Division IV, Education and Training Section

"International Guidelines for Equivalency and reciprocity of Qualifications for LIS Professionals. Draft guidance document for transparency, equivalency and recognition of qualifications" by Terry Weech and Anna Maria Tammaro on behalf of IFLA's Education and Training Section. December 30, 2009.

IFLA recognizes that accredition of LIS programs and recognition of qualifications need a framework of principles, standards and procedures to: 1) assure transparency, 2) stimulate cooperation between LIS schools and 3) foster international collaboration for quality assurance of LIS programs.
In those countries with formal accrediting and credentialing programs, as US, Canada and UK it might be enough to develop measures that the approved LIS programs in each country would accept as equivalent. But in many other parts of the world where the first professional degree is less than a Master's degree, the acceptance would be adjusted accordingly. In all countries it is important to foster an international dimension and a global approach to the LIS profession with comparable standards worlwide

Scope
To provide a basis for establishing principles, standards and procedures for determining the equivalency of degrees granted and the reciprocity for recognition of LIS job qualifications.

Objectives
To determine acceptable criteria, standards and procedures for establishing equivalency and reciprocity of LIS Professional Qualifications.

To determine best measures of quality assurance of LIS educational programs in the judgement of LIS professionals and LIS faculty worldwide.

To assure transparency and assist employers and LIS education programs to assess the equivalency of earned degrees and certificates internationally

Principles
IFLA takes the lead in establishing a quality model for library education programs to follow to achieve transparency and facilitate recognition of quality of programs of study.

The LIS profession requires education at university level and has a recognised body of knowledge.

Subject benchmarking and diversity of LIS educational programmes are encouraged, adapting to different context.

Standards
The educational program should follow the Guidelines for Professional Library/Information Educational Programs (http://www.ifla.org/en/publications/guidelines-for-professional-libraryinformation-educational-programs-2000). In particular:

Curriculum
- The curriculum should be stated clearly in a publicly available formal document, describing the aims, prerequisites, content, learning outcomes, and assessment methods for each course within the programme. An English translation should be made available in the Web.
- LIS educational programmes are offered at the technical level, at the graduate and professional level, and at the research and doctoral level.
- The LIS schools offering the programme must be accredited to offer degrees by the govern or other accrediting agency. The programme should meet such educational and/or professional accreditation requirements as are the norm in the country.
- LIS Programmes should refer to educational policy statements issued by government or professional associations that identify important knowledge and learning outcomes components.
- The Programmes should cover the knowledge areas indicated at point 8 Core elements of the IFLA Guidelines
- A process of formal curriculum review should take place on a regular basis. This review should be informed by input from employers, practitioners and professional associations, as well as students and faculty.

Learning and teaching
- Methods of teaching and assessment should be designed to develop or enhance students' interpersonal communication skills, ability to work in teams, and time and task management skills. At the professional level, emphasis should be placed on developing students' analytical and problem-solving skills.
- The academic (teaching) staff should be sufficient to accomplish programme objectives. The qualification of each full-time faculty member should include research-based competence in the designated teaching areas, technological proficiency, effectiveness in teaching, a sustained record of scholarship, and active participation in appropriate professional associations.
- Review and Promotion Policies. The educational programme should have stated policies and standards for appointment, review and promotion of full-time faculty equivalent to those in comparable units. All full-time faculty should hold degrees in relevant subjects from recognised academic institutions. There should be a clearly stated policy for the continuing education and professional development of the academic teaching staff, and for reviewing the currency and relevance of courses and teaching methods.
- Instructional resources and facilities should be adequate to the minimum standard defined at point 27,28,29,30 of the Guidelines

Learning outcomes
- Students should have advisory assistance in constructing a coherent programme of study to meet career aspirations consistent with the educational programme's mission, goals and objectives. Evaluation of student achievement should be provided on a consistent and equitable basis.
- A clear statement of the requirements and learning objectives of the educational programme should appear in a formal document that is available to students and prospective students.
- On completion of requirements and assessment of learning outcomes, students should be awarded a degree, diploma, or certificate suitable to their level of study.
- A benchmarking system could be established by sharing best experiences of LIS schools to assess quality through a peer review process

Procedures to evaluate LIS programs
The oversight of library associations could be especially important for the recognition of the profession, and also for facilitating equivalency of qualifications at the international level.

When accrediting a LIS program the following categories will be evaluated:
- the stated learning objectives and the evidence of their achievements
- design and content of the curriculum
- Assessment of student learning outcomes through exams and/or employee evaluations
- Resources in terms of funding, staff numbers and IT/Library facilities
- Number of students, drop - out rates, recruitment
- Effectiveness of teachers, staff qualifications
- Responsiveness to learner backgrounds and preferences, pedagogy
- Support for learning
- Student evaluation of the learning experience

(Indicators based on: Report Survey on quality assurance models in Library and Information Science (LIS) programs by Annamaria Tammaro, on behalf of IFLA's Education and Training Section. 2005)

In the absence of a library association, and for the endorsement of an international dimension in the education, IFLA will develop an International Resource Center for relevant information on LIS education for the diffusion of best practices and subject becnhmarking. This will be based on the following tools, continuosly updated:
- *World Guide to Library, Archive and Information Science Education*
- *Guidelines for Professional Library/Information Educational Programs*