Skills for Learning Professionals

Interim report
**on the development of National Occupational Standards
for the libraries, archives and information services workforce**

June 2007

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Background

Prior to the commencement of the project to develop new National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the libraries, archives and information services workforce in the autumn of 2006 a programme of fourteen initial consultation events had been held across the UK earlier in the year. The outcomes of these events were summarised in an earlier report [1].

Following the engagement in December 2006 of SAL Associates to work in partnership with Lifelong Learning UK on the articulation of the new standards it was decided to hold a number of invited focus group meetings to identify an initial structure for the new standards framework. Four focus groups with UK-wide representation were held in Belfast, Edinburgh and London during February and March 2007.

The outcomes of the focus groups were considered together with a review of the existing standards, reference to the 2002 functional mapping undertaken by the former Information Services National Training Organisation (isNTO) [2] and an examination of other bespoke competency frameworks in information skills developed by organisations such as the National Health Service, the National Archives and the Civil Service. The result of this work was a draft framework based generally on the information lifecycle and with the individual standards grouped in the following areas of occupational activity. This was the draft framework which was taken to the open consultation events:

- **Area A: Information strategy and planning** – activities associated with the development of information and knowledge strategies and policies that determine the direction and implementation of library, archives, records and information management

- **Area B: Governance and ethics** – activities associated with specifying the characteristics of services to ensure they meet and respect relevant legislative, regulatory and professional standards and which are delivered within an employer's framework of values, policies and procedures

- **Area C: Creating and acquiring resources** – activities that enable the identification, selection and acquisition of published information, support the creation of information or acquire internally produced documents for corporate use

- **Area D: Organising and managing resources** – activities associated with identifying, developing and maintaining the infrastructure and tools that enable resources to be managed and exploited effectively

- **Area E: Facilitating independent access to resources** – activities associated with encouraging users and potential users to want to use information resources and ensuring that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to do so easily and in an informed way

- **Area F: Providing mediated services** – activities involved with the provision of services that deliver information, documents and material to users to meet specific requirements and requests

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[1] *New standards, new qualifications, new skills: outcomes of the initial consultation events on creating new NOS and VQ frameworks for the libraries, archives and information services workforce.* LLUK, September 2006.
[2] *The functional and occupational maps for the information services sector.* isNTO, June 2002.

Bilateral discussions about the standards framework and proposed future qualifications development work have also been held with the relevant professional bodies and the national stakeholders: the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in England, CyMAL – Museums, Libraries & Archives Wales, the Scottish Library & Information Council, the Scottish Council on Archives and the Library & Information Services Council for Northern Ireland. Guidance has also been taken from the regulatory bodies on a simplified format for presenting the standards.

In line with LLUK's strategy on occupational standards, it is proposed that the new NOS will not be levelled in qualification terms but will relate to a number of generic roles. A structure of four generic roles was identified following discussion within the focus groups, a review of the 2002 functional mapping and reference to other recent standards development work (eg the 2004 NOS for Management and Leadership, produced by the Management Standards Centre). The roles identified for the libraries, archives and information services workforce are:

- Operational
- Practitioner
- Middle Manager
- Senior Manager

The Project Steering Group (PSG) met on [date] to consider the draft framework which was the outcome of the focus groups and to endorse the plans for the planned open consultation events. The PSG has been kept informed through a number of written project updates and a number of articles have also been produced by the Project Manager for publication in the professional press [3].

