



# School of Library and Information Studies



University of Alberta

## U of A SLIS Employment Survey, 1999

The School is pleased to report the results of its survey of 1999 SLIS graduates, our 12<sup>th</sup> annual employment survey. In 1999, 35 students graduated with the Master of Library and Information Studies degree from the University of Alberta, 29 of whom responded to this survey (an 83% response rate, which is similar to previous years). The 1999 survey was conducted in June and July 2000, approximately a year after graduation.

### Summary

The rate of placement of MLIS graduates from the University of Alberta has remained relatively stable over the past seven years, with 25 out of 29 graduates (86%) from 1999 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, but only 60% of the current placements were for full-time permanent positions. Over half of responding graduates said they had worked in one or more temporary positions since graduation.

The most frequent employers were academic libraries and special libraries, supplying one-third each of current placements, with another 20% found in public and regional libraries. Just over half of the graduates were employed in Alberta, mostly in Edmonton. The most common ways in which graduates learned about their positions were through word-of-mouth (networking), followed by the SLIS job board, listservs, and periodical advertisements.

Ninety percent of all responding graduates said they had obtained paid library work experience either before or during their MLIS program.

### Placement

The rate of placement of University of Alberta MLIS graduates has remained relatively constant over the past seven years. Among responding 1999 graduates, 86% were employed in library and information services at the time of the survey (25 out of 29), while one had been employed earlier in the year, one had just started seeking employment, one was employed in another field, and one was not actively looking for work. The placement rate for 1998 graduates was similar at 82%.

Of the 25 responding graduates currently employed in library and information services, 24 held full-time positions but only 15 of these were permanent (63%). This was similar to the pattern among 1998 graduates when 60% of full-time positions were permanent.

The 9 temporary full-time placements held at the time of the survey by 1999 graduates ranged from two months to three years. Fifteen graduates said they had worked in one or more temporary positions at some point since graduation, including one respondent who had held four such positions.

Current Placement Status	Number	Percentage
Full-time permanent*	15	60%
Full-time temporary	9	36%
Part-time permanent	1	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	25	100%

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\* one respondent held both a full-time permanent position and a part-time permanent position (only the former is recorded above)

## Employment Sector

Academic libraries and special libraries were the most frequent employers of 1999 graduates, supplying one-third each of current placements, with another 20% found in public and regional libraries. These three sectors accounted for 84% of current placements, a proportion similar to 1998 placements for these sectors (92%).

Sector	Number	Percentage
Academic libraries	8	32%
Special libraries	8	32%
Public and regional libraries	5	20%
School libraries	2	8%
Information industry	2	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>

The 1999 graduates reported an enormous range of responsibilities and task levels at the time of the survey: Assistant Librarian; Associate Reference Librarian; Associate Staff; Automation Services Librarian; Business Reference Librarian; Cataloguer (3); Children's Librarian/Assistant Branch Manager; Content Manager; Coordinator of Bibliographic Instruction; Information Specialist; IT Quality Assistant/Company Webmaster; Librarian (2); Library Assistant; Library Technician; Manager Private Records and FOIP; Media Librarian II; Reference and Bibliographic Instruction Librarian; Reference Librarian; Regionalization Research Officer; Support Analyst; Technical Services Librarian; and Youth Services Librarian.

## Location

Alberta provided just over half of the current placements for 1999 graduates (56%); in contrast, 70% of 1998 graduates stayed in the Province. Other work locations reported by 1999 graduates were Ontario (2), Nova Scotia (1), the United States (5), China (1), Cyprus (1), and Guyana (1).

Most of the Alberta placements were in Edmonton (11 out of 14 graduates or 79%), with two in Calgary and one in Red Deer. Only 63% of the 1998 graduates employed in Alberta had stayed in Edmonton.

## Salaries

Eight of the graduates with full-time positions in Canada reported annual salaries ranging from \$18,000 to \$60,000, with a median of \$35,500, up \$4,000 from the previous year. Five respondents with full-time positions in the United States reported annual salaries ranging from \$30,900 US to \$43,389 US, with a median of \$32,600 US.

## Job Search

Of the 25 graduates in 1999 who reported how they learned about their positions, word-of-mouth (networking) was the primary method, mentioned 14% of the time. The SLIS job board ranked a close second in frequency, followed by listservs, periodical advertisements, Edmonton Public Library job postings, and the Foothills Library Association Web site. In 1998, word-of-mouth, internal positions, and the SLIS job board were the most frequent ways in which graduates learned about their positions.

Source of Information	Number of Jobs	Percentage
	(Current & First Positions)	
Word-of-mouth (networking)	6	14%
SLIS job board	5	12%
Listservs	4	9%
Periodical advertisements	4	9%
Edmonton Public Library job postings	3	7%
Foothills Library Association Web site	3	7%
Other*	18	42%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Internal position (2); Internet (2); University of Toronto Faculty of Information Studies Web site (2); American Library Association Annual Conference Job Fair (1); Career and Placement Services (1); Edmonton Journal (1); Edmonton Public Schools (1); Employer's job board (1); Employment agency (1); Hire-A-Student (1); Job boards (1); Manitoba Library Association (1); Practicum placement (1); University of Alberta campus posting (1); University of Alberta Web site (1)

Some 77% of 1999 graduates found their first position before graduation, 81% within 3 months of graduation, and 96% within 6 months of graduation. The 1998 graduates took somewhat longer, with only 60% employed before graduation but 92% within 3 months of graduation and 96% within 6 months.

Position Secured	First Position		Current Position	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Before entering program	7	27%	---	---
Before graduation	13	50%	1	6%
Within 3 months of graduation	1	4%	2	12%
3 to 6 months after graduation	4	15%	6	35%
More than 6 months after graduation	1	4%	8	47%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Future Prospects

All survey respondents were asked about job satisfaction with their current work situation. Approximately half (14 out of 29 graduates) said they were still seeking more satisfactory employment, of whom 12 wanted permanent full-time positions, one wanted either full-time or part-time, and one wanted only part-time. This is similar to 1998 graduates, when 43% indicated they were still looking for more satisfactory employment.

### Library Work Experience

Ninety percent of all responding graduates (26 out of 29) said they had obtained library work experience either before or during their MLIS program; only three left the program with no library work experience. This was similar to the pattern

for 1998 graduates, of whom 93% reported library work experience either before or during their MLIS program. However, fewer 1999 graduates worked before their MLIS program than did 1998 graduates (55% versus 82%), while more of them worked during it than did 1998 graduates (83% versus 68%).

<b>Library Work Experience*</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Either before or during MLIS - before (16 of 29 or 55%) - during (24 of 29 or 83%)	26	90%
Neither before nor during MLIS	3	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* excluding for-credit field placements and practicums

## **Demographics**

Of the 29 graduates who responded to the survey, 22 were female and 7 were male, 76% and 24% respectively, a ratio similar to all graduating students in 1999; in 1998, graduates were 85% female and 15% male. The average age for the graduating class of 1999 was comparable to the norm for recent years, which has ranged between 29 and 34 years of age at graduation. In 1999, the average age of a graduate was just over 34 years; in 1998, it was 31. Academic patterns for degrees earned prior to the MLIS for 1999 survey respondents were as follows: 14 of the 1999 graduates held the BA, four the BEd, two the BSc, two the BCom, five the MA, one the MMus, and one the PhD. This pattern is similar to previous survey years, although in 1998 no responding graduates had obtained a graduate degree or postgraduate diploma before entering the MLIS program.

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