

**DEVELOPING AN ACCREDITATION SYSTEM FOR LIS  
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN  
SOUTHEAST ASIA: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The paper examines some of the issues involved in developing accreditation standards and procedures for Library and Information Studies (LIS) professional education programs in Southeast Asia. The accreditation standards of the American Library Association (ALA), Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) (UK) and International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) are examined, and the main features and content of the standards are discussed with respect to the Southeast Asian context. The four major aspects/activities in the accreditation process, dialogue, self-evaluation, documentation and external review, are also discussed. The paper also presents summary results of a questionnaire survey of LIS schools in Southeast Asia that was carried out in 2002 to gather views on various accreditation issues and expected problems. An organisational model is proposed for the accreditation of LIS degree programmes in Southeast Asia under the oversight of Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL).*

**Keywords:** Library and information science education; LIS professional programmes; Information studies; Accreditation; Southeast Asia

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The issue of accreditation of Library and Information Studies (LIS) programmes and degrees in the Southeast Asian region was raised during the 2001 *International Conference for Library and Information Science Educators in the Asia Pacific Region* held in Kuala Lumpur. The conference had surveyed LIS education programmes in the region, discussed the core competencies of the profession and examined some of the issues in LIS education. It was felt that an accreditation scheme for the region would be useful in enhancing the quality and acceptability of LIS degrees as well as providing more flexible mobility of

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library and information professionals in the region. There was a general consensus that some effort needs to be made in this direction.

In 2002, Prof. Shaheen Majid undertook a questionnaire survey of LIS schools in the region to gather views on various issues related to a regional accreditation scheme, including the need for an accreditation scheme, geographical scope of accreditation, coordination, duration, expenses and cost and potential problems. The results were reported in a paper (Majid, Chaudhry, Foo & Logan, 2002) presented at the *Library and Information Science Education in Asia (LISEA) Workshop* – a post-conference workshop of the 2003 *International Conference on Asian Digital Libraries (ICADL)* in Singapore. The paper also proposed an organisational model for the accreditation of LIS education programmes in Southeast Asia under the auspices and oversight of CONSAL.

The issue of accreditation and certification was raised at the recent CONSAL XII (2003) conference in Brunei, and a proposal for the development of a regional accreditation and certification scheme was included in the conference resolutions. The outgoing conference chairperson from Brunei and the CONSAL General Secretary highlighted this in their concluding speeches, and expressed the hope that Philippines, now assuming chairmanship of CONSAL, would work hard towards achieving this goal.

This paper seeks to stimulate further discussion regarding the development and implementation of a regional accreditation system. The education standards and accreditation procedures of the following library associations were examined to identify their main features and to understand the major phases or aspects of the accreditation process:

- American Library Association (ALA),
- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA),
- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP, U.K.)
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

Specifically, we examined the following standards:

- *ALA Standards for accreditation of Master's programs in library and information studies*  
([http://www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Our\\_Association/Offices/Accreditation1/pub/standards.htm](http://www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Our_Association/Offices/Accreditation1/pub/standards.htm))
- *IFLA Guidelines for professional library/information educational programs – 2000* (<http://www.ifla.org.sg/VII/s23/bulletin/guidelines.htm>)
- *ALIA Education policy statement n° 1*  
(<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/education/entry-level.courses.html>)
- *ALIA The library and information sector: core knowledge, skills and attributes.* (<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/core.knowledge.html>)

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- *CILIP Accreditation instrument: Procedures for the accreditation of courses.*

IFLA chose to call the standards “guidelines.” ALIA specified the standards as a series of education policy statements. CILIP does not have a separate accreditation standard, but specified the accreditation criteria in its “accreditation instrument” (i.e. accreditation procedure and checklist). In addition to the standards, we also consulted the written accreditation policies and procedures of the four library associations for more information about the accreditation process.

