and problem-solving abilities', 'Awareness of cultural diversity in society and related information needs', 'Role of technology in library and information environments', and 'Professional communication' were ranked as the most relevant Program Level Learning Outcomes.
- The results indicate a continued increase since 2017 in full-time permanent salaries, with 2021 respondents earning an average of \$74,287 per year. After a peak in 2018, average full-time temporary/contract salaries have bounced back to an average monthly salary of \$4,426, as reported by 2021 respondents. The average part-time hourly wage reported is \$20.83 and the average number of hours of work equal to 17.8/week.
- Slightly greater than half of the respondents are located in Alberta.
- 50% of jobs secured required an American Library Association-accredited degree.

## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### Gender Identity

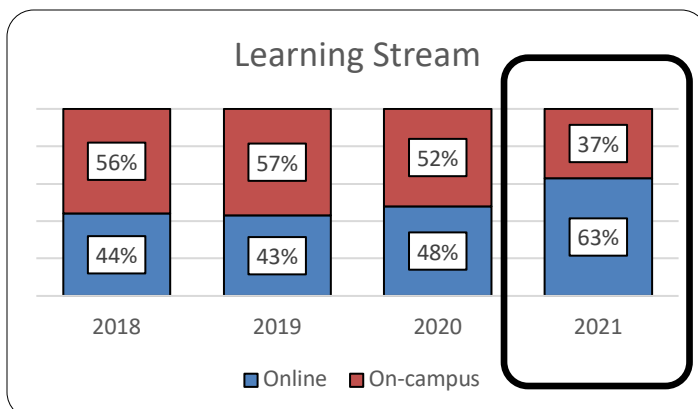
Sixty-two percent of respondents identified as female, 26% identified as male, and 12% identified as non-binary or non-binary, gender non-conforming. At less than 2/3, this is the lowest proportion of respondents identifying as female since this data has been collected.



### MLIS Offering and Learning Streams

Thirty-three (94%) of the respondents completed the course-based MLIS learning stream and two were in the MA/MLIS combined learning stream

MLIS course based	33	94%
MLIS thesis based	0	0
MA/MLIS combined	2	6%
MBA/MLIS combined	0	0



The proportion of online to on-campus 2021 respondents increased significantly compared to the previous three years.

**Last Prior Degree**

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Arts	80%	66%	62%	81%	55%
- MA	20%	28%	2%	23%	8%
- BA	59%	38%	60%	58%	47%
Education	13%	9%	14%	13%	6%
Science	2%	13%	12%	3%	6%
Law					6%

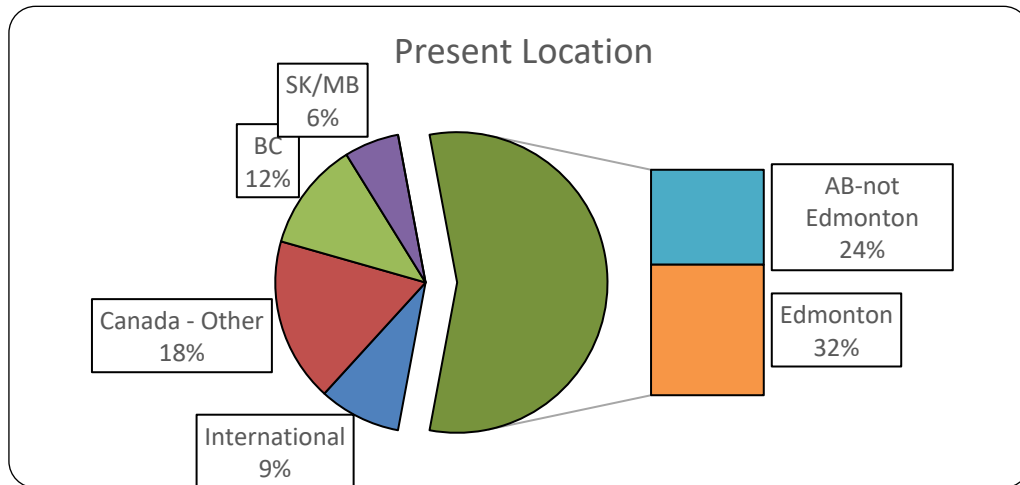
The most prevalently reported prior degree subject area is Arts; however, at 55%, 2021 respondents report the lowest proportion of Arts degrees in the past five years. Seven respondents entered the MLIS program with Master’s degrees (Arts, Museum Studies, Fine Arts) or Law degrees and one entrant holds a Library Technician diploma. Single degrees

include journalism and computer information systems degrees.

Identified majors were broad-ranging and include English (11), history (3), psychology (3), classics (2), and political science (2), with the following noted singly: film studies, music, philosophy, religious studies, women’s studies, science, international development, sexuality/marriage/family studies, adult education, studio/fine arts, social work, museum studies, interdisciplinary leadership studies, cognitive science, journalism, and information and communication studies.

**Location**

Nineteen (56%) of the responding graduates were based in Alberta at the time of the survey.

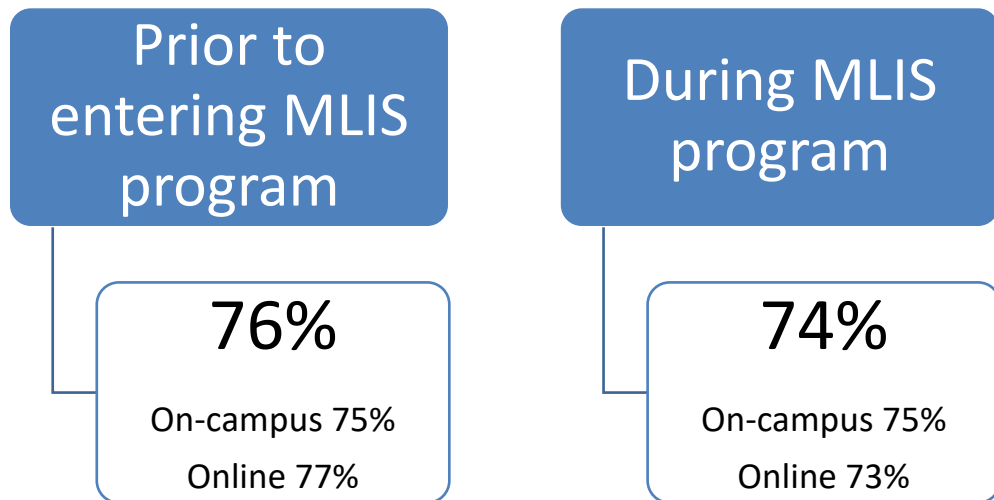


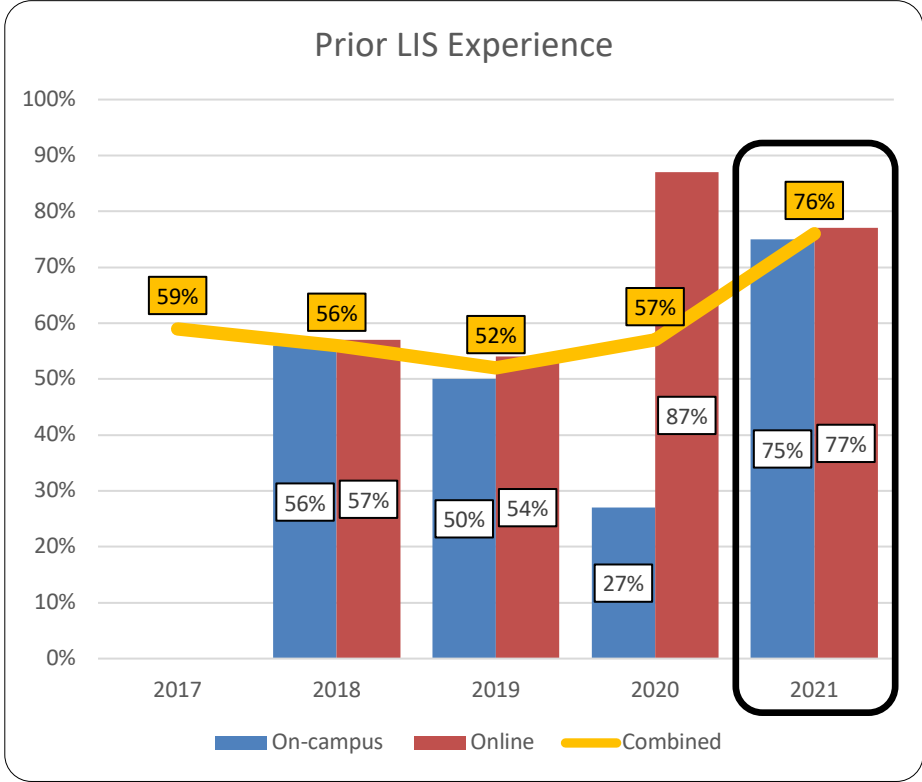
Other provinces where respondents were located include BC (4), Saskatchewan (1), Manitoba (1), Ontario (4), New Brunswick (1) and Nova Scotia (1). Three respondents were located outside of Canada.