The consultation events

A programme of eight open consultation events was held throughout the UK during May – June 2007 in order to consult more widely on the draft standards framework. The generic programme for the events is attached at Annex A. The consultation events had the following objectives:

- To communicate and develop an understanding of the value and use of National Occupational Standards

- To validate the Standards framework developed from discussions in the earlier focus groups

- To consult on the specific skills, knowledge and understanding which the Standards should encapsulate

- To improve our understanding of current and emerging roles (traditional and non-traditional) within the information workforce

- To identify enablers and barriers to the adoption of National Occupational Standards by employers and employees

The events were attended by approximately 175 people, whose organisations are listed at Annex B. A summary of participants' feedback on the events is at Annex C, together with a

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[3] LLUK consults on standards, in *CILIP Update* January 2007; Modernising is on the agenda: CILIP and LLUK are collaborating on standards for workforce development, in *CILIP Gazette* 10 March 2007; LLUK leads development of new national occupational standards, in *ARC* April 2007.

selection of comments at Annex D, which suggest that the majority of participants considered the events were effective and that their contributions were valued.

The consultation events began with a half-hour brief on National Occupational Standards and an update on progress to date. The first short (icebreaker) discussion session then asked participants, seated in small groups, to consider the headings in the Management Standards Centre's document "100 uses of the Management & Leadership Standards", ranking the three uses which they considered would be most likely to apply to them and those which they considered least likely to apply.

The main event on the programme was the discussion in small groups of the standards framework and the range of individual standards in each of the six areas outlined above. Participants were provided with a mind-map of each area, containing an overview of each of the standards and asked to respond to the following questions:

- Are the area names clear and appropriate?
- Are the Standards in each area relevant and appropriate?
- Is the proposed coverage of the Standards sufficiently comprehensive?
- Are they in the right area?
- What is missing?

A report back to the full group followed and the day concluded with further discussion in small groups on the proposed generic roles, coverage of the proposed standards in relation to the different domains of libraries, archives and other information services and finally a consideration of what factors might militate against or encourage adoption of the standards by employers for uses other than benchmarking qualifications. The day concluded with a consideration of the proposed format for expressing the new standards and a short brief on the next steps in the development process.

Outcomes of the consultation events

The original intent had been to aim for a "lean and mean" standards framework and to signpost out to generic skills in customer services, and management for example. Although the proposed areas in the standards framework were endorsed, in content if not in name, there was a strong desire to see generic skills explicitly included in the standards framework, through the importing of appropriate standards from elsewhere. This has influenced the size of the standards framework, resulting in a significant increase in the number of standards included within the framework.

At the same time, consideration has been given within LLUK to identifying ways of aligning the different standards frameworks currently under development with the aim of working towards an overarching standards framework for the lifelong learning sector. The majority of standards frameworks group individual standards into "areas" or "domains"[4] so the approach has been adopted of seeking to identify those areas or domains that are similar or common across different standards frameworks, even though the mix of individual standards within the areas might vary. An analysis of the two sets of NOS which are most advanced in their development – those for the libraries, archives and information services workforce and those for youth work – identifies the following areas or domains in common:

- Planning and developing services
- Working in line with values and principles, and ensuring compliance
- Working with or through people to deliver services

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[4] The decision has been made not to use the term "domain" in relation to standards for the libraries, archives and information services workforce because of the existing use of this word to describe the different functional areas of activity within both the information and cultural heritage sectors.

In addition to this, it is considered appropriate that each set of standards should explicitly set out appropriate occupational standards which reflect the different workforce roles in delivering or facilitating lifelong learning.

The outcome of the consultation events and the work within the Standards and Qualifications Team at LLUK on aligning the different standards frameworks within its portfolio is a draft framework of NOS for the libraries, archives and information services workforce structured as follows:

- **Area A: Planning and developing services** – activities which enable the development of information and knowledge strategies and policies to determine the direction and implementation of library, archives, records and information management

- **Area B: Working ethically and ensuring compliance** – activities which reflect with specifying the characteristics of services to be delivered ensure they meet and respect relevant legislative, regulatory and professional standards and which are delivered within an employer's framework of values, policies and procedures

- **Area C: Identifying, evaluating and acquiring content and material** – activities associated with identifying, evaluating, selecting and acquiring information resources, irrespective of format or origin

- **Area D: Creating and communicating information and knowledge** – activities which enable knowledge to be created, developed and transferred, including the recording and publishing of information