The IFLA *Guidelines for Professional Library/Information Educational Programs – 2000* seem to be the logical choice as a basis to develop a regional standard for Southeast Asia, since international feedback was taken into consideration in developing the Guidelines. The discussion in this paper focuses on the IFLA Guidelines, with additional features found in the other standards highlighted where appropriate. We outline the main features and content of the standards, and discuss in some detail four major aspects or activities in the accreditation process – dialogue, self-evaluation, documentation and external review. We then summarise the results of the 2002 Majid Survey and discuss the regional issues raised in the survey. The organisational model for regional accreditation proposed by Majid *et al.* (2002) is outlined and further steps towards implementing an accreditation system is suggested.

#### **FEATURES OF THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS**

What is *accreditation*? Majid *et al.* (2002) defined it as “a process which assures that education institutions and their programmes meet appropriate standards of quality and integrity. It is a collegial process based on self-evaluation and peer-assessment for the improvement of academic quality and public accountability.”

The ALA accreditation standards (American Library Association, 1992) defined it in greater detail:

Accreditation assures the educational community, the general public, and other agencies or organizations that an institution or program (a) has clearly defined and educationally appropriate objectives, (b) maintains conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, (c) is in fact accomplishing them substantially, and (d) can be expected to continue to do so. Accreditation serves as a mechanism for quality assessment and quality enhancement with quality defined as the effective utilization of resources to achieve appropriate educational objectives. (ALA, 1992)

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All the accreditation standards are fairly general, broad and open to interpretation in the context of the individual LIS programme. This is to accommodate different kinds of LIS programmes and specialisations, different contexts and different national and regional needs. All the standards reflect a consciousness of the breadth of the LIS field, the varied roles information professionals play, and the variety of information services, organizations and contexts in which information professionals work. The IFLA Guidelines state in the preamble that “Today ... the concentration is on information provision in a variety of contexts.” The ALA Standards point out that the standards “are indicative, not prescriptive, with the intent to foster excellence through the development of criteria for evaluating educational effectiveness.” The CILIP Accreditation Instrument said that “in view of the wide range of skills and expertise now needed for the efficient provision of information and the effective management of library and information services, the professional body does not seek to stipulate precise requirements for course content.”

The standards are specified relative to the context of the LIS programme being accredited. The context are specified at three levels:

1. the standards and objectives of the parent institution, i.e. a university (institutional context),
2. the requirements for professional education in the country (national context)
3. the objectives of the programme (local context).

The IFLA Guidelines state that the programme should be responsive to the needs of the country, and meet the educational and professional accreditation requirements as are the norm in the country. However, the LIS programme should be part of a degree-granting institution (i.e. university).

The evaluation of an LIS programme is performed largely with respect to the stated objectives of the programme:

Program goals and objectives are fundamental to all aspects of master's degree programs and form the basis on which educational programs are to be designed and developed and upon which they are evaluated. (ALA, 1992)

The accreditation standards of the four library associations cover the following areas:

- The context of the programme, institutional support, and relationship with the parent institution
- Mission, goals and objectives
- The curriculum
- Faculty and staff
- Students, and policy and procedures relating to students

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- Administration and financial support
- Instructional resources and facilities
- Regular review of the programme, the curriculum, and the employment market
- Documentation

Even though the main focus of the accreditation evaluation is the objectives of the program and those of its parent institution, there needs to be some means of determining whether a program is an “LIS programme” and whether the programme objectives are appropriate for an LIS programme. The IFLA Guidelines do not attempt to define the LIS field. The ALA Standards define LIS broadly:

The phrase "library and information studies" is understood to be concerned with recordable information and knowledge and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use. Library and information studies encompasses information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management. (ALA, 1992)

CILIP characterized LIS as

... the principles and management of the production, organization, analysis and provision of information and information services. It is concerned with the study of information from its generation to its exploitation, and its transmission in a variety of forms through a variety of channels. (CILIP, 2002)

LIS core skills and competencies are specified in a general kind of way in the standards. IFLA Guidelines listed the following core areas:

1. The Information Environment, Information Policy and Ethics, the History of the Field
2. Information Generation, Communication and Use
3. Assessing Information Needs and Designing Responsive Services
4. The Information Transfer Process
5. Organization, Retrieval, Preservation and Conservation of Information
6. Research, Analysis and Interpretation of Information
7. Applications of Information and Communication Technologies to Library and Information Products and Services
8. Information Resource Management and Knowledge Management
9. Management of Information Agencies
10. Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of Outcomes of Information and Library Use

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CILIP and ALIA have somewhat more detailed lists of core areas, given in Appendix A and B.