Expectedly, those students who took their degree online are more geographically dispersed following graduation.

<b>2021</b>	<i>On-campus</i>	<i>Online</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>Edmonton</i>	6	5	11
<i>AB – not Edm</i>	4	4	8
<i>SK/MB</i>	-	2	2
<i>BC</i>	1	3	4
<i>Canada – other</i>	-	6	6
<i>International</i>	1	2	3
	12	22	34

***Library, Archives, or Other Information Agency Experience***



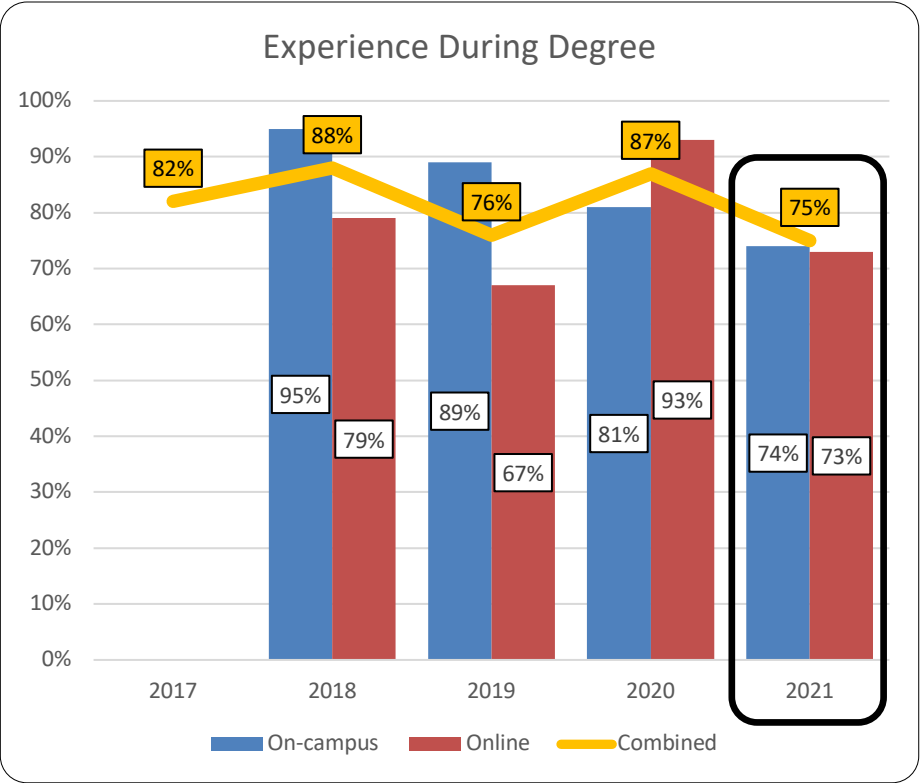


Approximately three of four respondents entered the MLIS program with prior experience in a library, archives, or other information agency.

This is significantly higher than in each of the previous five surveys, where this figure ranged from 50-60%. The proportion of respondents from both streams who entered the program with prior experience was similar.

At 75%, this is the lowest percentage of students to have participated in LIS-related work during their degree, but with the least difference between the online and on-campus streams.

The percentage of respondents participating in LIS-related work during their degrees has been declining for the on-campus stream and variable for the online stream, with both reporting declines on this survey. It is reasonable to assume that opportunities available to both learning streams reflect reduced employment opportunities available during the pandemic.

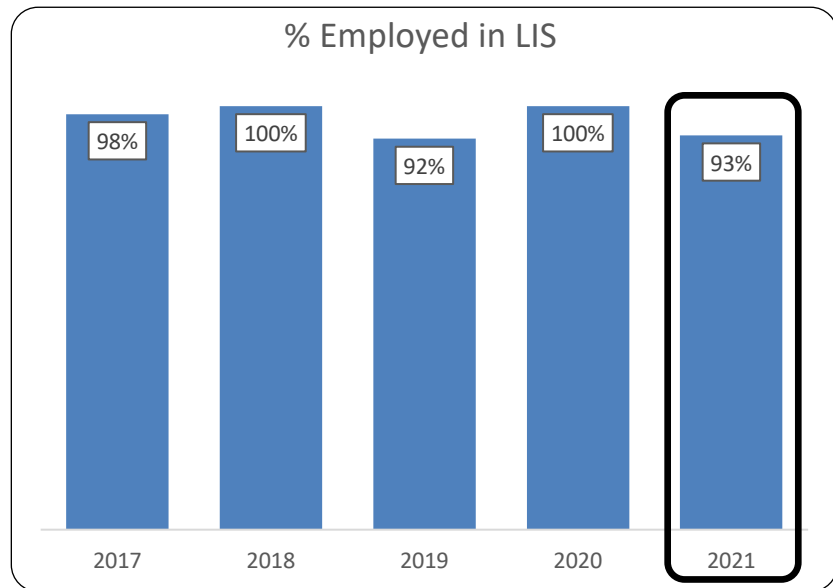




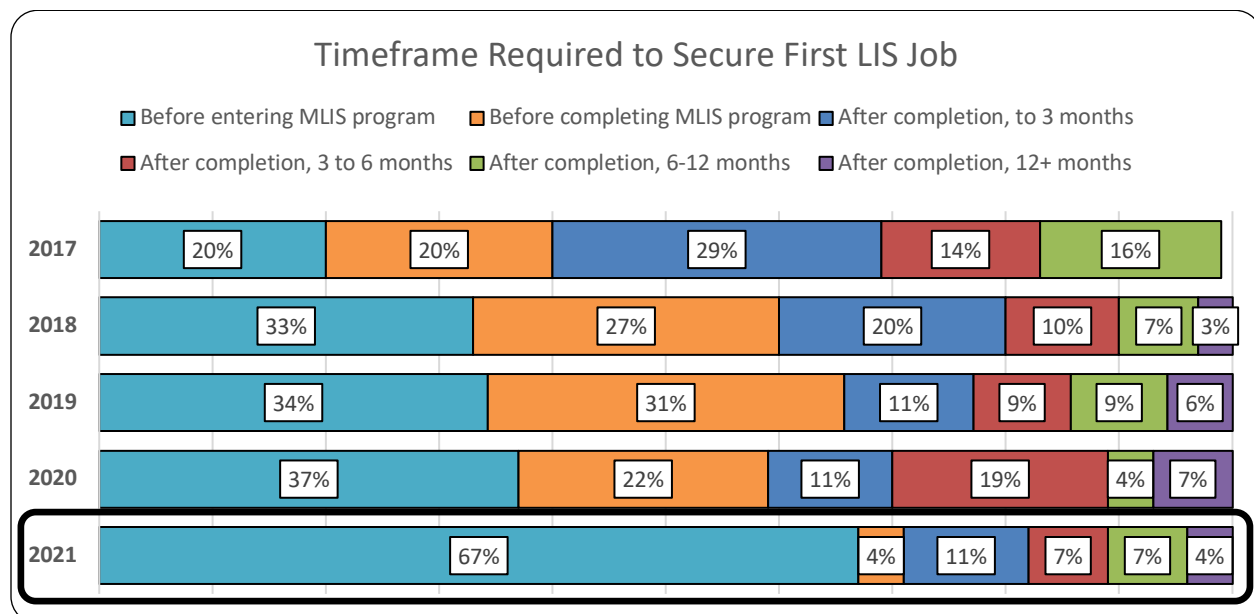
## GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

### *LIS Employment*

Twenty-seven respondents have been employed at some time since graduation in the LIS sector. An additional four were not interested in pursuing library work at the time of the survey and one indicated that they were transitioning from the military and would be seeking a job in the library sector within three years. Accounting for those not interested in LIS-related employment at the time of the survey, 93% of interested respondents secured LIS-related employment.



