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Subject Benchmark Statement

Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)

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Contents

How can I use this document?

This is the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management. It defines the academic standards that can be expected of a graduate, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies, and describes the nature of the subject.

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) sets out the Expectations and Core Practices that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet. Providers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland must also meet the Common Practices in the Quality Code.

The Quality Assurance Agency for UK Higher Education (QAA) has also published a set of Advice and Guidance, divided into 12 themes, and a number of other resources that support the mandatory part of the Quality Code. Subject Benchmark Statements sit alongside these resources to help providers develop courses and refine curricula but are not part of the regulated requirements for higher education providers in the UK.

This Statement is intended to support you if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of courses of study in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management or related subjects
- a prospective student thinking about studying this subject, or a current student of the subject, to find out what may be involved
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of a graduate in this subject.

Subject Benchmark Statements provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the course but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in course design within a framework agreed by the subject community.

It may be helpful to refer to the relevant Advice and Guidance when using this Statement.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in QAA's Glossary.

About the Statement

This Subject Benchmark Statement refers to bachelor's degrees with honours, postgraduate certificates, postgraduate diplomas and master's degrees in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.[1]

It has been produced by a group of subject specialists drawn from, and acting on behalf of, the subject community. The process is facilitated by QAA, as is the full consultation with the wider academic community and stakeholder groups each Statement goes through.

In order to ensure the continuing currency of Subject Benchmark Statements, QAA initiates regular reviews of their content, five years after first publication, and every seven years subsequently, or in response to significant changes in the discipline.

Relationship to legislation

Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example by funding bodies. This Statement does not interpret legislation, nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. The responsibility for academic standards remains with the higher education provider who awards the degree.

Higher education providers may need to consider other reference points in addition to this Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing courses. These may include requirements set out by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and industry or employer expectations.

Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Subject Benchmark Statement where appropriate. Individual higher education providers will decide how they use this information.

Summary of changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement (2015)

This version of the Statement forms its fourth edition, following initial publication of the Subject Benchmark Statement in 2000 and review and revision in 2007 and 2015.

This latest version of the Statement is the consequence of the revision to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education which was published in 2018. It has been revised to update references to the Quality Code and other minor changes within the sector. Changes have been made by QAA and confirmed by a member of the most recent review group.

There have been minor revisions to the subject-specific content, namely:

- in 4.2, updating the reference document to the *Student Employability Profiles: A guide for higher education practitioners*
- adding a new URL in footnote 6
- noting the change of name for HEA in footnote 7.

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[1] Bachelor's degrees are at level 6 (master's at level 7) in *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and level 10 (master's at level 11) in *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland*, as published in The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies

1   Introduction

1.1   Degree courses in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management aim to equip students with a range of knowledge, understanding and skills at a level that prepares them for professional career opportunities in jobs broadly concerned with the management of information. Students acquire an understanding of the theoretical principles of the subject area that guides their career development in whichever area or areas of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management (henceforth denoted as 'the subject area') they choose for their career.

1.2   Students following courses in this subject area develop competencies related to identifying, creating, acquiring, organising, retrieving, preserving, curating and disseminating information. Degree course titles vary according to the particular subject focus within the subject area, or the cognate fields that may form part of the degree course. The subject is taught at foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.[2]

1.3   Professional and vocational relevance is an important aspect of these courses, which generally include exposure to current professional practice and/or a period of in-service job-specific training as an integral part of the curriculum. Courses are likely to be accredited by relevant professional bodies such as The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)[3] and the Archives and Records Association (ARA).[4] This Subject Benchmark Statement does not by itself confer professional accreditation or approval as it is equally applicable to all courses in the subject area. It is expected that graduates undertake continuing professional development throughout their careers.

1.4   The National Occupational Standards for information and library services, archives services and records management may also be useful for gaining an understanding of the occupational standards associated with these professions.[5]

Defining principles

1.5   The purposes of this Subject Benchmark Statement are to enable and assist:

- students to understand what the subject entails and to choose a course appropriate for their personal career plans
- employers and other stakeholders to understand what knowledge and skills may be expected from graduates in the subjects that use this Subject Benchmark Statement
- higher education providers in designing, developing and approving new courses in the subject area and related degrees
- providers of such courses who wish to develop or amend their courses.