All the standards also specify general transferable skills that the programme should impart. IFLA listed the following skills: communication skills, teamwork, time and task management skills, and analytical and problem-solving skills. ALIA listed the following additional skills: management skills; ability to think critically, reflectively, and creatively; evaluation skills; valuing of professional ethical standards; commitment to life-long learning; IT skills; and information literacy skills. CILIP added the following skills: human resource management, training and development, financial and budgetary management, statistical analysis, research methods, project management, and language skills.

The IFLA Guidelines specify that the programme should cover theory and practice and professional concerns, and suggested having practicum, internship and fieldwork for students. CILIP requires an individual project or a dissertation for graduation. Students are also expected to have a broad general education as preparation for the LIS education.

The general and flexible nature of the accreditation standards make it possible to adopt one of these standards (especially the IFLA Guidelines) as the basis for an accreditation standard for Southeast Asia. However, since the different countries in Southeast Asia have different national needs and different education systems, and we do want graduates of accredited programmes to be able to work in different countries, the different national contexts have to be examined before instituting a regional accreditation system. The Southeast Asia regional context may have to be taken into consideration when evaluating LIS programmes.

It may be difficult to decide whether the core areas are adequately covered by an LIS programme for accreditation. Guidelines may need to be drawn up regarding the extent and depth of coverage of the core skills. ALA and CILIP standards indicate the possibility of accrediting specialized programmes, though the program should be built on an broader LIS foundation:

Courses that are submitted may be generalist in nature, designed to provide entry to any part of the profession, or more specialized. In the case of specialized courses the professional body will look for an element that sets the specialism within a broader professional context. (CILIP, 2002)

This suggests that a programme may provide in-depth coverage of a few areas, and much less coverage of other areas.

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The next section discusses the four main aspects or activities in the accreditation process – dialogue, self-evaluation, documentation and external review. Though we consider them part of the accreditation process, they are specified in the standards and are important features of the standards.

## **MAJOR ACTIVITIES IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

### **Dialogue**

“Accreditation” sounds intimidating and evokes in our minds a picture of hostile outsiders, possibly foreign, on a fault-finding mission to uncover the weaknesses of the programme and assess the programme against international (i.e. Western) norms. Accreditation can be seen as interference by outsiders.

However, a closer examination of the accreditations standards and procedures suggests that the accreditation process need not be a hostile and fear-inspiring activity, and can be a “collegial” and productive process involving dialogue, consultation and mutual-help.

Our perspective is that dialogue and consultation are the most important aspects of the accreditation process. The LIS school has to engage in dialogue with many different parties, including

- *Faculty members within the LIS school.* Dialogue within the LIS school is clearly necessary for self-evaluation, planning for improvement and preparing the case for accreditation.
- *The parent institution* (i.e. the university and faculty/school) in which the LIS programme resides. The parent institution may need to be approached for financial, administrative and infra-structural support to meet accreditation standards and to continually improve the programme.
- *The profession*, including practising library and information professionals, and employers. The profession needs to be consulted regarding employment prospects, skills needed and adequacy of the training provided by the programme.
- *Students and alumni*, for feedback on the programme.
- *The accreditation body.* Documentation and information have to be provided to the accreditation committee for assessment. The committee can also provide advice and suggestions for improving the accreditation case as well as for improving the programme to meet the standards.
- *Other library schools* can be consulted on putting up the accreditation case and also for help to strengthen various aspects of the programme.
- *Other related programmes* in the university, and other related professions. The LIS field is multi-disciplinary, and LIS professionals play many different roles in industry. It is thus important for the LIS

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schools to interact with and possibly collaborate with other departments and programmes in the university and also related fields and professions in industry.