### *Time to Secure First Jobs*



*Note: The 2017 employment survey had an upper-end timeframe of 'After completion, 6+ months'. Starting with the 2018 survey, this timeframe was capped to 'After completion, 6-12 months' and the 'After completion, 12+ months' category was added.*

Two out of three respondents had already secured their post-graduation jobs when they entered the MLIS program. This is a considerable increase over past years, and it is trending upwards. In the past four graduating classes, less than 50% of respondents needed to look for jobs after completing the program.

When interpreting these results, it is important to recognize that this question is only answered by graduates who had secured LIS-related employment sometime prior to the administration of the survey; the seven respondents, accounting for 21% of original respondents, who had not secured LIS-related employment are not reflected in the results to this question. Of these respondents, two were from the on-campus stream and five were from the online stream.

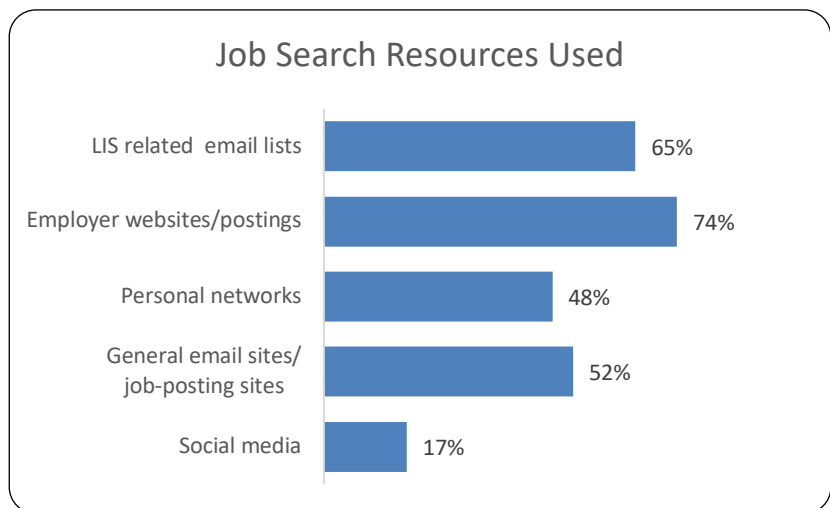
	<i>On-campus</i>	<i>Online</i>
<i>Before entering MLIS program</i>	40%	83%
<i>Before completing MLIS program</i>	10%	-
<i>After completion, to 3 months</i>	30%	-
<i>After completion, 3 to 6 months</i>	10%	6%
<i>After completion, 6-12 months</i>	10%	6%
<i>After completion, 12 + months</i>	-	6%

If on-campus and online streams are considered separately, a significantly greater proportion of online respondents had jobs entering the program, 83% compared to 40% of on-campus respondents. Although there is significant discrepancy between the two streams, it is notable that at

40%, this is the highest proportion of on-campus respondents entering the program with employment already secured since this data has been collected in the past four surveys.

### **Job Search Resources**

Employer-communicated opportunities and LIS-related email lists, such as Jerome-L and the Partnership Job Board, and employer websites/postings were the resources most used by respondents during their job searches. The prevalence of these resources has been consistent over the past five years. Personal networks and general email sites/job-posting sites tend to be used by approximately half of respondents.



### ***Importance of LIS-related Experiences***

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of SLIS experiences in securing first employment. Experiences included the following:

- MLIS course work
- MLIS practicum
- LIS related, on-campus employment opportunities (e.g. Employment with Library and Museums, University of Alberta, Graduate Research Assistantships)
- On-campus student leadership involvement (e.g. Library and Information Studies Students' Association (LISSA), Future Librarians for Intellectual Freedom (FLIF), Partner's Week, Forum for Information Professionals (FIP), Graduate Students Association (GSA), Curriculum Committee)
- Networking with graduates and other professionals during time as a student [e.g. Greater Edmonton Librarians Association (GELA), Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL), Special Libraries Association (SLA), Edmonton Law Libraries Association (ELLA)]
- Previous LIS employment experience

Where the selection was not relevant to a respondent's experience, they had the option to select 'Not applicable' (N/A). The option to choose 'Not applicable' rather than the lowest rating was added in the 2018 survey.

<b>2021</b>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Job</i>				<i>Current Job</i>	
	<u>Combined</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>On-Campus</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<i>Previous employment</i>	<b>3.50</b>	24%	4.20	3.18	3.64	15%
<i>MLIS Course Work</i>	<b>2.55</b>	5%	3.13	2.17	3.31	-
<i>Student Leadership</i>	<b>2.25</b>	24%	2.88	1.63	2.00	15%
<i>Campus employment</i>	<b>2.07</b>	33%	3.14	1.00	2.00	23%
<i>Networking</i>	<b>1.94</b>	14%	2.38	1.60	2.00	15%
<i>MLIS Practicum</i>	<b>1.83</b>	43%	2.40	1.43	1.50	23%

*Responses were calculated using a 5-point scale with 1 being 'Not Important', 3 being 'Moderately Important', and 5 being 'Very Important'*

When responses for the two streams are examined separately, results show that the on-campus learning stream rated all of the LIS-related experiences as being more important for securing first-job employment than the online learning stream did. This is not surprising, given that, as indicated above, 83% of online respondents had secured LIS-related employment before beginning the MLIS program.

Results presented in the table above suggest that respondents consider previous LIS employment to have been the most relevant experience to securing a first job post-degree.

Because the survey question does not limit previous LIS employment experience to pre-degree experience, it is likely that the higher score for respondents' current job includes the experience gained in respondents' first post-degree (and possibly subsequent) positions.

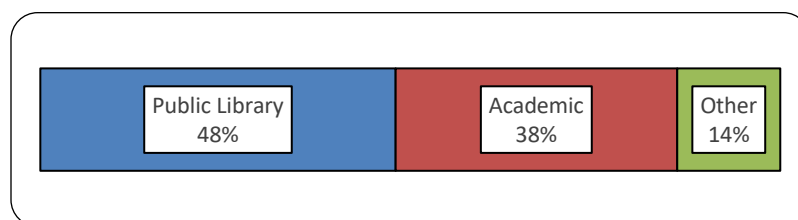
Course work ranked second for both learning streams. Importantly, in contrast to most of the other experiences, course work factors more notably in subsequent job searches.

Student-specific activities, campus employment, and student leadership activities were rated as being more relevant by the on-campus stream than the online stream. It should be noted that the student leadership category is not restricted to on-campus students; online students can, and have, participated in Library and Information Studies Students' Association (LISSA), Partner's Week, Forum for Information Professionals (FIP), and the School's Curriculum Committee.

Regarding the campus employment category, Graduate Research Assistant positions were available to both on-campus and online students. Employment with the Library and Museums, University of Alberta under the SLIS Collaborative Program required enrollment in a full-time program and was therefore restricted to qualifying on-campus students; the number of students hired during the pandemic was less than usual and subject to the opening and closing of the university as health measures shifted.

