



Subject benchmark statement

Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management: Draft for consultation

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How can I use this document?

This document is a subject benchmark statement for librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of programmes of study in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management or related subjects
- a prospective student thinking about studying librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management
- a current student of the subject, to find out what may be involved
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of a graduate of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this subject benchmark statement can be found in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA's) glossary.¹

¹ The QAA glossary is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary.

About subject benchmark statements

Subject benchmark statements form part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) which sets out the expectations that all providers of UK higher education reviewed by QAA are required to meet.² They are a component of *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, which includes the expectation that higher education providers 'consider and take account of relevant subject benchmark statements' in order to secure threshold academic standards.³

Subject benchmark statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study.

Subject benchmark statements are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within a framework agreed by the subject community. Further guidance about programme design, development and approval, learning and teaching, assessment of students, and programme monitoring and review is available in *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of the Quality Code in the following Chapters:⁴

- *Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval*
- *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching*
- *Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning*
- *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review.*

For some subject areas, higher education providers may need to consider other reference points in addition to the subject benchmark statement in designing, delivering and reviewing programmes. These may include requirements set out by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, national occupational standards and industry or employer expectations. In such cases, the subject benchmark statement may provide additional guidance around academic standards not covered by these requirements.⁵ The relationship between academic and professional or regulatory requirements is made clear within individual statements, but it is the responsibility of individual higher education providers to decide how they use this information. The responsibility for academic standards remains with the higher education provider who awards the degree.

Subject benchmark statements are written and maintained by subject specialists drawn from and acting on behalf of the subject community. The process is facilitated by QAA. To ensure the continuing currency of subject benchmark statements, QAA initiates regular reviews of their content, five years after first publication, and every seven years subsequently.

² The Quality Code, available at www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code, aligns with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, available at: www.engq.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG_3edition-2.pdf.

³ *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a.

⁴ Individual Chapters are available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b.

⁵ See further *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a.

Relationship to legislation

Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example by funding bodies. The Quality Code does not interpret legislation nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the subject benchmark statement where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.⁶

Equality and diversity

The Quality Code embeds consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in, and responsibility for, promoting equality.

Equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning. In addition, disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary.

⁶ See further the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=181#.UR-Y-XhwY-I.

About this subject benchmark statement

This subject benchmark statement refers to bachelor's degrees with honours and master's degrees in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.⁷

This version of the statement forms its third edition, following initial publication in 2000 and review and revision in 2007.⁸

Note on alignment with higher education sector coding systems

Programmes of study which use this subject benchmark statement as a reference point are generally classified under the following codes in the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS):

P100 (Information services); P110 (Information management); P120 (Librarianship); P121 (Library studies); P132 (Archive studies); P190 (Information services not elsewhere classified).⁹

Summary of changes from the previous subject benchmark statement (2007)

The key changes made in this revision of the subject benchmark statement are:

- the title has been amended to reflect the broader scope and content of the statement, by including archives and records management
- content has been added on knowledge management in addition to librarianship and information management
- consideration has been given to master's degrees, in addition to honours degrees
- attention has been paid to developments in technology and their ongoing impact on practice, and learning and teaching
- greater consideration has been given to the range of environments in which the subject is practised, and to external drivers influencing this.

Acknowledgements

The Group wishes to express its thanks to the Archives and Records Association (ARA), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and the Forum for Archives and Records Management for their generous assistance and, in particular, to members of the Group for their active and informed contributions.

⁷ Bachelor's degrees are at level 6 in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2008) and level 10 in the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (2001), and master's degrees are at level 7 and level 11 respectively.

⁸ Further information is available in the *Recognition scheme for subject benchmark statements*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=190.

⁹ Further information about JACS is available at: www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649/.

1 Introduction

1.1 Degree programmes in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management aim to equip students with a range of knowledge, understanding and skills at a level that prepares them for professional career opportunities in jobs broadly concerned with the management of information. Students acquire an understanding of the theoretical principles of the subject area that guides their career development in whichever area or areas of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management they choose for their career.