Dialogue among LIS schools is possibly the most beneficial side-effect of a regional accreditation scheme. This dialogue is necessary to formulate regional accreditation standards and procedures that are acceptable to most LIS schools. Dialogue is needed to improve understanding of each other's unique context, history and objectives. This understanding is important since LIS faculty members will probably be serving in accreditation panels for other LIS programmes. An LIS school undergoing an accreditation process can seek advice and consultancy from faculty members in other LIS schools in preparing the accreditation case as well as improving the programme itself. Indeed, the ALA accreditation procedure specifically advises the LIS school seeking accreditation to "seek advice from individuals within the profession who have experience with accreditation" (ALA, 2002). The accreditation process can help to identify the particular strengths and best practices of individual LIS programmes, so that LIS schools know who to approach for assistance in particular areas of LIS education.

LIS schools seeking accreditation also need to have more dialogue with the profession. Dialogue with the profession is a two-way communication. On one hand, it involves feedback from professionals and employers on employment opportunities, skills needed, the adequacy of the programme in preparing graduates for professional work, and trends and developments in the profession. On the other hand, the LIS schools also need to

- explain to the profession the objectives, content, approach and rationale of the programme
- disseminate research results and new ideas, and inform the profession of trends and developments reported in the literature
- provide continuing education and consultancy to the profession
- provide leadership to the profession.

Indeed providing continuing education and consultancy to the profession, and membership and service of faculty members in professional associations are part of the IFLA Guidelines. IFLA guidelines state that "in order to assist practising librarians and information specialists to maintain competence in a changing society and to keep educators aware of issues and trends in practice, the programme should either conduct suitable workshops and short courses ...". Furthermore "the programme's staff should have the opportunity of offering consulting to libraries and information agencies to develop further interplay between the educational institution and practice."



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Dialogue with other university departments in related disciplines and dialogue with related professions are also important. The IFLA Guidelines specify that the LIS programme should demonstrate awareness of related disciplines, and that “the administrators, faculty and staff of the library/information educational programme should be aware of, and in communication with other related professions and disciplines within and outside the educational establishment.” The ALA Standard also specifies that faculty members should interact with faculty of other disciplines. This makes sense considering the multidisciplinary nature of the LIS field and the convergence and growing overlap between LIS, computer science, information systems, communication studies, and other disciplines.

LIS schools should also be an active participant in the university community and participate in the intellectual dialogue across the university, and forge partnerships and collaborations. Otherwise the LIS schools may become isolated entities in the university, and seen as redundant and not contributing to the mission of the university.

#### **Self-evaluation**

Although we can expect all LIS schools to do a certain amount of self-evaluation and self-reflection, the accreditation process requires the LIS schools to do this self-evaluation systematically and regularly:

The programme should have a clearly developed, regular planning and evaluation process. The process should include an ongoing review of policies and procedures in light of anticipated changes in the library/information field and in the larger society. Faculty, staff, and students should be involved in the planning and evaluation activities. Employers and practitioners should be consulted as well. (IFLA, 2002)

The ALA (2003) accreditation procedures emphasize the use of qualitative and quantitative “outcomes assessment”:

Each school and program will have its own ways of expressing its goals, determining desired outcomes, and measuring its accomplishments. The results of developing and evaluating outcomes assessments will be a unique set of measures of what constitutes success for that school and program. ... Not all outcomes measures need to be objective or easily quantifiable; they must, however, be verifiable. The first places to look for outcomes measures are in existing documents about the program, its resources, and its external environment. Examples of sources of data for demonstrating attainment of objectives include student achievements, alumni surveys, faculty accomplishments, employer feedback, and

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departmental or program evaluations. Assessment measures for the curriculum come from testing for success in attaining course and program objectives, school objectives, or institutional objectives for basic skills, thinking and practice in the discipline, and preparations for lifelong learning. The development of measures for teaching might begin with answering questions such as: What methods of presentation accommodate various learning styles? How are students encouraged to practice and apply their learning? ... The plan should include and describe plans for data-collection efforts that are necessary for the review; for example, will the school conduct focus groups, structured interviews, mail or telephone surveys with its constituent groups and/or students and alumni? (ALA, 2003)

The accreditation procedures thus call for a fairly extensive and detailed evaluation study of the programme – a daunting task requiring substantial manpower and financial resources and research skills.