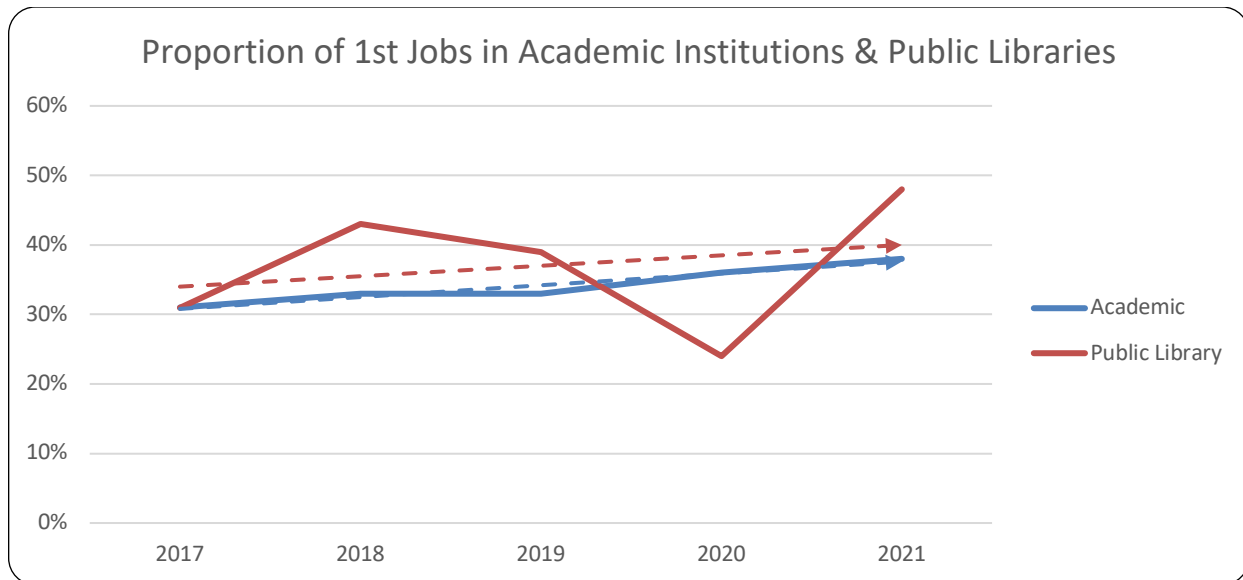
Over 40% of respondents indicated rating the importance of the practicum was not applicable to them. Of those who responded, the practicum was ranked the lowest of the choices impacting the securing of employment. This rating has been declining over the four surveys where comparable data is available.

### ***Employer Type***



Public libraries and academic libraries (which includes university, college, research, and theological institutions) remain the dominant employer types for first jobs for MLIS

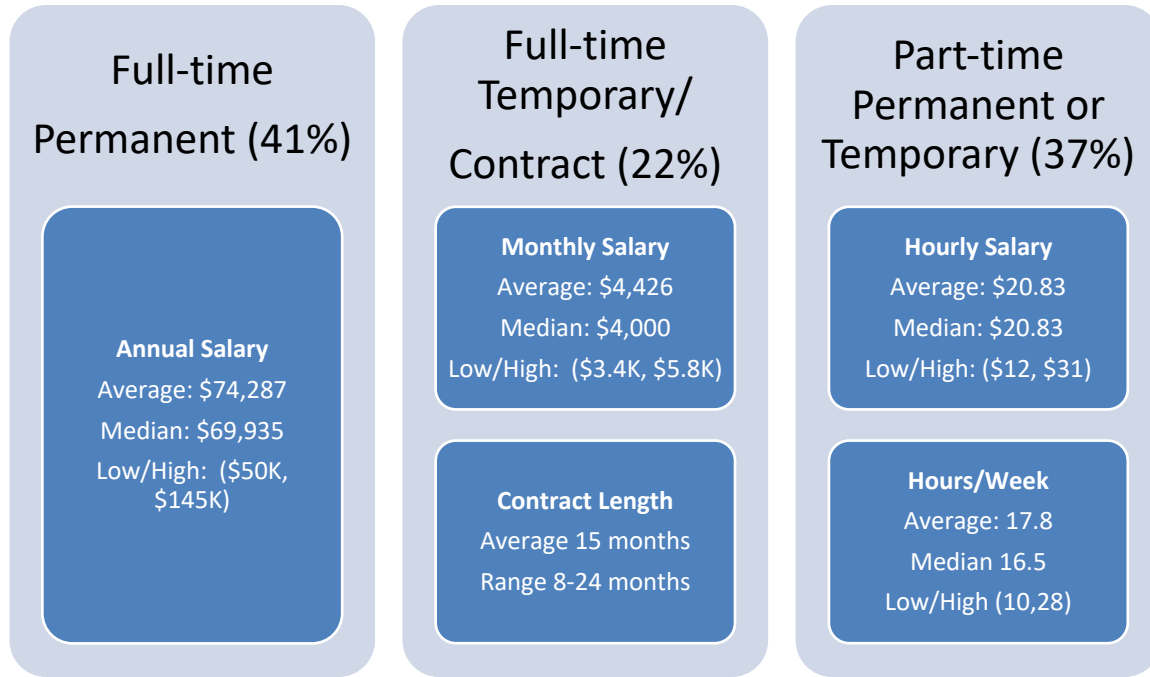
respondents, accounting for 86% of first placements. These sectors have always been significant employers of University of Alberta MLIS graduates, but this is the highest proportion in those two sectors, in combination, in the past 10 years. The "Other" category is comprised of two respondents employed in the corporate/business sector and one respondent in a K-12 school.



Half of respondents holding first jobs in public libraries had their post-degree job secured before entering the MLIS program. In the academic category, five of eight secured their job prior to entering the program. The corporate and K-12 school jobs were also secured by respondents prior to entering the program.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>Academic</i>	31%	33%	33%	36%	<b>38%</b>
<i>Public Library</i>	<u>31%</u>	<u>43%</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u><b>48%</b></u>
	62%	76%	72%	60%	<b>86%</b>
<i>Corporate/Business</i>	5%	-	-	12%	<b>9%</b>
<i>K-12 School</i>	-	3%	3%	8%	<b>5%</b>
<i>Government</i>	12%	10%	3%	4%	-
<i>Non-profit</i>	19%	-	6%	4%	-
<i>Museum/Archive</i>	2%	3%	3%	4%	-
<i>Legal</i>	-	3%	-	-	-
<i>Med/Pharm/Science</i>	-	3%	3%	-	-

**Employment Status, Hours of Work, Salary Information**



No respondents indicated that they had been self-employed since graduation.

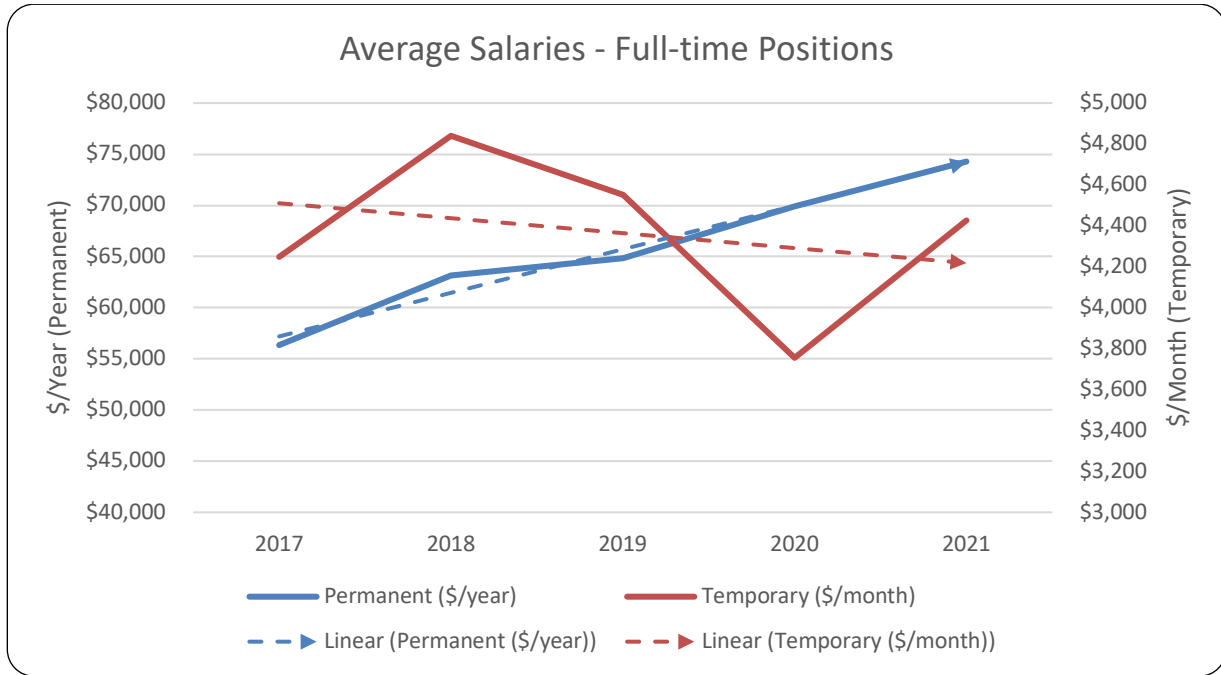
The following table presents the mean/median for annual and monthly salaries reported by respondents for first full-time positions after graduation for the last five graduating cohorts. The associated graph illustrates the five-year trend of mean salaries.

