



# School of Library and Information Studies



University of Alberta

## U of A SLIS Placement Survey, 1997

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The School is pleased to report the results of its survey of 1997 graduates, our 10th annual placement survey. In 1997, 31 students graduated with the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree from the University of Alberta, of whom 25 responded to this survey (an 81 per cent response rate, which is similar to the year before). The 1997 survey was conducted in June and July 1998, a little over a year after the students had graduated.

### Summary

The rate of placement of MLIS graduates from the University of Alberta has remained relatively stable over the past five years, with 22 out of 25 graduates (88%) from 1997 reporting employment in library and information services at the time of the survey. Almost all respondents obtained their first job within six months of graduation. As in earlier years, however, only half of those working full-time held permanent positions. Also as in earlier years, two-thirds of responding graduates worked in one or more temporary positions at some point since graduation.

The most frequent employers of currently employed 1997 graduates were post-secondary libraries, accounting for almost half of all placements, with another third employed by public libraries and government libraries. For the first time in the history of the annual placement survey, a significant number of responding graduates found employment in the United States.

The most common way in which graduates learned about available positions was through electronic listservs, followed by word-of-mouth and the School's job board.

### Placement

The rate of placement of MLIS graduates from the University of Alberta has remained relatively stable over the past five years. Among 1997 responding graduates, 22 (88%) were employed in library and information services at the time of the survey, and the remaining three respondents had also been so employed earlier in the year. Among 1995 and 1996 graduates, the figures were 80% and 82%.

Of the 22 respondents currently employed in library and information services, the majority (91%) held full-time positions; however, only half of those were permanent. This is similar to the pattern among 1996 graduates, when full-time positions accounted for 82% of placements but again only about half were permanent. Nine of the 19 full-time placements obtained by 1997 graduates were temporary positions ranging from three months to one year.

The survey indicates that 16 of the 25 respondents (64%) had held one or more temporary positions at some point since graduation, including a few who had as many as three such positions. This pattern is similar to that of previous years.

<b>Current Placement Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Full-time permanent	11	50%
Full-time temporary	9	41
Part-time temporary	2	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Employment Sector**

The most frequent employers of currently employed 1997 graduates were post-secondary libraries (46% of respondents), with government libraries and public libraries together supplying another third. These three sectors accounted for 82% of all 1997 positions. This contrasts with a year earlier when it was only half of all 1996 positions.

Graduates from 1997 described their positions with the following job titles: electronic services/reference librarian; public access trainer; library media specialist; assistant archivist; medical librarian; humanities reference librarian; library coordinator; collections librarian; serials librarian; and instructional librarian.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Post-secondary libraries	10	46%
Public and regional libraries	4	18
Government libraries	4	18
Other special libraries	2	10
School libraries	1	4
Archives	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Location**

Unlike previous years, Alberta did not provide the majority of placements for 1997 graduates: only 11 out of 25 respondents (44%). This was a marked decrease from the previous year, when the proportion of graduates staying in Alberta was 78%. Other work locations were Ontario (3) and British Columbia (1). For the first time

in the history of the annual placement surveys, a significant number of graduates found employment in the United States, with 10 respondents (40%) indicating that they were currently employed there.

Almost all of the graduates employed in Alberta worked in Edmonton (9 out of 11), with one in Calgary and one in Lethbridge. This proportion is similar to 1996, when 18 out of 21 graduates employed in Alberta worked in Edmonton.

### Salaries

Five graduates working full-time in Canada reported annual salaries ranging from \$29,500 to \$43,000, with a median of \$31,000. Six graduates in contract positions earned between \$6.25 per hour and \$22.00 per hour, with a median of \$16.50. The 10 graduates with full-time positions in the United States reported annual salaries ranging from \$22,000 US to \$40,000 US, with a median of \$31,500 US.

### Job Search

Of the 10 graduates reporting how they learned about available positions in 1997, electronic listservs were the primary method, accounting for four positions. Word-of-mouth and general networking ranked second in frequency, followed by the SLIS job board. In 1996, word-of-mouth was the most frequently mentioned way in which graduates learned about jobs, and second was newspaper advertisements.

<b>Source of Information</b>	<b>Number of Jobs (Current &amp; First Positions)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Listservs	4	29%
Word-of-mouth	3	22
SLIS job board	2	14
Internet	1	7
Library association joblines	1	7
Internal position	1	7
Referral	1	7
National Library of Canada	1	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

Two-thirds of graduates in 1997 found their first position within three months of graduation, and another five (20%) within six months. Only three people took longer than six months to find positions.

<b>Position Secured</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Position</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Before entering program	6	24%	-	
Before graduation	4	16	1	8%
Within 3 months of graduation	7	28	1	8
3 to 6 months after graduation	5	20	4	34
More than 6 months after graduation	3	12	6	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	25	100%	12	100%

### Future Prospects

All survey respondents were asked whether they were seeking more satisfactory employment, regardless of their current work situation. Ten of the 25 graduates (40%) said yes, nine still looking for a permanent full-time position and one wanting part-time work. This is down substantially from 1996, when 18 out of 28 graduates (64%) indicated they were still looking for satisfactory employment.

### Library Work Experience

Twenty-three out of 25 respondents (92%) said they had obtained library work experience either before or during their MLIS program, and only two respondents left the program with neither (8%). More 1997 graduates worked before the MLIS program than did 1996 graduates (60% versus 39%). There was a similar shift in the proportion of 1997 graduates who worked during the program (88% versus 68%).

<b>Library Experience*</b>	<b>Number</b> <b>(n=25)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Either before or during MLIS	23	92%
- before	15	60
- during	22	88
Neither before nor during MLIS	2	8%

\* excluding for-credit field placements and practicums

## **Demographics**

Of the 25 graduates who responded to the survey, 20 were female and 5 were male, 80% and 20%, respectively. This ratio was similar to the composition of the whole student body in 1997, with 83% female students and 17% male students (in 1996, the student body was 74% female and 26% male).

The age pattern of all 1997 graduates was comparable to the norm for recent years, which has ranged between 29 and 34 years of age at graduation. In 1997, the typical graduate was 32; in 1996, 33.

Academic patterns among degrees earned prior to the MLIS by 1997 graduates in the survey were consistent with earlier years: two-thirds of respondents reported holding an undergraduate degree while the remaining one-third also had a graduate degree or postgraduate diploma. Ten of the 1997 graduates held the BA, four the BEd, one the BSc, six the MA, one the MSc, one the MEd, and one the LLB.

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