1.2 Students following programmes in this subject area develop competencies related to identifying, creating, acquiring, organising, retrieving, preserving, curating and disseminating information. Degree programme titles vary according to the particular subject focus within librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management, or the cognate fields that may form part of the degree programme. The subject is taught at foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

1.3 Professional and vocational relevance is an important aspect of these programmes, which generally include exposure to current professional practice and/or a period of in-service job-specific training as an integral part of the curriculum. Programmes are likely to be accredited by relevant professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)¹⁰ and the ARA.¹¹ This subject benchmark statement does not by itself confer professional accreditation or approval as it is equally applicable to all programmes in the subject area. It is expected that graduates undertake continuing professional development throughout their careers.

1.4 The National Occupational Standards for information and library services, archives services and records management may also be useful for gaining an understanding of the occupational standards associated with these professions.¹²

Defining principles

1.5 The purposes of this subject benchmark statement are to enable and assist:

- students to understand what the subject entails and to choose a programme appropriate for their personal career plans
- employers and other stakeholders to understand what knowledge and skills may be expected from graduates in the subjects which use this subject benchmark statement
- higher education providers in designing, developing and approving new programmes in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management and related degrees
- providers of such programmes who wish to develop or amend their programmes.

1.6 The subject benchmark statement for librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management sets out threshold and typical standards for bachelor's degrees with honours and master's degrees. The statement represents general expectations about academic standards within the subject. It is intended to encourage collaborative relationships

¹⁰ For details of accreditation procedures and requirements, see the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals: www.cilip.org.uk/.

¹¹ For details of accreditation procedures and requirements, see the Archives and Records Association: www.archives.org.uk/.

¹² <http://nos.ukces.org.uk/>

between the areas of interest to which the benchmark statement applies and with other subjects as appropriate.

1.7 This subject benchmark statement focuses on programmes where librarianship, information, knowledge, records or archives management is the main area of study. The structure of individual degree programmes is determined by the higher education provider. Consequently, the point in the programme at which subject knowledge and skills are achieved may vary, though the substance of the programme as a whole reflects this statement. Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management may also be studied in combination with other subjects, for example, business, communication studies or computing. The choice of areas to cover in combined and joint programmes varies from provider to provider, depending on factors such as the subject area with which the main subject is combined, the concerns of relevant employers, and the research profile and specialist interests of teaching staff.

1.8 Notwithstanding the above, all programmes which include the study of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management, whether on their own or in combination with another subject, enable students to develop a critical understanding of:

- the processes, institutions, and infrastructure associated with the creation, acquisition, management, organisation, curation and storage of knowledge and information in all media and formats
- theories relating to the usage and management of individual and aggregated information objects in all media and formats
- theories and frameworks that may be used to design information, records and archives services and systems that are attractive to use, and cost-effective
- theories relating to the managing and sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge
- information governance and legislative and regulatory compliance, including such areas as ethics, copyright, risk management and accountability
- reading, literacies and learning
- relevant technologies underpinning the design of, and in support of, information, records and archives services or systems
- how to conduct research, evaluation and service audit
- what may be achieved by different quantitative and qualitative methodologies and techniques, and when a particular methodology or technique is most appropriately used.

1.9 This subject benchmark statement specifies only the teaching to be provided and the learning required from the student. There are no prescriptions as to the provider's arrangements for delivery of subject matter, and cooperation between subjects and departments within and between subject boundaries is generally regarded as beneficial.

2 Nature and extent of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management

2.1 Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management are closely related subjects which together encompass the principles and practice of knowledge representation, knowledge organisation and communication. We live in an 'information society' and professionals in this subject work to ensure that people can easily and securely find, use and evaluate information, be it document, book or web page, that they need for work, study or leisure. This requires understanding of how such information objects are created and may be represented, how knowledge is generated, how people disseminate and share information, and why information objects need to be carefully managed for possible retrieval now and in the future.

2.2 Central to the subject area is knowledge which may be explicitly recorded as information objects in electronic or physical documentary form, including unstructured and structured data and records; knowledge may also be tacit. Documents may be generated by many different types of creator, in different media formats, and require management through their lifecycle (creation/use/destruction or archiving). For the knowledge in the documents to be used, there have to be communication processes and infrastructure. For the communication processes to work effectively, information needs to be collected, analysed, classified, organised, stored, disseminated and retrieved. Professional practitioners in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management understand the theoretical principles and concepts that underpin these activities and apply them in practice.