We have doubts that such an extensive evaluation is necessary to assess whether standards are met and to identify areas for improvement. Simpler accreditation procedures will need to be developed for use in the Southeast Asian context. Perhaps the ALIA and CILIP accreditation procedures can be taken as starting points. A few model programme evaluations will have to be developed to provide LIS schools guidance on what is expected.

### **Documentation**

Extensive documentation has to be done by the LIS schools to show that the programme complies substantially with the accreditation standards and also to present the evaluation study and results.

The IFLA Guidelines emphasize transparency and detailed documentation in publicly available documents. Policies and procedures to be documented and made publicly available include:

- The programme's mission, goals and objectives
- Philosophy, principles and methods of the programme
- Areas of specialisation
- Level of preparation provided
- Teaching, service and research values
- Role of library and information services in society
- Curriculum, including the aims, prerequisites, content, learning outcomes, and assessment methods for each course
- Student recruitment, admission, financial aid, placement, and other academic and administrative policies for students

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- Criteria for selection of students, including interest, aptitude, intellectual and educational backgrounds and diversity

ALA (1992) has more details about what is to be included in the programme objectives:

- Definition of LIS
- The philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field
- Appropriate principles of specialization (areas of specialization and their definitions)
- The value of teaching and service to the advancement of the field
- The importance of research to the advancement of the field's knowledge base
- The importance of contributions of library and information studies to other fields of knowledge
- The importance of contributions of other fields of knowledge to library and information studies
- The role of library and information services in a rapidly changing multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual society, including the role of serving the needs of underserved groups
- The role of library and information services in a rapidly changing technological and global society
- The needs of the constituencies that a program seeks to serve

Policies and procedures to be documented (but not publicly available):

- Faculty appointment, review and promotion policies.
- Faculty continuing education and professional development
- Policy for reviewing the currency and relevance of courses and teaching methods.

The accreditation standards and procedures developed for Southeast Asia will need to specify what LIS schools need to document and make public, and the amount of documentation.

#### **External review**

Finally, an accreditation review panel will be formed by the accrediting agency to review the documents and the accreditation case presented by the school, and assess whether the programme substantially meets the “standards”. This would involve a site visit by the accreditation panel to review aspects of the programme that cannot be assessed fairly from documentation alone, and to meet with the various constituencies of the programme.

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### **Survey of LIS Schools**

Prof. Shaheen Majid carried out a questionnaire survey of LIS schools in Southeast Asia in January and February 2002, to explore the perceptions of the LIS schools about a regional accreditation scheme for the LIS degrees. A summary of the results is provided here. More details are given in Majid *et al.* (2002).

Fourteen LIS schools from five Southeast Asian countries participated in the study. No LIS programmes could be identified in four countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. The highest number of participants (five) was from Thailand, followed by the Philippines with 4 schools. Two schools each from Singapore and Malaysia participated in this study.

Twelve of the 14 schools agreed there is a need for developing an accreditation scheme for LIS degrees awarded in Southeast Asian countries. One school from Thailand was unsure, and one school from Malaysia disagreed pointing out that “the process of accreditation by concerned [government] authorities at national level ... is effective and good enough”. Thirteen schools expressed interest in participating in an accreditation scheme developed for Southeast Asian countries. The Malaysian school, which earlier disagreed, expressed its inability to join since government authorities would not accept such an exercise undertaken by a body not authorised by them.

Most of the schools agreed that implementation of an accreditation scheme would result in better coordination among LIS programmes in the region, result in wider acceptance, higher credibility and recognition of LIS degrees, better job prospects for LIS graduates, and better quality of LIS programmes and their graduates. Eleven schools agreed while three were not sure that such a scheme would enhance the mobility of LIS graduates in the region.

Regarding the implementation and coordination of accreditation activities, a majority of the respondents agreed that a joint committee of representatives from CONSAL and LIS schools should be responsible for developing rules and procedures as well as for coordination of the proposed regional accreditation scheme.