- **Area E: Organising and managing content and collections** – activities connected with developing, maintaining and applying the tools, processes and infrastructure required to enable the effective management and use of content and collections

- **Area F: Enabling access to and use of content and collections** – activities which enable information and material to be delivered to customers to meet specific requests and requirements

- **Area G: Facilitating lifelong learning** – activities relating to the promotion of literacy and the support of individuals and groups in their learning, defined in its widest sense

- **Area H: Managing people to deliver services** – activities relating to the effective management of people in delivering services and the delivery of excellence in customer service

This is likely to be the final iteration of the standards framework and the structure within which the standards are presented for consultation via the LLUK website during July 2007. The majority of the standards uploaded in July relate to the management and practitioner roles. Work continues on updating a number of standards from the 2000 NOS to provide a better statement of competencies appropriate to the operational role. Additional standards will be uploaded to the LLUK website during August 2007.

Annex A – Programme for the consultation events

**Lifelong Learning UK – the sector skills council for
the libraries, archives and information services workforce**

Consultation on the development of National Occupational Standards for the workforce in libraries, archives, records and information management: April – June 2007

10.00	**Coffee and Registration**
10.30	**Welcome, introductions and background**

National Occupational Standards – what are they?

The National Occupational Standards project – the development process and the standards framework

The consultation activities and objectives for today

11.00	**The purpose and use of the Standards**

Who are the Standards for?
What occupational activity will they cover?
The current and emerging roles they need to support?
How can they be used?

12.00	**The Standards – the content** Populating the standards framework (part 1)
12.45	**Lunch**
13.30	**The Standards – the content** Populating the standards framework (part 2)
14.30	**Afternoon tea and coffee**
14.45	**The Standards – adoption** Testing the relevance for each sector Identifying factors that will help the standards to be used
15.45	**What happens next?**
16.00	**Close**

Lifelong Learning UK is part of the Skills for Business network
of 25 employer-led Sector Skills Councils

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Annex B – List of consultation events and participants

York – 1 June 2007

Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Libraries; Dept for Farming & Rural Affairs; Darlington Borough Council – Libraries & Community Learning; Dept of Health; Hartlepool Borough Libraries; Hartlepool College of FE; University of Huddersfield Library; Hull City Libraries; Lincolnshire County Libraries; Middlesborough Libraries & Information; The Museums, Libraries & Archives Council – Yorkshire; The National Library for Health; The National Library of Scotland; Newcastle City Libraries & Information Service; North East Lincolnshire Libraries; Redcar & Cleveland College – Library; Redcar & Cleveland Library Service; Rotherham Borough Council – Libraries; Skillset Sector Skills Council; Sunderland City Libraries; City of York Libraries; York College of FE.

London – 8 June 2007

Archway Healthcare Library; Brighton & Hove City Libraries; The British Library; Buckinghamshire County Libraries; Burge Associates; Cambridgeshire County Libraries, Archives & Information; The Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals; Croyden Health Sciences Library; Dept for Communities & Local Government; Dept for Farming & Rural Affairs; Dept of Trade & Industry; EDI Awarding Body; Eli Lilley & Company Ltd; Essex County Libraries; Gwenda Sippings – Independent Information Consultant; Hertfordshire County Library Service; Luton Libraries; Maidstone NHS Hospital Library; The Museums, Libraries & Archives Council – East of England; The National Archives; Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust; Sue Hill Recruitment; St Martin-in-the-Fields School; Surrey County Council – Libraries & Culture; Surrey History Centre; Thurrock Library Service; Tower Hamlets Ideas Stores & Libraries; The Training & Development Agency for Schools; University College for the Creative Arts; The University of Liverpool – Library; University College London – School of Library, Archive & Information Studies; The University of Reading – Library; Westminster Kingsway College; Wood Green School – Library & Study Centre.