2.3 Theory and practice combine in the management of individual and aggregated documents. Operations on individual information objects include lifecycle management, representation, and recovery of their semantic content. These require an appreciation of how human beings categorise objects and activities of interest to them, and how conceptual knowledge structures such as classification schemata, taxonomies, thesauri and ontologies may then be developed. Techniques for abstracting and secondary processing, such as through structural tagging and digitisation, are also involved. Conceptual knowledge structures also facilitate the physical and logical ordering of collections of information objects, recording their properties by means of cataloguing and metadata construction, complemented by other curatorial functions embodied in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management, including selection, acquisition, disposal, storage, display, preservation, conservation and digitisation.

2.4 Information service provision provides settings and systems to empower people to use information effectively, with their information needs appropriately met. The setting may be within an organisation, educational provider, at home or on the move, local, national or international, physical or virtual. Effective information provision requires the identification of the information needs and behaviour of the target audience, including users and non-users, and of the wider cultural, historical, educational and organisational context. It involves the principles and practices that reflect and contribute to information literacy, such as information retrieval, data mining, information brokerage, website and portal design and maintenance. Information architecture provides the framework, within which information products, services and systems are created, analysed, evaluated, moderated and manipulated in order to meet the requirements of user, customer and client communities. In order to provide such services information professionals require strong interpersonal skills and an understanding of ethical practice and the wider societal and policy context in which they operate.

2.5 Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management are practised within a wide variety of organisational and community environments. The ethical, legal, policy and governance issues that attend their application within any given

environment contribute significantly to these disciplines, which are also informed by the standards and codes of practice of the relevant professional bodies. Compliance with the requirements of these bodies is a key determinant of programme design for programmes seeking professional accreditation. Responsibility and authority for such accreditation rests mainly with CILIP and the ARA. Some programmes may also be accredited by professional bodies associated with cognate disciplines, such as the British Computer Society.

3 Subject knowledge, understanding and application

3.1 The following is an outline of the broad areas of knowledge that characterise librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management. The emphasis placed on each area will depend on the focus of particular programmes.

Creating and organising knowledge and information

- Understanding of concepts and practices appropriate to the creation and organisation of a range of knowledge and information resources in all media and formats, for example published and unpublished materials, structured and unstructured data, records and archives, and including tacit knowledge.
- Understanding of relevant frameworks and standards that support systems and processes applied in the life cycle management of knowledge, information, records and archives.
- The ability to create, use and develop systems and procedures that assist in organising knowledge, information, records and archives, for example in creation, capture, control, organisation, indexing, retrieval and tracking.
- The ability to apply appropriate processes for organising, describing, retrieving and exploiting resources, for example appraisal, acquisition, selection, classification, use of thesauri, taxonomies, cataloguing, metadata and their management, indexing, database design, data mining, and bibliometrics.

Managing and exploiting knowledge and information

- Appreciation of the functions, cultures and contexts of organisations and individuals that produce, manage and disseminate knowledge, information, records and archives and the role of the information professional in relation to these.
- The ability to apply tools and techniques to support and maintain knowledge, information, records and archives for as long as required (including for example curation, digitisation and preservation) and evaluating for disposal based on format, relevance, usage and legal requirements.
- The ability to apply tools and techniques to make tacit and explicit knowledge available and to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- Understanding human information behaviour and information seeking processes, using knowledge and information skills to meet the information needs of user communities for example academics, general public, business, government and local communities and individuals.
- The ability to design, develop and deliver information products, systems and services to match customer requirements in conformity with appropriate quality standards.

Collection management and development

- The ability to plan, deliver and maintain a programme of acquisition and selection of knowledge and information resources that meet organisational objectives and community expectations.
- The ability to develop, arrange, display, manage, preserve and review collections of information objects and other resources for particular communities.
- The ability to deal with suppliers and to negotiate with publishers and aggregators for electronic and other resources.

- Understanding of conceptual and practical approaches to developing collections of resources and of the processes of planning, resources selection, acquisition, appraisal, selection, and de-selection.
- Understanding of practical advantages and disadvantages of collaborative collection activities and initiatives.

Using information technology

- The ability to model information requirements, information flows, and business processes in such a way that allows cost-effective translation into the design of information systems and services.
- Understanding of the principles of electronic records and data management, database design, object-oriented systems, conceptual data models (such as the Resource Description Framework) and the Semantic Web, web services, social media information retrieval methods for different types of content, information retrieval methods based on logic and probability, data mining, knowledge discovery systems and knowledge capture systems, and systems to support decision-making and problem solving, for example, case-based reasoning.
- Understanding of systems methodologies and computer systems lifecycles, appreciation of the issues around systems development, implementation and maintenance, including human-computer interaction.
- Understanding of the design and development of web-based documents, e-publishing and document engineering.
- Understanding of the principles of bibliometrics, scientometrics and webometrics, and how such quantitative methods may be used for research and evaluation.