The following factors were considered very important in the accreditation criteria by at least 10 LIS schools:

- Relevance of curriculum to market needs
- Faculty educational/ professional qualifications
- Number of faculty members
- Faculty areas of specialisation and diversity in background

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- Total credit hours/workload for graduation
- Funds for developing resources and facilities
- Physical Resources and Facilities
  - Computer hardware/software/networking
  - Access to the Internet
  - Instructional equipment
- Library Resources

The main problems to developing and implementing a regional accreditation scheme were identified as:

- Non-availability of funds (9 respondents)
- Limited understanding and appreciation for such a scheme (8 respondents)
- Lack of expertise and procedural difficulties (6 respondents)

Four schools feared that there might be some resistance from LIS programmes in implementing this scheme.

#### **An Organisational Model for a Regional Accreditation System**

Majid *et al.* (2002) also outlined a model for developing and implementing an accreditation scheme. They proposed that in the first phase of implementation only Master's degrees will be accredited, and extended to Bachelor's degree in the second phase. They proposed that a regional accreditation scheme be developed under the auspices and oversight of CONSAL.

They proposed a CONSAL Special Committee on Accreditation with representatives from LIS schools, National Libraries, professional associations, library and information practitioners, etc., to draft rules, procedures and accreditation standards, and submit the report to the CONSAL Executive Board (EB) for implementation.

CONSAL will then form a CONSAL Advisory Committee on Accreditation (CACA) with 14 members for coordinating and implementing the proposed accreditation scheme (Table 1), representing CONSAL, LIS schools, National Libraries, LIS professional associations, and practitioners.

To accredit a particular LIS programme, CACA will nominate an Accreditation Review Panel (ARP) in consultation with the CONSAL Executive Board, to visit candidate schools and assess their eligibility by using the approved *Accreditation Standards*. For this purpose, a pool of experts would be developed with appropriate qualifications, experience and interest in LIS education. Each ARP would consist of four members, two academicians and one representative each from library associations and National Libraries of ASEAN member countries.

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Based on the recommendations of the Accreditation Review Panel, the CONSAL Advisory Committee on Accreditation (CACA) would decide whether or not to grant accredited status to the candidate school.

Table 1: Proposed composition of the CONSAL Advisory Committee on Accreditation

| Agency               | Number of Representatives | Duration    | Remarks                                                                                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CONSAL               | 1                         | Two years   | -                                                                                                             |
| LIS Schools          | 6                         | Three years | No more than two persons from each country on staggered-rotation basis                                        |
| National Libraries   | 2                         | Two years   | On staggered-rotation basis                                                                                   |
| Library Associations | 2                         | One year    | On staggered-rotation basis – to be nominated by National Library of the respective country on rotation basis |
| LIS Practitioners    | 3                         | One year    | Representing different specialisations – not more than one person from each country                           |

### **Steps Towards Establishing a Regional Accreditation System**

Clearly, for an accreditation scheme to be developed and accepted by LIS schools in the region, extensive dialogue among the LIS schools need to take place to draft the accreditation standards and procedures. The schools will then have to perform self-evaluation, and apply the draft standards and procedures to their own programmes to identify problems and assess to what extent their programmes meet the draft standards. LIS faculty may also need to visit other schools to understand the problems encountered by other schools and to simulate accreditation panel site visits. The CONSAL Special Committee on Accreditation proposed by Majid et al. (2002) could be the coordinating body for these efforts.

Once the accreditation standards and procedures have been agreed on, a CONSAL Advisory Committee on Accreditation (CACA) could coordinate and implement the accreditation scheme. Initially, the accreditation committee will

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have to spend a substantial amount of time clarifying the standards and procedures. The committee will have to provide guidance to LIS schools to prepare the required documents, carry out the evaluation study, and prepare the case for accreditation. A consultant with extensive experience of the accreditation process in Australia, UK or the US will probably need to be engaged to advise the accreditation committee, and to ensure that the accreditation process is performed properly.

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents of Majid's survey indicated non-availability of funds as a major problem. To reduce the financial burden of the candidate schools, it is suggested that members of the Review Panel be encouraged to seek travel funds from their parent organisations. Alternatively, CONSAL could approach appropriate international donors for grants to cover costs for the initial implementation of this scheme.

