

Thinking about going overseas or just arrived in Australia and seeking work?

Reciprocal arrangements: UK and US qualified library and information professionals

Ever thought about travelling overseas to United States or United Kingdom and wanted to work as a professional librarian but don't know how to go about it? ALIA has reciprocal recognition agreements with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the American Library Association (ALA) / Canadian Library Association (CLA). Under reciprocal arrangements with the UK, USA/Canada holders of graduate level qualifications accredited by these associations are eligible for ALIA Associate (librarian) membership and may apply for positions advertised at librarian level in Australia. IFLA provide a mailing list for librarians and information professionals seeking employment. To subscribe to the list or post a vacancy yourself, go to libjobs@infoserv.inist.fr. There is a list of overseas employment agencies on the ALIA website <http://www.alia.org.au/employment/links.html>.

Other overseas qualifications

Qualifications from other countries may also be recognised by ALIA for work at librarian and library technician level in Australia. To be considered for work as a librarian in Australia, you need to hold, as a minimum, a qualification equivalent to an Australian Bachelor degree. For library technician work, you need to hold a Diploma or other qualification in library and information studies equivalent to a Level 5 qualification in the Australian Qualifications Framework. As the standards body, ALIA is responsible for assessing the content of your qualification together with your work experience to determine your readiness to work in the Australian library and information sector and an assessment by VETASSESS will be required to establish your current equivalent qualification level.

For further information on qualification recognition, contact education@alia.org.au or 02 6215 8222.

The Vietnam connection

RMIT University Library, through RMIT International University Vietnam, has been an active partner in the development of several educational facilities supporting teaching and learning in other institutions in Vietnam. The projects, all with a library focus, have included project management to develop new learning resource centres in established universities and a number of projects with the National Library of Vietnam including the translation of DDC 14th abridged and the recent introduction of cataloguing in publication. A number of RMIT



Huynh Ton Nu Minh Nguyet at the Saigon South Campus

University Library staff have provided time and expertise to the projects and have worked in Vietnam for periods of weeks and months depending upon the scope of the project.

Bernadene Sward, Manager Design and Social Context Liaison Team, has visited Vietnam at least a dozen times over the past five years, providing advice and support to projects with the National Library and consulting or working with the learning centres in Can Tho, Hue, Da Nang and particularly Thai Nguyen. The projects have been funded by the *Atlantic Philanthropies* education program and have helped the Vietnamese library community to grow and prosper as they build capacity and strengthen student-centred learning and teaching practice.

For Bernadene the experience has been a mix of pleasure (working with people who are engaged and eager to learn) and long days and nights of hard work in a complex and stimulating environment. The experience has taught her that while we may all aspire to global standards, the proof is in their application.

"I can recall many meetings and workshops where international partners would expound the benefits of the Western system and in the end, after exhibiting patience and resolve, the local participants would politely respond 'we will do it our way'," Bernadene says.

"In my view it's easy to talk about the way our system works but not so easy to craft a model that incorporates a way of working which will build upon the complex array of cultural, socio-economic and political agendas and imperatives - that's been my lesson and daily guide."

This year a number of our staff members have been engaged directly with RMIT International University Vietnam librarians in a staff development project designed to align services to those of a modern Western university. The project is jointly funded by RMIT University, Melbourne and RMIT Vietnam, which has modern and growing campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. As these are English language only it is possible for us to engage relatively easily.

The Equipping Librarians project includes face-to-face workshops in Vietnam, visits by several Vietnam staff to Melbourne, online discussions and informal coaching. The percentage of staff with professional library qualifications is higher at our Vietnam campuses than in Australia, but many courses studied lack significant input on customer service, reference, and information literacy so we have focussed on these areas. We have really enjoyed engaging with colleagues in another country and sharing cultural information and professional practice.

We hope to maintain the momentum at the conclusion of this one-year project by having buddy relationships and occasional online forum discussions. An interesting aspect of this project has been the need to make explicit the knowledge which has become intuitive for us and to attempt to shine a light on the probable assumptions and expectations which lie behind the predominantly Western university executives' view of the library and its services.

It is a privilege to be able to work overseas and it does enrich and alter our professional perspective.

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