Ethics, information governance and compliance

- Awareness of the cultural, ethical, economic, legal, political, security and social issues surrounding the use of knowledge, information, records and archives by individuals and groups in organisations and society, at local, regional, national and international levels.
- Understanding of policies and regulations regarding processes and procedures for information creation, maintenance and use, retaining a balance between information availability and information security.
- Understanding of the legal and regulatory framework within which information professionals operate in relation to, for example, intellectual property, copyright, licensing, patents, information risk, freedom of information, data protection, information ownership and accountability.
- The ability to identify and apply appropriate policies and procedures to the creation, capture, storage, dissemination, retrieval and destruction of information to ensure compliance with regulatory frameworks.
- Awareness of the professional context of knowledge, information, archives and records management, including standards and codes of ethics and practice, professional bodies and relevant government agencies.
- The ability to consider and address the above in a dynamic library, information, knowledge, records and archives environment, for example with regard to recent and emerging developments related to open data and big data.

Providing information solutions

- Understanding of the functions and activities of information, knowledge, records and archives specialists in mediating access to information and knowledge for particular communities in specific contexts.
- Familiarity with the purposes, operations, facilities, services and interactions of libraries, information and record centres, archives and knowledge repositories in all sectors.
- The ability to identify, access, evaluate and use such resources in different contexts.
- Understanding human information behaviour, information seeking processes and how these influence the design and presentation of information retrieval systems.
- Understanding of components of effective enquiry and search services.
- The ability to design, develop and deliver information products, systems and services to match customer requirements in conformity with appropriate quality standards.
- The ability to develop innovative information services and systems that require specialist expertise (for example research data management, research support using bibliometric/webometric expertise, collaboration on digitisation).
- The ability to instruct and guide users to assist them to develop their search and retrieval capabilities.

Reading, literacies and learning

- The ability to support all stakeholders appropriately in gaining optimum experience of their contact with knowledge, information, data, records and archives.
- The ability to identify and make appropriate interventions to help different types of information users and service recipients become information literate and receive suitable support in their development as readers and users of information in all types of formats (text, numeric, audio and visual).
- Understanding of the concept of information literacy and its application in education, the workplace and society.
- Understanding of the concept of reader development and its application in recreation, education, the workplace and society.
- Understanding of the role of information professionals and information agencies in developing information literacy, promoting reading for education and recreation, and supporting learning.

4 Skills

4.1 Students graduating in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management demonstrate a significant proportion of the abilities and competencies identified in each area listed in this section. Those graduating at master's level are expected to demonstrate higher levels of skills, especially of leadership, critical thinking and analysis skills, alongside the characteristics outlined in the relevant qualification frameworks and supporting documents.

Knowledge acquisition and study

- Appreciation and application of professional and ethical frameworks, requirements and mechanisms for continuing professional development and lifelong learning.
- The ability to apply subject knowledge, skills and understanding critically and effectively to real-world situations.
- The ability to work with and in relation to others through the presentation of ideas and information and the collective negotiation of solutions.
- The ability to handle information and argument in a critical and self-reflective manner.
- The ability to gather, sift and organise material independently and critically, and evaluate its significance.
- The ability to manage and reflect on their own learning, including an awareness of personal learning styles.

Research skills

- Understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods and their application and utility in the context of evidence-based policy and practice.
- The ability to use research techniques and knowledge of information resources to support service delivery for organisational, client or personal research projects to provide new findings and data, including knowledge of research methods, literature searching, citations, statistics and statistical analysis, and report writing.
- Understanding of and the ability to use a range of research methods and data collection appropriate to academic and professional research, leading to writing of publishable quality for both academic and professional audiences.
- The ability to contribute to conceptual and applied professional developments, locally, nationally and internationally.

Leadership and advocacy

- The ability to provide active leadership by inspiring and managing themselves and teams, both inside and outside the organisation and by promoting the positive value of library, information, knowledge, records and archives services across the organisation and society.
- The ability to influence key stakeholders and understand external frameworks.
- Understanding of the organisational context of service operations, including the significance of organisational mission, strategy, systems, structures and cultures.

