



School of Library and Information Studies



University of Alberta

U of A SLIS Placement Survey, 1998

The School is pleased to report the results of its survey of 1998 SLIS graduates, our 11th annual placement survey. In 1998, 34 students graduated with the Master of Library and Information Studies degree from the University of Alberta, 28 of whom responded to this survey (an 82% percent response rate, which is similar to previous years). The 1998 survey was conducted in June and July 1999, a little over a year after most of the students had graduated.

Summary

The rate of placement of MLIS graduates from the University of Alberta has remained relatively stable over the past six years, with 23 out of 28 graduates (82%) from 1998 reporting employment in library and information services at the time of the survey. Almost all respondents obtained their first job within three months of graduation, a shorter time by some three months than the year before. However, as in earlier years, only half of all placements were full-time permanent positions. Also as in earlier years, close to two-thirds of responding graduates worked in one or more temporary positions since graduation.

The most frequent employers of currently employed 1998 graduates were academic libraries (one-third) and public and regional libraries (one-third), with another one-fifth employed by special libraries. In contrast to last year, the majority of graduates found placements in Alberta, with three-quarters of graduates remaining in the province.

The most common way in which graduates learned about available positions was through word-of-mouth (networking), followed by the School's job board, the Foothills Library Association Web page, and two electronic listservs, JEROME-L and LIBJOB.

Placement

The SLIS graduate placement rate has remained relatively constant over the past six years. Among 1998 responding graduates, 23 (82%) were employed in library and information services at the time of the survey, one had been so employed earlier in the year, one was self-employed in another field, one was still seeking employment, and two were not actively looking for work.

Of the 23 respondents currently employed in library and information services, almost all (87%) held full-time positions; however, only 60% of those full-time positions were permanent. This is very similar to the pattern among 1997 graduates, when full-time positions accounted for 91% of placements but only half were permanent. Eight of the 20 full-time placements obtained by 1998 graduates were temporary positions ranging from five months to two years.

Current Placement Status	Number	Percentage
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Full-time permanent	12	52%
Full-time temporary	8	35%
Part-time permanent	1	4%
Part-time perm/temp	1	4%
Part-time temporary*	1	4%
TOTAL	23	100%

* this respondent held two part-time temporary positions

The survey indicates that 17 of all 28 respondents (61%) had held one or more temporary positions at some point since graduation, including a few who had as many as three such positions. This is similar to the pattern of the previous year.

Employment Sector

The most frequent employers of employed 1998 graduates were academic libraries (35%) and public and regional libraries (35%). Special libraries supplied another one-fifth of all placements. These three sectors accounted for 92% of all 1998 positions. In 1997, these three sectors supplied 82% of all positions.

Sector	Number	Percentage
Academic libraries	8	35%
Public and regional libraries	8	35%
Special libraries	5	22%
Library consortia	1	4%
Computer industry	1	4%
TOTAL	23	100%

The 1998 graduates described their positions with the following job titles: Reference Librarian/Assistant Librarian; Collections/Reference Librarian; Public Services Librarian; Assistant Librarian/Children's Librarian; Access Service Coordinator; Branch Supervisor; Manager; Head Librarian; Director; Acting Internet Librarian; Librarian/Webmaster; Support Analyst; Project Librarian; Academic Researcher; Associate Fellow; Librarian; Professional Librarian; Librarian/Archivist; Library Assistant; and Library Technician.

Location

Alberta provided the majority of placements for 1998 graduates (21 out of 28 respondents or 75%). This was a marked increase from 1997, when the proportion of graduates staying in Alberta was 44% while 40% went to the United States. At the same time, this year's preference for Alberta marked a return to the pattern in earlier years: 78% of 1996 graduates remained in Alberta. Other work locations reported by 1998 graduates were British Columbia (1), Saskatchewan (1), Manitoba (1), Ontario (1), China (1), United Arab Emirates (1), and the United States (1).

The majority of graduates employed in Alberta worked in Edmonton (14 out of 21 or 67%), with others in Barhead (1), Calgary (1), Canmore (1), Elk Point (1), Lethbridge (1), St. Paul (1), and Sherwood Park (1). In 1997, 9 out of 11 graduates (82%) employed in Alberta were in Edmonton.

Salaries

Twelve graduates with full-time positions reported annual salaries ranging from \$29,900 to \$43,000, with a median of \$31,500, up \$500 from the previous year. Full-time and part-time hourly wages reported by six respondents ranged from \$10.50 to \$22.00, with a median of \$15.00.

Job Search

Of the 21 graduates reporting how they learned about available positions in 1998, word-of-mouth (networking) was the primary method, mentioned 38% of the time. Internal positions ranked second in frequency, followed closely by the SLIS job board, the Foothills Library Association Web page, and two electronic listservs, JEROME-L and LIBJOB. In 1997, listservs and word-of-mouth were the two most frequent ways in which graduates learned about available positions.

Source of Information	Number of Jobs (Current & First Positions)	Percentage
Word-of-mouth (networking)	12	38%
Internal position	6	19%
SLIS job board	5	16%

Foothills Library Association Web page	4	13%
Listservs (JEROME-L 3, LIBJOB 1)	4	13%
Periodical advertisement	1	3%
TOTAL	32	100%

Some 60% of graduates in 1998 found their first position before graduation, and 92% obtained their first position within 3 months of graduation. This is faster than in 1997, when only 40% had positions before graduation and 68% within 3 months. Only 2 of the 1998 graduates took longer than three months to find positions.

Position Secured	First Position		Current Position	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Before entering program	3	13%	1	8%
Before graduation	11	46%	1	8%
Within 3 months of graduation	8	33%	2	17%
3 to 6 months after graduation	1	4%	3	25%
More than 6 months after graduation	1	4%	5	42%
TOTAL	24	100%	12	100%

Future Prospects

All survey respondents were asked whether they were seeking more satisfactory employment, regardless of their current work situation. Twelve of the 28 graduates (43%) said yes, with 10 looking for permanent full-time positions, one wanting part-time work, and one seeking any type of position. This is similar to 1997, when 10 out of 25 graduates (40%) indicated they were still looking for satisfactory employment, but it is down considerably from 1996 at 64%.

Library Work Experience

Twenty-six out of 28 respondents (93%) said they had obtained library work experience either before or during their MLIS program, and only two left the program with no library work experience. This proportion was identical to 1997. However, there were marked differences in when their experience was obtained: more 1998 graduates worked before their MLIS program (82% versus 60%), while fewer 1998 graduates worked during it

(68% versus 88%). Library work experience gained through program-related practicums and field placements are not included in these figures.

Library Work Experience*	Number	Percentage
Either before or during MLIS	26	93%
- before (23)		
- during (19)		
Neither before nor during MLIS	2	7%
TOTAL	28	100%

* excluding for-credit field placements and practicums

Demographics

Of the 28 graduates who responded to the survey, 25 were female and 3 were male, 89% and 11%, respectively. This ratio was similar to all graduating students in 1998, with 29 female students (85%) and 5 male students (15%).

The average age for the graduating class of 1998 was comparable to the norm for recent years, which has ranged between 29 and 34 years of age at graduation. In 1998, the average age of a graduate was 31; in 1997, 32.

Academic patterns for degrees earned prior to the MLIS for 1998 survey respondents were as follows: 19 of the 1998 graduates held the BA, six the BEd, one the BSc, one the BScPT, and one the BCom. This is different from the previous year, when one-third of the respondents had obtained a graduate degree or postgraduate diploma before entering the MLIS program.

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