2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
<b>Annual Salary – Full-time Permanent</b>									
<b>Mean</b>	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
<b>\$56,345</b>	\$55,000	\$63,178	\$65,000	\$64,867	\$71,000	\$69,877	\$69,000	<b>\$74,287</b>	<b>\$69,935</b>
<b>Monthly Salary – Full-time Temporary/Contract</b>									
<b>Mean</b>	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
<b>\$4,249</b>	\$4,789	\$4,840	\$5,020	\$4,552	\$4,847	<b>\$3,755</b>	\$3,100	<b>\$4,426</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>

The results indicate a continued increase since 2017 in full-time permanent salaries, including a 6.3% increase from 2020 to 2021, following a 7.7% increase from 2019 to 2020.

After a peak in 2018, average full-time temporary/contract salaries decreased for two reporting years, with 2020 results significantly lower than in the previous year (36% decrease). For the 2021 cohort, there appears to be a salary bounce back to approximately 2019 levels. This data

must be interpreted cautiously because the number of respondents in each category is relatively small, as is their geographic distribution.



**Accreditation by the American Library Association**



Respondents reported having a total of 52 positions in the library and information sector since graduation, of which 50% required an American Library Association (ALA) accredited degree. Over the six years that this information has been collected, the proportion of jobs requiring an ALA accredited degree has ranged from 50-60%.

### ***Job Titles***

The first column shows the titles of the first positions that respondents were hired into post-graduation. Where respondents indicated that they had changed positions, the second column lists the title of the job that they were employed in at the time of the survey (i.e., their current job).

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Job After Graduation</b>	<b>Current Job</b>
Reference and Learning Services Specialist	
Library page	Library technician
Branch Library Assistant	Director
Library Technician	Instructional Reference Librarian
Librarian 1	STEAM specialist - Librarian 2
	Bookmobile Services Specialist
Community Engagement Librarian- Adult	
Digital Resource and Collections Librarian	
Intergenerational Programmer	Prospect Research Analyst
Systems Analyst	Team Lead
High School Librarian	
Head of Adult Services	
Research/Archival Assistant	Library Technician
Paralegal Support Lead – Law Products	Compliance Consultant
Instruction Librarian	Faculty Librarian
Indigenous Cataloguing Librarian	
Youth and Community Librarian	Project Manager
Digital Initiatives Librarian	
Public Service Assistant	Library Manager
OER Librarian	

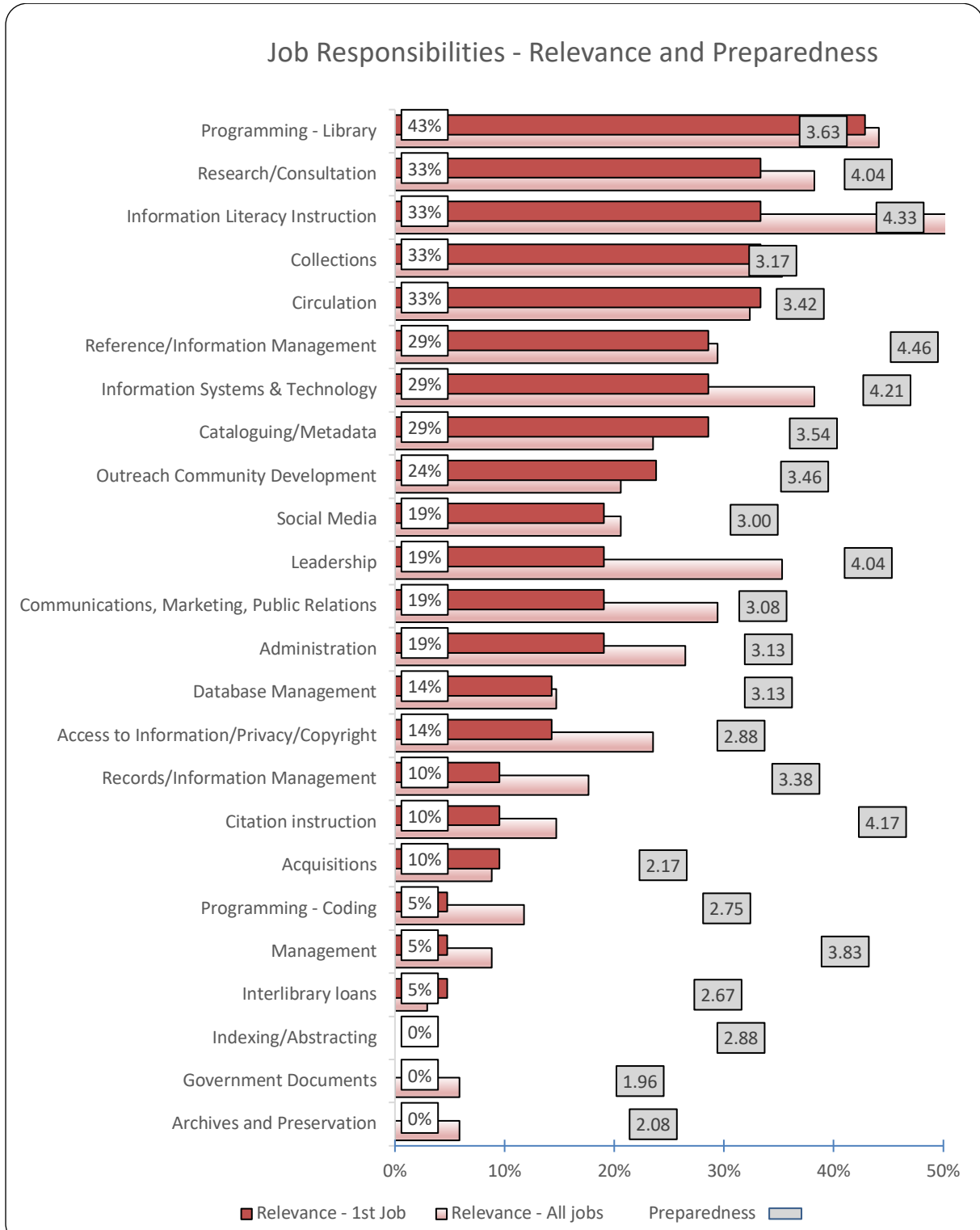
### ***Job Responsibilities***

Surveying respondents about job responsibilities and allowing for multiple selections from the list provides more granular information about respondents’ activities than can be assumed from only considering their job titles. The following chart ranks the prevalence of each responsibility by the percentage of respondents indicating that it is an activity that they perform on the job.

The solid bar indicates the responses based on first jobs only, with the shaded bar indicating the combined impact of considering first jobs plus current jobs, where respondents had changed jobs since graduation. The silver rectangles indicate how prepared respondents felt



upon graduation in each area of responsibility, based on a 5-point scale with 1 being 'Not At All', 3 being 'Somewhat' and 5 being 'Adequate'.



Preparedness calculation based on a 5-point scale with 1 being 'Not At All', 3 being 'Somewhat' and 5 being 'Adequate'

'Programming – Library', 'Circulation', 'Collections', 'Information Literacy Instruction', and 'Research/Consultation' were all identified by at least 1/3 of respondents as being relevant to their first jobs. When current jobs are factored in, 'Information Systems & Technology' and 'Leadership' are also identified by at least 1/3 of respondents as being relevant.

Respondents identified the following areas of responsibility that were not listed as survey options: sales, facility management, STEAM and staff education, and open educational resources support.