1.6   The Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management sets out threshold and typical standards for bachelor's degrees with honours, postgraduate certificates, postgraduate diplomas and master's degrees. The Statement represents general expectations about academic standards within

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[2] *Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement*, available at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/supporting-resources
[3] For details of accreditation procedures and requirements, see the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals: www.cilip.org.uk
[4] For details of accreditation procedures and requirements, see the Archives and Records Association: www.archives.org.uk
[5] National Occupational Standards: www.ukstandards.org.uk

the subject. It is intended to encourage collaborative relationships between the areas of interest to which the Statement applies and with other subjects as appropriate.

1.7   This Subject Benchmark Statement focuses on courses where the subject area is the main area of study. The structure of individual degree courses is determined by the higher education provider. Consequently, the point in the course at which subject knowledge and skills are achieved may vary, though the substance of the course as a whole reflects this Statement. The subject area may also be studied in combination with other subjects, for example, business, communication studies, computer science, cultural heritage and data management. The choice of areas to cover in combined and joint courses varies from provider to provider, depending on factors such as the subject area with which the main subject is combined, the concerns of relevant employers, and the research profile and specialist interests of teaching staff.

1.8   Notwithstanding the above, all courses which include the study of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management, whether on their own or in combination with another subject, enable students to develop a critical understanding of:

- the value of knowledge, information and records to individuals, organisations, groups and society
- the wider context in which information professionals operate
- the processes, institutions, and infrastructure associated with the creation, acquisition, management, organisation, dissemination, access to curation, storage and retrieval of knowledge and information in all media and formats
- theories relating to the usage and management of individual and aggregated information objects in all media and formats
- theories and frameworks that may be used to design information, records and archives services and systems that are fit for purpose and sustainable
- theories and practices relating to the capture, managing and sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge
- information governance and legislative and regulatory compliance, including such aspects as ethics, copyright, risk management and accountability
- how to identify and meet the (actual and potential) needs of individuals, communities and organisations, in relation to learning
- reading and reader development, information literacy, and other related lifelong learning requirements
- relevant technologies underpinning the design of, and in support of, information, records and archives services or systems
- how to conduct research, evaluation and service audit, and how to appraise the evidence from such studies
- what may be achieved by different quantitative and qualitative methodologies and techniques, and when a particular methodology or technique is most appropriately used.

1.9   This Subject Benchmark Statement specifies only the teaching to be provided and the learning required from the student. There are no prescriptions as to the provider's arrangements for delivery of subject matter, and cooperation between subjects and departments within and between subject boundaries is generally regarded as beneficial.

2 Nature and extent of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management

2.1 Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management ('the subject area') are closely related subjects which together encompass the principles and practice of knowledge representation, knowledge organisation and communication. We live in an 'information society' and professionals in this subject work to ensure that people can easily and securely find, use and evaluate information, be it a document, book or web page that they need for work, study or leisure. This requires understanding of how such information objects are created and may be represented, how knowledge is generated, how people disseminate and share information, and why information objects need to be carefully managed for possible retrieval now and in the future.

2.2 Central to the subject area is knowledge which may be explicitly recorded as information objects in electronic or physical documentary form, including unstructured and structured data and records; knowledge may also be tacit. Documents may be generated by many different types of creator, in different media and formats, and require management through their lifecycle (creation/use/destruction or archiving). For the content in the documents to be used, there have to be communication processes and infrastructure. For the communication processes to work effectively, information needs to be collected or captured, analysed, classified, organised, stored, disseminated and retrieved. For information objects to be usable for as long as they may be required, appropriate, preservation systems need to be in operation. Professional practitioners in the subject area understand the theoretical principles and concepts that underpin these activities and apply them in practice.