Management, planning and strategy

- Understanding of the concepts, principles and techniques of strategic management and their application in directing and leading service organisations.
- Understanding of the concepts, principles and techniques underpinning key aspects of planning, managing and leading services, including financial management, human resource management, project management, marketing, service quality, customer relationship management and change management.
- The ability to plan, work in line with, and contribute to parent organisation vision and objectives.
- Relevant personal skills, including reflective learning, time management, problem solving, decision making and the exercise of personal responsibility, initiative and leadership.
- Interpersonal skills, including effective teamwork and collaboration.
- The ability to plan and maintain a record of personal professional development.

Customer focus, service design and marketing

- The ability to identify user community needs; to shape library, information, knowledge, records and archives services to meet those needs; and to develop appropriate methods to inform customers of accessibility, value and benefit of the resources and services.
- The ability to effectively communicate and consult with user and non-user communities, and identify and communicate with cultural, educational and organisational stakeholders through the design and promotion of services and evaluated outcomes and impacts.
- The ability to practise a range of marketing and promotional activities.

IT and communication

- Use and appropriate adaptation of electronic information resources, systems, software and web-based services (for example databases, catalogues, search engines, web browsers and portals).
- The ability to communicate in a clear, systematic and concise way for a range of different purposes and audiences, employing both written and oral presentation skills.
- The ability to interact, network and negotiate effectively and impartially with individuals and groups in a variety of contexts, including customer service, supplier liaison, IT project development, and team work. This may include techniques for creative problem solving, and soft systems analysis.
- Understanding of the principles and capacities of information and communication technologies and their application in professional practice.
- The ability to create, manipulate and format documents and databases using appropriate software.
- The ability to evaluate and present information in numerical and statistical form using appropriate software.
- The ability to use a range of electronic communication and collaboration tools, including email, discussion lists, social media and virtual environments.
- Awareness of trends and developments in information and communication technologies and their implications for service provision.

4.2 For an in-depth analysis of how graduates may be required to apply and develop knowledge and skills in the workplace, students and academic staff may wish to consult the *Student Employability Profiles: Librarianship and Information Management*, prepared by the Higher Education Academy and the Council for Industry and Higher Education.¹³¹⁴

¹³ In 2013, the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) was replaced by National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB), www.ncub.co.uk/.

¹⁴ *Student Employability Profile: Library and Information Management*, available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/4434.

5 Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning

5.1 Teaching and learning may be delivered in both real (physical) and virtual environments or through blended learning. Given the importance of the development of practical and technical skills for librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management for graduates across all areas of professional practice, providers integrate skills-based learning activities within their programmes.

5.2 Because of the nature of the subject matter, higher education providers place particular emphasis on inquiry and evidence-based practice, and foster a high standard of ability to conduct research. Higher standards than expected in other subjects are demanded in the quality of literature searching carried out by students, and in the accuracy of their bibliographic citations.

5.3 Depending upon the mode of study, learning and teaching may include:

- use of computers in, for example, internet searching, web page design and database creation; and access to online hosts, online public access catalogues, digitised archives and electronic journals, e-books and social media
- intensive use of libraries and/or archives, viewed as more than the standard resource used by all students, and will be used wherever possible as a controlled environment laboratory where students can undertake a variety of practical work or projects, and gain experience of working with specific resources and collections
- a range of self-guided student-centred learning resources, including paper-based materials and IT-based resources, such as tutorial modules, chat rooms, social media, discussion groups, message boards, wikis and websites
- guided and directed reading within the specialist literature (including books, journals and electronic resources) to help establish, develop and reinforce subject knowledge and understanding.

Assessment

5.4 Students take part in the kinds of activities that provide them with guidance and feedback, and help them to learn how to assess themselves as future professionals. They are encouraged to reflect, evaluate and provide feedback on their learning, and as a result become more effective, independent, confident, self-directed and active learners.

5.5 Students experience a range of assessment methods that reflect the range of learning objectives, in relation both to the specialisms that may be taught in their programmes and to generic skills. Evidence on which the assessment of student achievement is based may be selected from the following methods to suit the needs of individual programmes.

- Planning, carrying out and reporting of project work, including some incorporating a research element, to assess planning, research and presentation skills.
- An extended personal research project, involving primary data collection and/or extensive interrogation and synthesis of secondary data including quantitative and/or qualitative analysis, assessed for evidence of knowledge deployment, reasoning, argument, and presentation.
- Essays, papers, reports and other written assignments of various lengths, to assess knowledge and understanding of a topic.
- Evidence and reports gathered during practical placements or workplace assignments.

