

Becoming a lecturer in Library Studies

Library and Information Studies Schools in Australia are made up of staff that come from a range of backgrounds with a huge range of experience, skills, and qualifications. To work in most library schools you will need to have qualifications that are at least at the level of the course you are teaching in. As all ALIA accredited library schools in Australia teach Master's level subjects, a Master's qualification is viewed as the base qualification.

What's a typical day for a university library educator:

At Charles Sturt University (CSU) the Library School operates in a totally distance education environment. This impacts the work that an educator does. Lecturers who teach face-to-face will work on building content for lectures to be delivered face-to-face. Lecturers who teach in the Distance Environment such as CSU still work on building lectures each week but also work on how to deliver this content online that engages the student using an online teaching platform that involves forums, wikis, blogs, youtube, skype, googledocs, and other web 2.0 technologies. Building content online is challenge and quite different to building content for a two-hour face-to-face lecture or tutorial.

There has been a push at many universities in Australia for new staff to have PhDs. Librarianship is not an area where there are a lot of people with PhDs, and most Library School managers (Heads of School) which have Librarianship and Information Management courses understand this about our profession. People from the

profession without a PhD are employed as an Associate lecturer or lecturer level. Generally it is made pretty clear to people once they start that there are two paths to follow when working in a university.

The first path is as a researcher where a PhD is viewed as the base qualification. Many people in librarianship schools Australia who don't have a PhD are asked to join a PhD program once they start. PhDs can take about 6 years to complete part-time and are a required qualification for promotion to Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor.

The second path is as a teaching/profession based specialist that engages heavily with the profession rather than spending time researching. This person may serve on ALIA committees or be involved in library consultative work.

Lecturers do four basic tasks: research, teaching, administration, and professional engagement. Teaching is a very important part of a lecturer's work and will take up a significant part of the week, teaching, marking, building content, and keeping up-to-date. Lecturers, depending on their role within the university, may spend at least one full day sometimes two days per week on research-only related activities. Administration is a big part of the job with paperwork always needing to be completed for research, students, and teaching. Professional engagement is vital for a lecturer as this ensures that they are up-to-date with their teaching and research and contributing back to the profession.

Making the jump from professional librarian to teaching/researching in

librarianship can be tough as they are incredibly different occupations with a very different skill base. Most who work in library schools have spent significant periods of time in libraries before moving to the dark side of librarianship. This experience will help you though with the move to academia.

With a big percentage of academics in library school getting ready to retire in the next few years we will see quite a few positions come up. To get a head start on other applicants it would help to have a Master's, have completed some casual work as marker or tutor (most schools are always willing to hear from people who are interested in marking or other forms of casual work), presented at a couple of conferences and written an article or two, and have thought about starting a PhD.

As a lecturer you do feel you are doing something great for the profession. You will work long hours, but you can't beat the feeling of that one special day every year – Graduation Day. Watching the next generation of librarians receive their degrees, knowing you played an important part in shaping their education and learning is one of the most satisfying feelings you will have in this profession.

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Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence opportunity for QUT Teacher-Librarianship educator

Dr Hilary Hughes, Coordinator/Lecturer for the Master of Education (Teacher-Librarianship) course at QUT will spend 4 months later this year as Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence in Denver, Colorado. This exciting opportunity is co-hosted by the University of Colorado Denver, Community College of Denver and Metropolitan State College of Denver.

The Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program gives U.S. institutions the opportunity to invite scholars with special expertise to their campuses for a semester. In Denver, Hilary will advance a project which aims to improve the academic success of both international students and traditionally underserved students. As Scholar-in-Residence, she will collaborate with academics and LIS practitioners in developing information services and academic learning programs, with a view to promoting inclusive reflective approaches to using information and teaching for

culturally diverse contexts. These initiatives will build on the findings and recommendations of Hilary's PhD thesis (2009) and Professor Christine Bruce's (2008) work on informed learning.

During her time in the US Hilary also looks forward to participating in a variety of learning and teaching opportunities. The Fulbright program has a strong commitment to community outreach and Hilary will also establish links with Denver public schools, school libraries, the Lions Club, and the Women's Press Club.

Hilary is one of 25 Australians to be recognised as a Fulbright Scholar in 2010. She encourages other LIS professionals and educators to consider Fulbright opportunities. Applications for Fulbright Scholarships in 2011 open on 1 June. Visit www.fulbright.com.au.

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