2.3 Theory and practice combine in the management of individual and aggregated documents. Operations on individual information objects include lifecycle management, representation, and recovery of their semantic content. These require an appreciation of how human beings categorise objects and activities of interest to them, and how conceptual knowledge structures such as classification schemata, taxonomies, thesauri and ontologies may then be developed. Techniques for abstracting and secondary processing, such as through structural tagging and digitisation, are also involved. Conceptual knowledge structures also facilitate the physical and logical ordering of collections of information objects, recording their properties by means of cataloguing and metadata construction, complemented by other curatorial functions conducted by practitioners in the subject, including capture, selection, acquisition, disposal, storage, display, preservation, conservation and digitisation.

2.4 Information service provision provides settings and systems to empower people to use information effectively, with their information needs appropriately met. The setting may be public or private (including organisational or educational), at home or on the move, local, national or international, physical or virtual. Effective information provision requires the identification of the information needs and behaviour of the target audience, including users and non-users, and understanding of the wider cultural, historical, educational and organisational context of the information. It involves the principles and practices that reflect and contribute to information literacy, such as information retrieval, data mining, information brokerage, website and portal design, and maintenance. Information architecture provides the framework, within which information products, services and systems are created, analysed, evaluated, moderated and manipulated in order to meet the requirements of user, customer and client communities. In order to provide such services information professionals require strong interpersonal skills and an understanding of ethical practice and the wider cultural, societal and policy context in which they operate.

2.5   Practitioners operate within a wide variety of organisational and community environments. The ethical, legal, policy, resource and governance issues that attend their application within any given environment contribute significantly to these disciplines, which are also informed by the standards and codes of practice of the relevant professional bodies. Compliance with the requirements of these bodies is a key determinant of course design for courses seeking professional accreditation. Responsibility and authority for such accreditation rests mainly with CILIP and the ARA. Some courses may also be accredited by professional bodies associated with cognate disciplines, such as BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

3　Subject knowledge, understanding and application

3.1　The following is an outline of the broad areas of knowledge that characterise librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management. The emphasis placed on each area will depend on the focus of particular courses.

Creating, capturing and organising knowledge and information

- Recognition of the benefits of appropriately creating, maintaining and using information for societies, groups, organisations and individuals.
- Understanding of concepts and practices appropriate to the creation and organisation of a range of evidential, knowledge and information resources in all media and formats, for example published and unpublished materials, structured and unstructured data, records and archives, and including tacit knowledge.
- Understanding of relevant frameworks and standards that support systems and processes applied in the life cycle management of knowledge, information, records and archives.
- The ability to create, use and develop systems that assist in organising knowledge, information, records and archives, for example in creation, capture, control, organisation, indexing, retrieval and tracking.
- The ability to identify and apply appropriate processes for managing information resources, for example appraisal, acquisition, selection, classification, indexing and cataloguing.
- The ability to use appropriate tools for organising, describing, retrieving, providing access to and exploiting resources, for example use of thesauri, taxonomies, metadata, databases, data mining, data analytics and bibliometrics.

Managing and exploiting knowledge and information

- Appreciation of the functions, cultures and contexts within which organisations, groups and individuals that produce, manage and disseminate knowledge, information, records and archives and the role of the information professional in relation to these.
- The ability to devise and apply tools and techniques to support and maintain knowledge, information, records and archives for as long as required (including, for example, curation, digitisation and preservation, interoperability and linked data) and evaluate for disposal based on format, relevance, usage and legal requirements.
- The ability to devise and apply tools and techniques to make tacit and explicit knowledge available (including, for example, after action reviews, peer assists, communities of practice) and to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration within and between organisations.
- Understanding human information behaviour and information seeking, sense-making processes, of individuals and groups, and the theoretical frameworks used to describe, explain and predict such behaviour and processes.
- Using knowledge obtained about information needs and gaps to design creative solutions to meet the information needs of defined and potential user communities, for example academics, general public, business, government and local communities and individuals.