- Posters and oral presentations to assess presentation and communication skills.
- Collaborative project work to evidence team working skills.
- Reports of laboratory-based work: for example, the creation of small databases and websites.
- Portfolios of work to demonstrate abilities in the selection and presentation of material to specified criteria.
- Formal examinations that may require written essays and/or multiple choice questions to assess knowledge-base, understanding and analytical skills.

Learning resources

5.6 Higher education providers have resources to deliver the curriculum which are sufficiently up-to-date, readily available with easy and convenient access, well managed and effectively deployed, including:

- archive and audio visual materials, published literature in both printed and digital formats, learning support materials, specialist equipment and appropriate IT for traditional on-site students, part-time students and those studying by distance learning
- online learning facilities, including access to online resources, assessments and guidance using a virtual learning environment
- access to relevant published and unpublished literature in a variety of formats and to IT facilities and appropriate primary sources.

Practical knowledge/experience/awareness of subject-specific software and other resources

5.7 Given the vocational nature of the subjects to which this benchmark statement relates, students are expected to make more intensive use of a range of information and communications technologies, and of libraries and/or archives, than is expected of students in most other subjects. Students develop practical knowledge, experience, and awareness of relevant subject specific software and hardware resources, such as library management software, content management systems and digitisation equipment. It is the responsibility of the higher education provider to determine the most appropriate resources for a particular programme, or programmes, and to ensure access.

Exposure to practical environments

5.8 Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management are vocational subjects. Programmes are designed to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and understanding to enter professional practice in any aspect of the subjects encompassed by this benchmark statement. It is important that students are exposed to current professional practice and that they are encouraged to integrate their learning experiences in the practical environment with the formal knowledge gained through their studies.

5.9 Exposure to professional practice may be obtained by a variety of means, such as work placements, projects, research, visits, and talks by visiting practitioners.

5.10 A key outcome for all programmes is that they foster an appreciation of the value of continuing professional development among graduates, and student awareness of relevant learned societies and statutory and professional bodies with encouragement to participate in relevant activities within and/or outside their place of study. Students are encouraged to develop a positive attitude to learning throughout life and helped to develop their capacity to plan for their future educational and career development.

6 Benchmark standards for honours degrees

Benchmark standards are defined at threshold and typical levels.

Threshold standard

6.1 All students graduating with an honours degree in the subjects of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management have achieved this level of knowledge, understanding and ability.

6.2 Students who reach this standard are characterised by their ability to:

- demonstrate a systematic understanding of the main body of knowledge for their programme of study
- understand and apply essential concepts, principles and practices of the subject in the context of well defined scenarios, showing judgment in the selection and application of processes, materials and techniques
- produce work involving problem identification and the analysis, design and development of a system, process or procedure, with appropriate documentation. The work shows some problem solving and evaluation skills, drawing on some supporting evidence, and demonstrates a requisite understanding of the need for quality
- demonstrate transferable skills and an ability to work under guidance and as a team member
- understand the contribution of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management to the educational, cultural and socio-economic wellbeing of their user communities
- identify appropriate practices within a professional and ethical framework and understand the need for continuing professional development
- manage their own learning and make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources appropriate to the field of study
- discuss applications based upon the body of knowledge.

Typical standard

6.3 This indicates the standard of achievement expected of the majority of students graduating with an honours degree in the subjects of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.

6.4 Students who reach this standard are characterised by their ability to:

- demonstrate a sound understanding of the main areas of the body of knowledge within their programme of study, and to exercise critical judgment across a range of issues
- critically analyse and apply a range of concepts, principles and practices of the subject in an appropriate manner, showing effective judgment in the selection and use of processes, materials and techniques
- initiate and carry out work or projects involving problem identification, problem solving and analysis and evaluation skills drawing upon supporting evidence
- analyse, design and develop systems, processes or procedures which are complex, and fit for purpose
- exercise critical evaluation and review of both their own work and the work of others

- apply appropriate practices within a professional and ethical framework and identify mechanisms for continuing professional development and lifelong learning
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
- engage with cultural, educational and organisational user communities, in order to identify their needs and thereby provide the most relevant services for them
- demonstrate transferable skills necessary for employment, such as the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision-making skills and a commitment to further personal professional development.