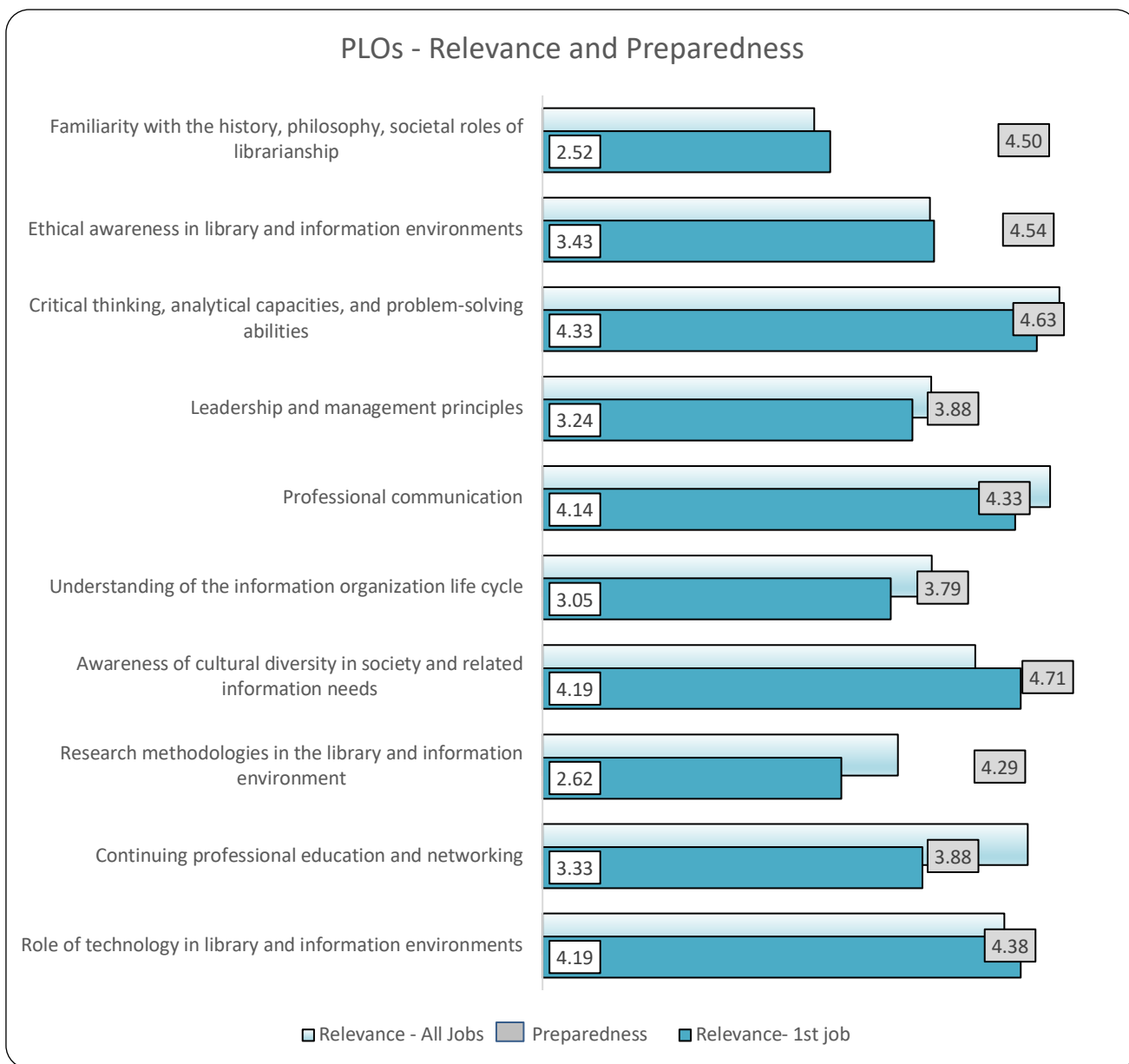
<b>Responsibilities – 1<sup>st</sup> job</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Programming – Library	-	43%	33%	44%	43%
Circulation	25%	40%	36%	24%	33%
Collections	32%	40%	39%	40%	33%
Information Literacy Instruction	27%	40%	36%	28%	33%
Research/Consultation	43%	43%	30%	32%	33%
Cataloguing/Metadata	20%	13%	30%	40%	29%
Information Systems & Technology	23%	3%	21%	32%	29%
Reference/Information Management	30%	33%	24%	24%	29%
Outreach Community Development	23%	40%	30%	16%	24%
Administration	20%	7%	15%	28%	19%
Communications, Marketing, Public Relations	25%	13%	18%	20%	19%
Leadership	20%	17%	21%	28%	19%
Social Media	23%	3%	12%	16%	19%
Access to Information/Privacy/Copyright	23%	7%	12%	20%	14%
Database Management	20%	10%	18%	28%	14%
Acquisitions	16%	3%	24%	24%	10%
Citation Instruction	-	-	18%	12%	10%
Records/Information Management	20%	10%	9%	28%	10%
Interlibrary loans	5%	17%		4%	5%
Management	18%	13%	15%	12%	5%
Programming - Coding	-	0		4%	5%
Archives and Preservation	9%	10%	21%	20%	0%
Government documents	9%	0	9%	8%	0%
Indexing/Abstracting	7%	0	0	8%	0%

*'Citation Instruction' was added as a response choice in the 2019 survey. The choice of 'Programming' as a Job Responsibility was further delineated into 'Programming – Library' and 'Programming – Coding' in the 2018 survey.*

Over the five-year period, the relevance of all job responsibilities both increased and decreased; there were no categories where a one-way progression occurred. Because of the small sample size, a single response is magnified when presented as a percentage, so small variations should not be over-emphasized.

### Knowledge and Competency Areas

The following chart presents data related to the Program Level Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which guide curriculum design in the MLIS program. Respondents were asked to assess the importance of these knowledge and competency areas in relation to helping them secure their first positions as well as their current positions. A 5-point scale was used where 1 = 'Not important', 3 = 'Moderately important', and 5 = 'Very important'. Respondents were also asked to assess their preparedness at the time of graduation in relation to each area was also assessed on a 5-point scale where 1 is 'Not at All', 3 is 'Somewhat' and 5 is 'Adequate'.



To assess Relevance, a 5-point scale was used where 1='Not important', 3='Moderately important', 5='Very important'.  
 To assess Preparedness at the time of graduation, a 5-point scale was used where 1='Not at All', 3='Somewhat' 5='Adequate'.

The solid bar indicates the responses based on first jobs only, with the shaded bar indicating the combined impact of considering first jobs plus current jobs, where respondents had changed jobs since graduation. Relevance ratings remain consistent with 'Critical thinking, analytical capacities, and problem-solving abilities', 'Awareness of cultural diversity in society and related information needs', 'Role of technology in library and information environments', and 'Professional communication' each scoring 4.0 or greater. Two of the categories of highest relevance were also rated as areas in which respondents felt most prepared. Preparedness scores were below 4.0 for 'Leadership and management principles' and 'Continuing professional education and networking', and 'Understanding the information organization life cycle'.

For both the relevance and the preparedness ratings in the knowledge and competency areas, the following chart shows how 2021 respondents' responses compared to the average of the responses during the previous five years.

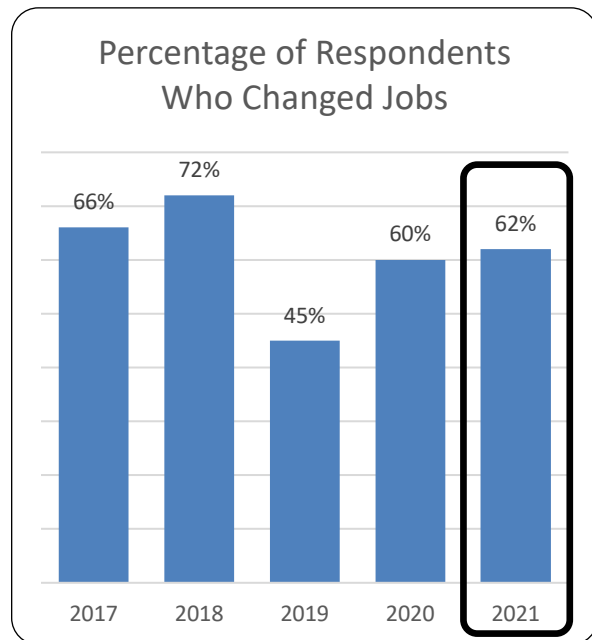
<u>Knowledge &amp; Competency Areas</u>	Relevance – 1 <sup>st</sup> positions		Preparedness – 1 <sup>st</sup> positions	
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2016-20</u> <u>Average</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2016-20</u> <u>Average</u>
Familiarity with the history, philosophy, societal roles of librarianship	2.52	2.22	4.50	4.11
Ethical awareness in library and information environments	3.43	3.23	4.54	4.32
Critical thinking, analytical capacities, and problem-solving abilities	4.33	4.42	4.63	4.52
Leadership and management principles	3.24	3.28	3.88	3.73
Professional communication	4.14	4.36	4.33	4.19
Understanding of the information organization life cycle	3.05	3.16	3.79	3.84
Awareness of cultural diversity in society and related information needs	4.19	3.80	4.71	4.41
Research methodologies in the library and information environment	2.62	3.02	4.29	4.19
Continuing professional education and networking	3.33	3.54	3.88	4.17
Role of technology in library and information environments	4.19	3.88	4.38	4.10

### Subsequent Employment

The MLIS Employment Survey is sent to graduates 18-24 months after their graduation date. In this span of time, 62% of 2021 respondents had changed jobs since their first job after graduation. These respondents were asked to answer additional questions about their current job (at time of the survey) in addition to their first job experiences. This allows some insight into how long graduates remain in their first positions and provides the opportunity to collect data about respondents' subsequent employment experiences. Where relevant, this data has been identified and incorporated into the previous sections. This section provides additional information about job change patterns of the 2021 respondents.