Managing and developing collections

- The ability to plan, deliver and maintain a course of acquisition and selection of knowledge and information resources that meet organisational objectives, and

- community needs and expectations.
- The ability to develop, arrange, display, manage, preserve and review collections of information objects and other resources for all defined and potential users.
- The ability to negotiate appropriately with those providing, licensing or supplying resources, for example donors, depositors, publishers, suppliers and aggregators of electronic resources.
- Understanding of conceptual, practical and cultural approaches to developing collections of resources and of the processes of planning, resources selection, acquisition, appraisal, selection, and de-selection.
- Understanding of practical advantages and disadvantages of collaborative collection activities and initiatives.

Using information technology

- The ability to model information requirements, information flows, and business processes in such a way that allows effective and efficient translation into the design of information systems and services.
- Understanding the principles of database design, object-oriented systems, conceptual data models (for example the Resource Description Framework) and the Semantic Web, design of web services and social media.
- Understanding how the principles of knowledge and information creation and organisation are applied within systems and to systems design.
- The ability to assess technology trends and their implications for the workplace, including the identification of training needs.
- Understanding information retrieval methods for different types of content, information retrieval methods based on logic and probability, data mining, knowledge discovery systems and knowledge capture systems, and systems to support decision-making and problem-solving, for example, case-based reasoning.
- Understanding of the preservation implications of digital materials (digitised and born-digital) and the ability to design or specify appropriate systems for digital preservation.
- Understanding of systems methodologies and computer systems lifecycles, appreciation of the issues around systems development, implementation and maintenance, including human-computer interaction, usability and user experience.
- Understanding of the design and development of web-based documents, e-publishing and document engineering.
- Understanding of the principles of bibliometrics, scientometrics and webometrics, and how such quantitative methods may be used for research and evaluation.

Ethics, information governance and compliance

- Awareness of the cultural, ethical, economic, legal, political, security and social issues surrounding the use of knowledge, information, records and archives by individuals and groups in organisations and society, at local, regional, national and international levels.
- Understanding of policies and regulations regarding processes and procedures for information creation, capture, maintenance and use, retaining a balance between information access and information security.
- Understanding of the legal and regulatory framework within which information professionals operate in relation to, for example, intellectual property, copyright, licensing, patents, information risk, freedom of information, data protection, information ownership and accountability.
- The ability to develop, identify and apply appropriate policies and procedures to the creation, capture, storage, dissemination, retrieval and destruction of information to

ensure the mitigation of risk and compliance with regulatory frameworks.

- Awareness of the professional context of knowledge, information, archives and records management, including standards and codes of ethics and practice, professional bodies and relevant government agencies.
- The ability to consider and address the above in a dynamic library, information, knowledge, records and archives environment, for example with regard to emerging developments related to open data and big data.

Providing information solutions

- Understanding of the functions and activities of information, knowledge, records and archives specialists in mediating access to information and knowledge for particular communities in specific contexts.
- Familiarity with the purposes, operations, facilities, services and interactions of libraries, information and record centres, archives and knowledge repositories in all sectors.
- The ability to identify, access, evaluate and use such resources in different contexts.
- Understanding human information behaviour, information culture, information-seeking processes and how these influence the design and presentation of information retrieval systems.
- Understanding of the components of effective enquiry and search services.
- The ability to design, develop and deliver information products, systems and services to match customer requirements in conformity with appropriate quality standards, (including, for example, interoperability and linked data, website architecture protocols, and usability requirements).
- The ability to develop innovative information services and systems that require additional specialist expertise (for example, research data management, research support using bibliometric/webometric expertise, and collaboration on digitisation).
- The ability to instruct and guide users to assist them to develop their search and retrieval capabilities.

Reading, literacies and learning

- The ability to support all stakeholders appropriately in gaining optimum experience of their contact with books, knowledge, information, data, records and archives.
- The ability to identify and make appropriate interventions to help different types of information users and service recipients become information literate and receive suitable support in their development as readers and users of information in all types of formats (text, numeric, audio and visual).
- Understanding of the concept of information literacy and its application in education, the workplace and society.
- Understanding and promoting literacy, reading, and reader development and their application in recreation, education, the workplace and society.
- Understanding other literacies (digital, archival, visual and so on), and their development and application in recreation, education, the workplace and society, and the role of the information professional in developing such literacies.
- Understanding of the role of information professionals and information agencies in developing information literacy, promoting reading for education and recreation, and supporting learning.
- Understanding the role of information professionals in developing user understanding of their responsibilities in using information and records, instilling appropriate understanding of the significance and compliance requirements of copyright, data protection, freedom of information and so on.