Taunton – 11 June 2007

University of Bath; Bournemouth University; Cornwall County Council – Corporate Records Division; Cornwall Library Service; Derbyshire County Libraries; Dorset County Council – Learning & Development; NHS Education South West; The Museums, Libraries & Archives Council – South West; North Somerset Council – Library Services; University of Plymouth; Plymouth Library Services; South West Learning & Development; University Of Wolverhampton.

Belfast – 15 June 2007

Belfast Education & Library Board; Belfast Education Library Service; University of Dundee; The Law Centre – Northern Ireland; The Library Council of Ireland; The Library & Information Services Council for Northern Ireland; Northern Education & Library Service; Public Record Office of Northern Ireland; Southern Education & Library Board; Queen's University Belfast; University of Ulster.

Sheffield – 17 June 2007

BT Group – Information Services; City College Manchester; De Montford University; Derby City Libraries; Doncaster College; University of Huddersfield; University of Liverpool – Centre for Archive Studies; Loughborough University Library; Rotherham Library & Information Service; University of Salford; Sheffield Children's NHS Trust Library; Sheffield

Libraries, Archives & Information; Sheffield Hallam University; University of Sheffield; West Cheshire College; York University Library.

Birmingham – 22 June 2007

The Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals; University of Central England; Coleg Llandrillo; Dudley Metropolitan Council Libraries; Higher Education Academy; Shropshire County Libraries; Staffordshire County Libraries; Leicester City Libraries; Leicester NHS General Hospital – Education Centre Library; University of Leicester Library; Northamptonshire Schools Library Service; The Science & technology Facilities Council; Shropshire County Libraries; Telford & Wrekin Libraries; Walsall Libraries & Heritage; City of Wolverhampton College.

Glasgow – 24 May 2007

Aberdeen City Council Libraries & Information Services; Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals in Scotland; Cumbria County Archives; Dundee City Council; Dundee University; Edinburgh City Libraries; Falkirk Libraries; Glasgow City Libraries; Glasgow Metropolitan College; Glasgow University Library; Glasgow Caledonian University Library; Govan High School; Highland Libraries; Midlothian Council – Library Services; Napier University Libraries; National Library of Scotland; NHS Education for Scotland (Knowledge Services Group); North Lanarkshire Archives; University of Paisley Library; Queen Margaret University; Scottish Enterprise; Scottish Library & Information Council; Scottish Qualifications Authority (Accreditation Team); Semple Fraser Law Library Partnership; South Lanarkshire Libraries; Stirling Council – Library Services.

Llandrindod Wells – 6 June 2007

University of Wales at Aberystwyth (Department of Library & Information Studies); Caerphilly Library Service; Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals Cymru; Coleg Glan Hafran; Coleg Morgannwg; CyMAL – Museums, Libraries & Archives Wales; Flintshire County Council – Library Services; Glamorgan Record Office; Herefordshire County Council – Library Services; Monmouthshire County Libraries; National Library of Wales; Newport City Council – Library Services; North East Wales Schools Library Services; Powys Library & Archive Services; Torfaen Libraries; Whitchurch NHS Hospital Library.

Annex C – Summary of consultation event feedback

	Question	Excellent	Very well	Satisfactory	Not very	Poor	Totals
1	How well do you feel the aims of the project have been explained?	13%	61%	22%	1%	1%	**98%ª**
2	To what extent do you feel the event achieved its purpose?	7%	68%	20%	4%	0%	**99%ª**
3	How appropriate did you find the format and delivery of the event?	14%	56%	27%	2%	1%	**100%**
4	How clear and informative were the presentation and the activities?	10%	49%	34%	7%	0%	**100%**
5	To what extent did you feel that your contributions were valued?	27%	57%	16%	0%	0%	**100%**
6	How convenient was the location?	52%	34%	12%	2%	0%	**100%**

ª Not all respondents answered Questions 1 and 2.

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Annex D – Selection of comments from consultation event feedback