Thirteen respondents provided information that allowed comparison of their employment status between their first job and their current position. A job change can include a change in job status for the same work, a different position with the same employer, or a change of employer. Data is collected for first job and current job only; therefore, interim job changes are not captured.

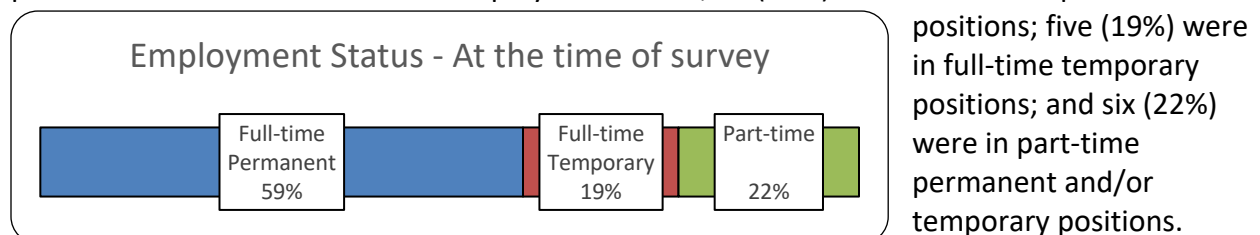
The proportion of 2021 respondents changing jobs is similar to those of the 2017 and 2020 surveys.



### Employment Status after Job Change

Of the six part-time permanent and/or temporary employees who changed jobs, two found different part-time work, and four found full-time permanent positions. Two of three full-time temporary/contract employees found full-time permanent positions, with the other finding alternate full-time temporary work. Of the four full-time permanent employees who changed jobs, three remained in full-time permanent employment.

With these migrations taken into account, at the time of the survey, of the 27 respondents who provided information about their employment status, 16 (59%) were in full-time permanent



positions; five (19%) were in full-time temporary positions; and six (22%) were in part-time permanent and/or temporary positions.

Only respondents who had been employed at some point since graduation in the LIS sector answer job-specific questions in the survey; therefore, this distribution does not include the seven respondents who did not attain LIS-related employment. Of these, two were looking, one deferred their search, and four indicated that they are not seeking LIS-related employment.

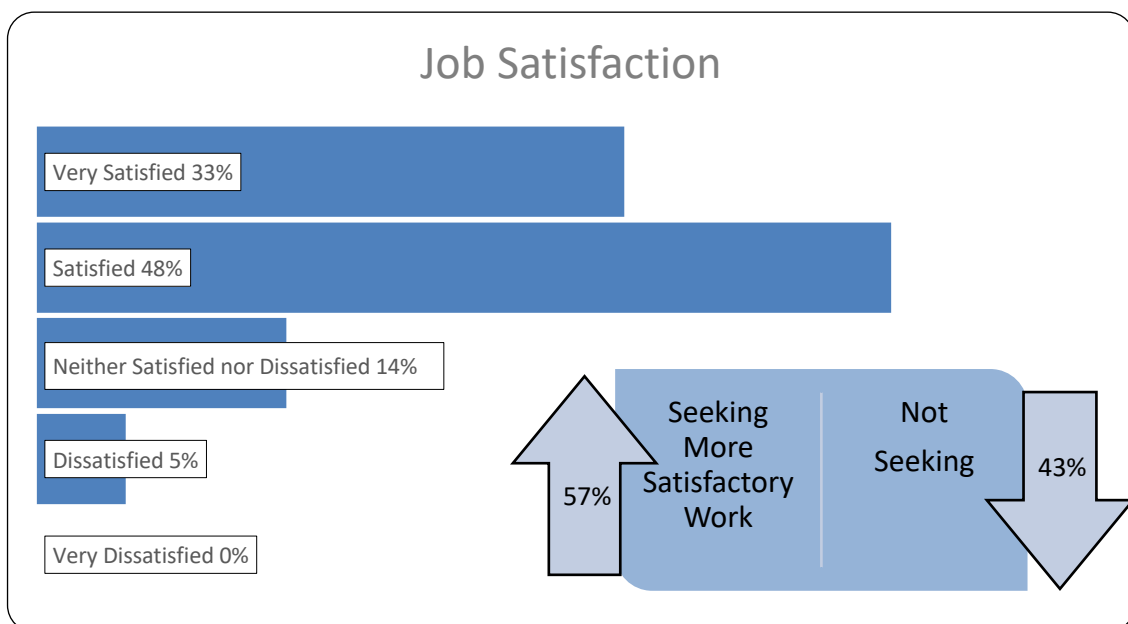
### *Salary Information after Job Change*

The average annual salary of the new, permanent full-time positions was \$87,916 (median = \$88,690, range = \$59,550 to \$130,000) which was \$13,629 greater than the average annual salary for 1<sup>st</sup> jobs. It must be emphasized that these calculations are based on a small number of responses; there was not a sufficient sample size to determine salary data for subsequent full-time temporary/contract or part-time employees.

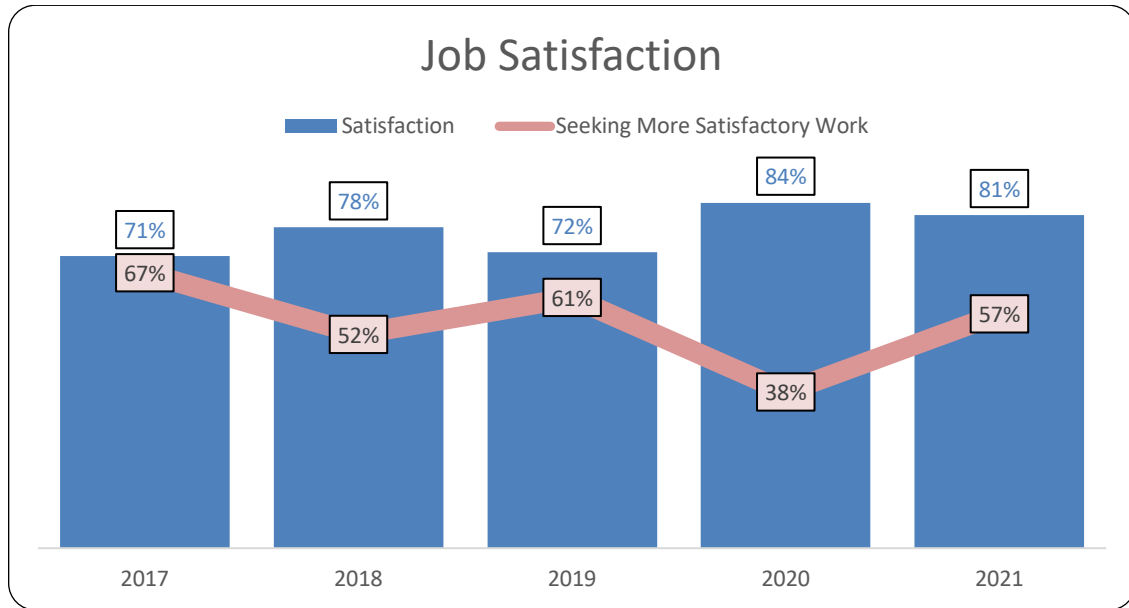
### *Employer Type after Job Change*

In addition to job type, changes in the type of employer were also observed. There was a net gain of two in academic institution positions due to migration of one each from the public library and corporate sectors. As a result, at the time of the survey, 48% of 2021 respondents were employed in the academic sector and 38% in the public library sector. Combined, public libraries and academic libraries still account for 86% of respondents, the same proportion as for 1<sup>st</sup> jobs; however, with these subsequent job changes, academic libraries are the largest single employer of 2021 respondents.