4   Skills

4.1   Students graduating in the subject area demonstrate a significant proportion of the abilities and competencies identified in each area listed in this section. Those graduating at master's level are expected to demonstrate higher levels of skills, especially of leadership, critical thinking, research and analysis, alongside the characteristics outlined in the relevant qualification frameworks and supporting documents.

Knowledge acquisition and study

- Appreciating and applying professional and ethical frameworks and requirements, for example, for continuing professional development and lifelong learning.
- Applying subject knowledge, skills and understanding critically and effectively to real-world situations.
- Working with and for others through collaborative and organisational learning, the presentation of ideas and information and the collective negotiation of solutions.
- Handling information and argument in a critical and self-reflective manner.
- Gathering, sifting and organising material independently and critically, evaluating its significance.
- Critically selecting, analysing and evaluating information, in order to make effective decisions and solve problems.
- Managing one's own learning, including an awareness of personal learning styles, reflecting on learning and practice.

Research skills

- Generating research questions and testable hypotheses, understanding general strategies for designing a research or evaluation study.
- Applying appropriate research ethics frameworks.
- Understanding how to collect and analyse both numerical data (quantitative research) and data that is primarily non-numeric, that is mostly textual (qualitative research), including data collected via the internet, and social network analysis.
- Appraising and synthesising existing evidence, relating this to the needs of policy and practice, and identifying gaps in the evidence.
- Using research techniques to undertake a project for personal, client or organisational needs, from start to finish, that may include a systematic review of the literature, statistical analysis, integration of qualitative and quantitative data analyses, service evaluation, impact assessment, as well as various methods of disseminating and sharing the results of the research, including writing for publication for academic and professional audiences.

Leadership and advocacy

- Understanding of the organisational context of service operations, including the significance of organisational mission, strategy, systems, structures and cultures.
- Contributing to professional policy and practice, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Providing active leadership by inspiring and managing oneself and others, whether they are inside or outside the organisation.
- Promoting the positive value of library, information, knowledge, records and archives services across the organisation and society.
- Influencing key stakeholders.

- Developing, and implementing creative, innovative and enterprising approaches and solutions.

Management, planning and strategy

- Applying the concepts, principles and techniques of strategic management to direct and lead service organisations.
- Applying the concepts, principles and techniques underpinning key aspects of planning, managing, leading and reviewing services, including financial management, human resource management, project management, marketing, service quality management, customer relationship management and change management.
- Planning and aligning the contribution to the parent organisation's vision and objectives.
- Using personal planning and management skills, taking responsibility for reflective learning, time management, problem-solving, and decision-making.
- Applying interpersonal skills to ensure effective teamwork and collaboration.
- Planning, undertaking and recording ongoing personal, professional and workforce development.

Customer focus, service design and promotion

- Identifying user community needs, shaping library, information, knowledge, records and archives services to meet those needs, and developing appropriate methods to inform customers of accessibility, value and benefit of the resources and services.
- Communicating, interacting and consulting effectively with user and non-user communities, cultural, educational and organisational stakeholders.
- Marketing services effectively from initial assessment of requirements, through design and promotion of services, to evaluating and communicating outcomes and impacts.
- Engaging and interacting with customers in various ways, including the appropriate use of social media.
- Developing, sustaining and reviewing service delivery through collaborative partnerships.