The respective national library associations will also need to set up a Standards and Accreditation Committee to represent the interests of the profession and the association, and to liaise with the CONSAL Advisory Committee on Accreditation. The Library Association of Singapore has set up a Standards & Professional Sub-Committee with the objectives:

- To develop standards and guidelines for LIS professional and paraprofessional education
- To develop standards and guidelines for library and information services
- To develop library and information industry competency standards
- To develop accreditation and certification guidelines and procedures
- To liaise with LIS-related standards and accreditation bodies in Singapore and other countries

The sub-committee has set up a Web site (<http://islab.sas.ntu.edu.sg:8000/projects/standards/>) to gather resource materials on standardization, accreditation and certification.

### **CONCLUSION**

We have examined some of the issues involved in developing accreditation standards and procedures for LIS professional education programs in Southeast Asia. The accreditation standards of the ALA, ALIA, CILIP (UK) and IFLA were examined, and their main features identified and discussed with respect to the Southeast Asian context.

The main advantages of a regional accreditation scheme were identified as:

- Assuring students and employers of the quality of the programme
- Encouraging commitment to continual improvement
- Improving the mobility of graduates

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- Encouraging interaction, dialogue, collaboration and cooperation between LIS schools
- Encouraging dialogue between LIS schools and their constituencies, as well as with other disciplines and professions
- Greater transparency and more documentation of policies and procedures
- Helping the region to negotiate mutual recognition of professional qualifications with the library associations of other countries.

We identified *dialogue* with different parties and *self-evaluation* as very beneficial aspects of the accreditation process, as well as point out the enormous amount of *documentation* that might be needed. We have also proposed a organisational model for regional accreditation and steps that may need to be taken to develop the system.

It is hoped that the analysis and proposals in this paper will stimulate further discussion regarding the development and implementation of a regional accreditation system.

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## APPENDIX A.

### List of Core Areas in the CILIP Course Accreditation Checklist

#### **Information Generation Communication and Utilization**

- Principles of information science
- Identification and analysis of information flows and resources
- Principles of collection and data management
- Knowledge organization and information retrieval
- Information evaluation
- Data restructuring and information presentation

#### **Information Management and Organizational Context**

- Development & Provision of Information Services and Products
- Strategic tactical and financial planning of information services
- Information services marketing and business development
- Quality issues and liability
- Information service performance assessment
- Information system / organization analysis
- Analysis of User Education Needs
- User Studies and Education

#### **Information Systems / Information and Communication Technologies**

- Specification, identification, analysis, implementation, evaluation and utilization of manual and electronic systems and tools

#### **Information Environment and Policy**

- Legal and regulatory issues
- Professional and ethical issues
- International and transborder information transfer
- Regional, national and international information policies and issues

#### **Management and Transferable Skills**

- Human resource management
- Training and development
- Financial and budgetary management
- Statistical analysis
- Research methods
- Project management
- Language skills
- Communication/interpersonal skills
- Practical experience

**APPENDIX B.**

**Core knowledge, skills and attributes listed in ALIA Education Policy Statements**

**Knowledge of the broad context of the information environment** -- ability to understand and interpret the contexts in which information is originated, stored, organised, retrieved, disseminated and used.

**Analysis** – ability to

- identify and investigate people's information needs and information behaviour;
- identify and evaluate information sources to determine their relevance to information needs;
- investigate how information is effectively sought and utilised.

**Strategy** -- ability to envision future directions and negotiate alliances for library and information sector development aligned with corporate, social and cultural goals and values.

**Information infrastructure** -- ability to forecast, plan, facilitate, evaluate and apply appropriate resource management to library and information operations.

**Information sources** -- ability to identify required information and implement its acquisition, licensing or creation.

**Processing of information** -- ability to enable information access and use through systematic and user-centred description, categorisation, storage, preservation and retrieval.

**Information product and service delivery** -- ability to

- provide and promote information access and client services;
- use research skills to provide appropriate information to clients;
- facilitate development of information literacy and the ability to critically evaluate information;
- design and deliver customised information;
- assess the effectiveness of library and information facilities, products and services;
- market library and information services.

**Generation of knowledge** -- ability to systematically gather and analyse data to advance library and information science theory and its application to the provision of information services.