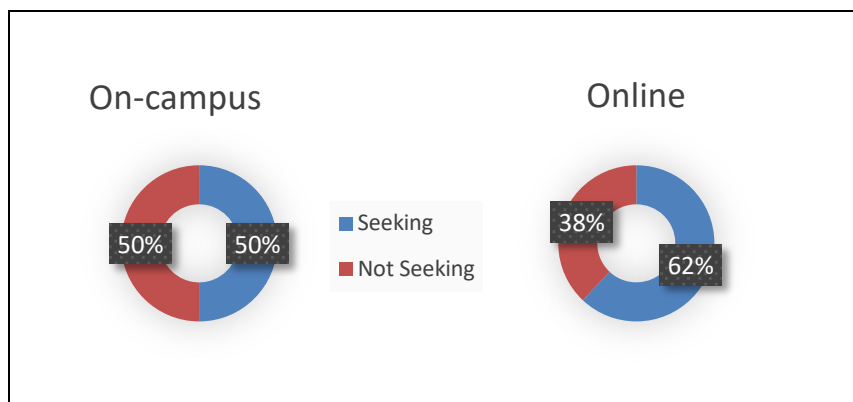
### *Current Job Satisfaction*



Eighty-one percent (a slight decrease from the previous year) of respondents indicated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their work, and 57% indicated that they are seeking more satisfactory work.



Desire for growth in job responsibilities and recognition, moving closer to family, and securing a permanent position were cited by respondents as reasons for seeking more satisfactory work.



Examination of the responses for the on-campus and online streams separately reveals a higher proportion of the online respondents are seeking more satisfactory work, with on-campus respondents equally split between seeking and not seeking more satisfactory work.

Nine of ten respondents seeking alternative work indicated that they were looking for a full-time permanent job. Seven indicated a desired annual salary in the range of \$70,000-\$80,000 with one respondent seeking a salary of \$150,000.

Of those who specified (with multiple answers allowed), four respondents indicated that they are looking for work in academic libraries, six in public libraries, and one expressing interest in each of government and a library system. One respondent expressed interest in part-time employment in a public library at a desired salary of \$35/hour.

### ***Continuing Professional Development Activities***

Approximately 50% of respondents reported participation in continuing professional development (PD) activities. Conferences and workshops were the most commonly cited types of PD activities. The topics of PD activities include leadership training, HTML/CSS, STEAM programming, reviewing/copyediting journals, joining community of practice to develop a database, DEI, mindfulness, copyright, multitiered support systems, and a project management certificate course.



## **RESPONDENT COMMENTS**

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment about how well their MLIS program prepared them for employment in the library and information sector:

<p>There need to be budgeting/accounts classes, more focus on practical work for those of us who straddle multiple areas (eg. Programming + collections + outreach)</p>
<p>Completing the MLIS program helped to refine my practice, and temper practicality with theory in order to improve informational literacy within my school.</p>
<p>IMHO the strength of the degree hinges strongly on what students do in addition to / complementary of coursework (LISSA, practicum, job shadowing, community work...)</p>
<p>Adequate since I was working in a library at the time but I could imagine it would be difficult if not complemented b[y] ongoing work experience.</p>
<p>One aspect that I really wish I had more access to as an online student was archival, acquisitions, and collection development.</p>
<p>I found the leadership and networking opportunities lacking. Also, the frequency with which the collections classes were offered online didn't allow the opportunity to register for them because they were always offered at the same time as core classes.</p>
<p>I would have liked more practical information about collection development and program development. I felt that the theory and history was well covered, as were some topics such as records management and government information services. But having no background in the LIS sector, a more practical course would have been useful.</p>
<p>Completing this program opened many doors that were previously closed to me as a library technician in a public library. In under 6 months I went from becoming librarian on-call casual -&gt; librarian perm -&gt; librarian supervisor. And within 1.5 year getting a dream job.</p>
<p>Honestly, my on-the-ground experience working as an LA was a bigger contributor to my ability to do my current job than the MLIS program was. I learned very few practical skills in the program, and philosophy doesn't get the daily work done.</p>
<p>I felt quite unprepared for employment in the LIS sector. I found that when it came to actually apply for a position, I had very little concrete evidence from my education that I was capable of doing what the job descriptions included. I have not been able to find a job within the LIS field; I do not have the experience or hard skills that employers are looking for.</p>
<p>It's been more difficult than I expected to find library employment – it seems like the MLIS degree isn't worth a lot without prior library experience.</p>
<p>As someone who was mid-career when I started the program, I relied on my past experience and teaching certification to get my current position, so it's difficult to distinguish between the program and the past experiences in some of the questions on skills/awareness. In that way, my experience is different than that of someone who is just starting their career. I would probably not have been offered [m]y current position if I didn't have the MLIS, so it's been invaluable in that way.</p>
<p>I was already occupying a position reserved for a MLIS holder prior to entering SLIS. Unfortunately, it didn't feel like the courses, outside of leadership and ethics, were particularly germane to my daily work and challenges. My time at SLIS was valuable in some respects, but, ultimately, it was about checking a box to continue my current employment and opening doors to future opportunities.</p>
<p>The work experience gained during my MLIS degree at U of A through the SLIS collaborative work program was very important to my development in the field. I was deeply saddened to hear that that program ended, because it means that SLIS will be more likely to be graduating students without any</p>

relevant library work experience, which, to me, is not good.

As a library manager, I feel that the vast majority of my coursework from my MLIS program did not prepare me for the day-to-day of my job. I find myself scrambling to catch up on leadership and management skills, especially when it comes to guiding and directing my staff.

Additionally, respondents were given the opportunity to add any final comments that they had about their employment status or suggestions about the survey:

I do wish the survey was structured differently! It would have been better if I could describe all of my library experience prior/during/after my MLIS rather than my first. I started as a shelver at age 16- and that information did not feel applicable to this survey.

After completing the program I discovered that the weekly discussion requirements online far exceeded other programs of peers at other library programs. My level of work each week was also higher than that of other programs. Once classes started letting us pick our teams or groups the program became more enjoyable. The first semester 2 times I was hindered by a single person doing 5% or less of the work. After taking the leadership course I developed a group contract. I recommend that first semester providing one to the groups. The summer semester with the contact professors were some of my most memorable courses. Storytelling, comics were outstanding.

I was very disappointed after graduating from SLIS in that I felt there was very little support in what comes next. For example, we didn't discuss how to market ourselves and our knowledge for what is a particular field, and we also didn't learn some of those hard skills that employers are looking for. Some schools/departments have dedicated staff or support for career searching, and this would have been very helpful.

I consider myself very fortunate to have gotten a full-time permanent position 3-6 months out of graduation from SLIS. That said, I had significant previous library experience (which included the SLIS collaborative program) and an MA completed before I enrolled in SLIS. The position that I was successful in competing for, however, was in a small rural city and had a deeply toxic workplace culture due to polarization brought on by the pandemic and a dreadful new Director. Due to those two factors, I left the position, because I could not stand to work there anymore. To be frank, my mental health was at risk. I share this because there is more to the employment picture than simply "getting a job" after graduation - there is the quality of the job, what a new graduate has had to sacrifice to get the job, etc. In my case, I moved away from my support networks and into a toxic workplace culture and hated my life for 14 months. Also, SLIS should use the insights gained from this survey to put a cap on its on-campus and online cohorts. To continue churning out graduates yearly hurts the labour market in LIS fields for everyone, and I do not know if SLIS faces any repercussions for continuing to saturate the labour market. The MLIS programs may be money makers for SLIS and the U of A, perhaps, but, given labour market outcomes in librarianship, they are overpromising to new graduates.

When it comes to the gender question, can you add Non-binary as an option rather than a write-in? Could you also ask a question about where students thought their degree from UofA would lead them compared to where they ended up? If a student took courses related to public librarianship but ended up in academics, it would be interesting to know.

[Y]our gender options on this survey are antiquated. generally, when a person identifies as "trans", they also identify as a man or woman. [T]he additional option you are looking for is "non-binary".