Communication and IT

- Communicating in a clear, systematic and concise way for a range of different purposes and audiences, using written and oral presentation skills.
- Interacting, networking and negotiating effectively and impartially with individuals and groups, for example for customer service, supplier liaison, IT project development, and team work.
- Using a range of project management techniques, that may include creative problem-solving, soft systems analysis, and formal training needs analysis to liaise with service users and technical designers in design and implementation of systems.
- Assisting in specification of the design, development and evaluation of IT requirements.
- Explaining technical concepts and procedures to all levels of staff.
- Using and adapting, where appropriate, electronic information resources, systems, software and web-based services (for example, databases, catalogues, search engines, web browsers and portals).
- Creating, manipulating and formatting documents and databases using appropriate software.

- Evaluating and presenting information in numerical and statistical form using appropriate software.
- Using a range of electronic communication and collaboration tools, including email, discussion lists, social media and virtual environments.

4.2   For an in-depth analysis of how graduates may be required to apply and develop knowledge and skills in the workplace, students and academic staff may wish to consult the *Student Employability Profiles: A guide for higher education practitioners*,[6] prepared by the Higher Education Academy and the Council for Industry and Higher Education.[7]

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[6] *Student Employability Profiles: A guide for higher education practitioners* , available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/student-employability-profiles

[7] In 2018, the Higher Education Academy merged with the Leadership Foundation and the Equality Challenge Unit to form Advance HE: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/. In 2013, the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) was replaced by National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB): www.ncub.co.uk.

5   Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning

5.1   Teaching and learning may be delivered in both physical and virtual environments or through blended learning. Given the importance of the development of practical and technical skills for librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management for graduates across all areas of professional practice, providers integrate skills-based learning activities within their courses.

5.2   Because of the nature of the subject matter, higher education providers place particular emphasis on inquiry and evidence-based practice and foster a high standard of ability to conduct research. An advanced level is expected in the quality of literature searching carried out by students, and in the accuracy of their bibliographic citations.

5.3   Depending upon the mode of study, learning and teaching may include:

- use of computers in, for example, internet searching, web page design and database creation; and access to online hosts, online public access catalogues, digitised archives and electronic journals, e-books and social media
- intensive use of libraries and/or archives, viewed as more than the standard resource used by all students, and will be used wherever possible as a controlled environment laboratory where students can undertake a variety of practical work or projects, and gain experience of working with specific resources, tools and collections
- a range of self-guided student-centred learning resources, including paper-based materials and IT-based resources, such as tutorial modules, chat rooms, social media, discussion groups, message boards, wikis and websites
- guided and directed reading within the specialist literature (including books, journals and electronic resources) to help establish, develop and reinforce subject knowledge and understanding.

Assessment

5.4   Students take part in the kinds of activities that provide them with guidance and feedback, and help them to learn how to assess themselves as future professionals. They are encouraged to reflect, evaluate and provide feedback on their learning, and, as a result, become more effective, independent, confident, self-directed and active learners.

5.5   Students experience a range of assessment methods that reflect the range of learning objectives, in relation both to the specialisms that may be taught in their courses and to generic skills. Evidence on which the assessment of student achievement is based may be selected from the following methods to suit the needs of individual courses:

- planning, carrying out and reporting of project work, including some incorporating a research element, to assess planning, research and presentation skills
- an extended personal research project, involving primary data collection and/or extensive interrogation and synthesis of secondary data including quantitative and/or qualitative analysis, assessed for evidence of knowledge deployment, reasoning, argument, and presentation
- essays, papers, reports and other assignments of various types and lengths, to assess knowledge and understanding of a topic
- evidence and reports gathered during practical placements, laboratory or workplace assignments

- posters and oral presentations to assess presentation and communication skills.
- collaborative project work to evidence team-working skills
- the creation and use of databases, websites and social media outputs
- portfolios of work to demonstrate abilities in the selection and presentation of material to specified criteria
- examinations and class tests that may require written work and/or multiple choice questions to assess knowledge base, understanding and analytical skills.

Learning resources

5.6 Higher education providers have resources to deliver the curriculum which are sufficiently up to date, readily available with easy and convenient access, well managed and effectively deployed, including:

- archive and audiovisual materials, published literature in both printed and digital formats, learning support materials, social media tools, specialist equipment and appropriate IT for traditional on-site students, part-time students and those studying by distance learning
- online learning facilities, including access to online resources, assessments and guidance using a virtual learning environment
- access to relevant published and unpublished literature in a variety of formats and to IT facilities and appropriate primary sources.