6.5 While the above benchmark standards are defined for threshold and typical performance levels, it is nevertheless expected that programmes in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management provide opportunities for students of the highest calibre to achieve their full potential. Such students are creative and innovative in their application of the principles covered in the curriculum and are able to contribute significantly to the development of the subject in the future.

7 Benchmark standards for master's degrees

Threshold standard

7.1 This indicates the standard of achievement expected of all students graduating with a master's degree in the subjects of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.

7.2 Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and new insights. Such insights may require awareness of developments across all areas of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management, beyond the specialist area of interest that may form the focus of a particular programme
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship, together with the ability to demonstrate use of appropriate research philosophies and methodologies
- originality in the application of knowledge
- a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and evaluate evidence for enhanced professional practice
- an ability to complete through independent study a substantial critical, empirical research/work-based project, significant review or case study that may also contribute to research in the subject or the solution of a work-related problem
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. This may require awareness of methodologies in cognate subjects.

Typical standard

7.3 This indicates the standard of achievement expected of the majority of students graduating with a master's degree in the subjects of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.

7.4 Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgments in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction, creativity and originality
- demonstrate skills in leadership and advocacy, with informed awareness of dynamic internal and external factors that may influence these
- exploit tools and processes for effective global networking
- challenge existing practice and justify proposed changes.

Appendix: Membership of the benchmarking and review groups for the subject benchmark statement for librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management

Membership of the review group for the subject benchmark statement for librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management (2014)

Professor Graham Matthews (Chair)	Loughborough University
Dr Jessica Bates	University of Ulster
Dr Briony Birdi	University of Sheffield
Simon Edwards	CILIP
Professor Emeritus Dick Hartley	Manchester Metropolitan University
Professor Phillipa Levy	Higher Education Academy
David McMenemy	University of Strathclyde
Jo Rowley	Queen Margaret University, SCONUL
Professor Elizabeth Shepherd	FARMER
Dr Christine Urquhart	Aberystwyth University
Brigitte Stockton	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
David Gale	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Employer representative

Karen McFarlane	UK Information Matters
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Professional, statutory and regulatory body representative

Caroline Williams	Archives and Records Association
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Student reader

Bethany Sinclair-Giardini	University of Aberystwyth
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Membership of the review group for the subject benchmark statement for librarianship, and information management (2007)

Details provided below are as published in the second edition of the subject benchmark statement for librarianship and information management.

Wendy Buckle	Cranfield University, Defence College of Management and Technology
Professor Sheila Corral	University of Sheffield
Professor P G B Enser (Chair)	University of Brighton
M Huckle	The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Dr Gerry MacAllister	Higher Education Academy Subject Centre, Information and Computer Sciences
Dr E Shepherd	University College London
Heather Taylor (minute taker)	The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

Membership of the reference group for the review of the subject benchmark statement for librarianship and information management (2007)

Details provided below are as published in the second edition of the subject benchmark statement for librarianship and information management.

Jacqueline Chelin	University of the West of England
Barry George	Bedfordshire County Council
Professor Dick Hartley	The Manchester Metropolitan University
Mark McCree	Lincolnshire Libraries
Karen McFarlane	Government Communications Headquarters(GCHQ)
Kate Millin	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Julia Newton	London Borough of Greenwich
Professor Charles Oppenheim	Loughborough University
Wendy Small	Eversheds LLP
Yvonne Warren	Doncaster Library and Information Services

Membership of the original benchmarking group for librarianship and information management (2000)

Details provided below are as published in the original subject benchmark statement for librarianship and information management.

Ms S Andretta	University of North London
Miss M E Burke	Manchester Metropolitan University
Professor P G B Enser	University of Brighton
Mr W Foster	University of Central England in Birmingham
Mrs C E Hare	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Ms S Hornby	Manchester Metropolitan University
Mr I M Johnson	The Robert Gordon University
Mr M A Lowe	University of Wales, Aberystwyth
Dr G Matthews	University of Central England in Birmingham
Professor I C McIlwaine	University College London, University of London
Mrs E M Milner	University of North London
Professor C Oppenheim	Loughborough University
Mr G Rowland	Liverpool John Moores University
Miss E Shepherd	University College London, University of London
Professor R C Usherwood	University of Sheffield
Ms M Huckle (Secretary)	The Library Association

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