Practical knowledge/experience/awareness of subject-specific software and other resources

5.7 Given the vocational nature of the subjects to which this Statement relates, students are expected to make more intensive use of a range of information and communications technologies, and of libraries and/or archives, than is expected of students in most other subjects. Students develop practical knowledge, experience, and awareness of relevant subject-specific software and hardware resources, such as library management software, content management systems and digitisation equipment. It is the responsibility of the higher education provider to determine the most appropriate resources for a particular course, or courses, and to ensure access.

Exposure to practical environments

5.8 Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management are vocational subjects. Courses are designed to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and understanding to enter professional practice in any aspect of the subjects encompassed by this Statement. It is important that students are exposed to current professional practice and that they are encouraged to integrate their learning experiences in the practical environment with the formal knowledge gained through their studies.

5.9 Exposure to professional practice may be obtained by a variety of means, such as work placements, projects, research, visits, and talks by visiting practitioners.

5.10 A key outcome for all courses is that they foster an appreciation of the value of continuing professional development among graduates, and student awareness of relevant learned societies and statutory and professional bodies with encouragement to participate in relevant activities within and/or outside their place of study. Students are encouraged to develop a positive and reflective attitude to learning throughout life and helped to develop their capacity to plan for their future educational and career development.

6 Benchmark standards for honours degrees

Benchmark standards are defined at threshold and typical levels.

Threshold standard

6.1   All students graduating with an honours degree in the subjects of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management have achieved this level of knowledge, understanding and ability.

6.2   Students who reach this standard are characterised by their ability to:

- demonstrate a systematic understanding of the main body of knowledge for their course of study
- understand and apply essential concepts, principles and practices of the subject in the context of well-defined scenarios, showing judgement in the selection and application of processes, materials and techniques
- produce work involving problem identification and the analysis, design and development of a system, process or procedure, with appropriate documentation. The work shows some problem-solving and evaluation skills, drawing on some supporting evidence, and demonstrates a requisite understanding of the need for quality
- demonstrate transferable skills and an ability to work under guidance and as a team member
- understand the contribution of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management to the educational, cultural, organisational and socioeconomic well-being of their user communities
- identify appropriate practices within a professional and ethical framework and understand the need for continuing professional development
- manage their own learning and make use of scholarly, professional and official literature and other data sources appropriate to the field of study
- discuss applications based upon the body of knowledge.

Typical standard

6.3   This indicates the standard of achievement expected of the majority of students graduating with an honours degree in the subjects of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.

6.4   Students who reach this standard are characterised by their ability to:

- demonstrate a sound understanding of the main areas of the body of knowledge within their course of study, and to exercise critical judgement across a range of issues
- critically analyse and apply a range of concepts, principles and practices of the subject in an appropriate manner, showing effective judgement in the selection and use of processes, materials and techniques
- initiate and carry out work or projects involving problem identification, problem-solving and analysis and evaluation skills drawing upon supporting evidence
- analyse, design and develop systems, processes or procedures which are complex, and fit for purpose
- exercise critical evaluation and review of both their own work and the work of others
- apply appropriate practices within a professional and ethical framework and identify mechanisms for continuing professional development and lifelong learning

- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
- engage with cultural, educational and organisational user communities, in order to identify their needs and thereby provide the most relevant services for them
- demonstrate transferable skills necessary for employment, such as the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision-making skills and a commitment to further personal professional development.

6.5   While the above benchmark standards are defined for threshold and typical performance levels, it is nevertheless expected that courses in librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management provide opportunities for students of the highest calibre to achieve their full potential. Such students are creative and innovative in their application of the principles covered in the curriculum and are able to contribute significantly to the development of the subject in the future.

7 Benchmark standards for master's degrees

Threshold standard

7.1   This indicates the standard of achievement expected of all students graduating with a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, or a master's degree in the subjects of librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management.[8]

7.2   Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and new insights. Such insights may require awareness of developments across all areas of the subject area, beyond the specialist area of interest that may form the focus of a particular course
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship, together with the ability to demonstrate use of appropriate research philosophies and methodologies
- originality in the application of knowledge
- a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and evaluate evidence for enhanced professional practice
- an ability to complete through independent study a substantial critical, empirical research/work-based project, significant review or case study that may also contribute to research in the subject or the solution of a work-related problem
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the subject area
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. This may require awareness of methodologies in cognate subjects.

Typical standard

7.3   This indicates the standard of achievement expected of the majority of students graduating with a master's degree in the subject area.

7.4   Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction, creativity and originality
- demonstrate skills in leadership and advocacy, with informed awareness of dynamic internal and external factors that may influence these
- exploit tools and processes for effective global networking
- challenge existing practice and justify proposed changes.

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[8] Postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas are also delivered at level 7 on *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and Level 11 on *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Qualifications in Scotland*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks

Appendix: Membership of the benchmarking and review groups for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management

Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management (2019)

The fourth edition, published in 2019, was revised by QAA to align the content with the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published in 2018. Proposed revisions were checked and verified by a member of the review group of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management from 2015.

Dr Christine Urquhart	Aberystwyth University
Dr Andy Smith	QAA

Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management (2015)

Details provided below are as published in the third edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement.

Professor Graham Matthews (Chair)	Loughborough University
Dr Jessica Bates	University of Ulster
Dr Briony Birdi	University of Sheffield
Simon Edwards	The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Professor Emeritus Dick Hartley	Manchester Metropolitan University
Professor Phillipa Levy	Higher Education Academy
Jo Rowley	Queen Margaret University, SCONUL
Professor Elizabeth Shepherd	FARMER
Dr Christine Urquhart	Aberystwyth University
QAA officers	
Brigitte Stockton	QAA
Dr David Gale	QAA
Dan Murch	QAA
Employer representative	
Karen McFarlane	UK Information Matters and The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Professional, statutory and regulatory body representative	
Caroline Williams	Archives and Records Association
Student reader	
Bethany Sinclair-Giardini	Aberystwyth University

Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship, and Information Management (2007)

Details provided below are as published in the second edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship and Information Management.

Wendy Buckle	Cranfield University, Defence College of Management and Technology
Professor Sheila Corrall	University of Sheffield
Professor P G B Enser (Chair)	University of Brighton
M Huckle	The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Dr Gerry MacAllister	Higher Education Academy Subject Centre, Information and Computer Sciences
Dr E Shepherd	University College London
Heather Taylor (minute taker)	The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

Membership of the reference group for the review of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship and Information Management (2007)

Details provided below are as published in the second edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship and Information Management.

Jacqueline Chelin	University of the West of England, Bristol
Barry George	Bedfordshire County Council
Professor Dick Hartley	Manchester Metropolitan University
Mark McCree	Lincolnshire Libraries
Karen McFarlane	Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)
Kate Millin	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Julia Newton	London Borough of Greenwich
Professor Charles Oppenheim	Loughborough University
Wendy Small	Eversheds LLP
Yvonne Warren	Doncaster Library and Information Services

Membership of the original benchmarking group for librarianship and information management (2000)

Details provided below are as published in the original Subject Benchmark Statement for Librarianship and Information Management.

Ms S Andretta	University of North London
Miss M E Burke	Manchester Metropolitan University
Professor P G B Enser	University of Brighton
Mr W Foster	University of Central England in Birmingham
Mrs C E Hare	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Ms S Hornby	Manchester Metropolitan University
Mr I M Johnson	The Robert Gordon University
Mr M A Lowe	University of Wales, Aberystwyth
Dr G Matthews	University of Central England in Birmingham
Professor I C McIlwaine	University College London, University of London
Mrs E M Milner	University of North London
Professor C Oppenheim	Loughborough University

Mr G Rowland	Liverpool John Moores University
Miss E Shepherd	University College London, University of London
Professor R C Usherwood	University of Sheffield
Ms M Huckle (Secretary)	The Library Association