



**SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENT
IN
LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION SCIENCE**

**Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
University Grants Commission
Sri Lanka**

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FOREWORD

The work in connection with the development of Subject Benchmark Statements was begun in August 2003 as a part of the overall quality assurance framework that supports academic standards and the furtherance and dissemination of good practice in Universities in Sri Lanka.

Subject Benchmark Statements will support and promote quality and standards by:

- Providing universities with a common and explicit reference point for internal and external programme approval and review;
- Guiding and promoting curriculum development, especially in new departments and new universities, and in other institutions of higher education;
- Evolving over time to take account of changes and innovations that reflect subject development and new expectations;
- Providing an authoritative and widely recognized statement of expectations of what is expected of a graduate in a specific (or designated) subject area in a form readily accessible to students, employers and others with a stake in higher education;
- Providing a clear and transparent reference point for External Examiners;
- Assisting international comparison and competitiveness of higher education awards and student achievement.

SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENT

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Subject Benchmark Statement – Scope and Purposes

- Benchmarking of academic standard is an essential and integral component of quality assurance in the university system. Subject benchmarking statement provides guidelines for the development of curricula, maintaining the highest standards of degree programmes and internal and external review of different study programmes offered within a particular subject field in a particular department of study.
- They also represent general expectations about the standards for the award of the degree at a given level and indicate the attributes and capabilities of graduates possessing such qualifications.
- Subject benchmark statement provides academic staff and institution with a framework for developing and specifying the intended learning outcomes of the programme and provide external reviewers a source of reference among others, for making judgment about the appropriateness of academic standards within the institution in pursuit of internal quality assurance.
- It also provides professional and statutory bodies, potential employers, with academic standards and other performance standards expected of a graduate.
- One of the most important aspects of benchmark statement is that it provides information to the general public at large about the standards of the higher education award.
- Benchmark statement reflects the academic, social and economic aspects and implications of the subject in a given period of time.
- Benchmark statement provides potential employers in public as well as private sector with academic and other performance standards of a quality graduate.
- They will also provide prospective students with a clear understanding of the academic and other performance levels they are going to achieve after the completion of a degree programme.

- This subject benchmark statement refers to the subject Library and Information Science (LIS) taught in the Social Science study stream of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Bachelors degree level.
- The subject benchmark statement for Library and Information Science has been undertaken as an activity of the Quality Assurance (QA) project of CVCD/UGC by a subject benchmarking team.

1.2 Level of Teaching

At present, Library and Information Science is taught as a subject for the BA degree programme only in the University of Kelaniya. Library and Information Science is taught at two levels in this University, i.e. a 3 year general degree programme which offer LIS as a subject and a 4 year special degree programme. The university offers postgraduate and diploma level courses as well.

As an external degree program, B.A. (General) Degree course with LIS as a subject is also offered at the University of Kelaniya.

Furthermore, Post-Graduate Degrees and Foundation level courses may be offered in some other universities as well as in the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences.

1.3 Nature and Extent of the Subject

1. Librarianship is that branch of knowledge which is dealing with the recognition, collection, organization, preservation, evaluation and utilization of information objects in print, electronic or any other physical documentary form. Information science investigates the properties and behavior of information, the forces governing the flow of information, and the means of processing information for optimum use and accessibility and usability. These two are closely related disciplinary fields which together encompass the principles and practice of knowledge representation, organization and communication in society, articulated by the generation, dissemination, exploitation and evaluation of information.
2. With the Government's stated objective of making Sri Lanka the knowledge hub of South Asia, the discipline of Library and Information Science assumes greater significance and relevance, as it embodies the role of facilitating the flow of recorded information across the society.

As the social institution primarily responsible for assimilating the domain of knowledge recorded as information objects in print, electronic and other physical means, the library system in the country could play a highly significant contribution in social, economic and cultural development. However, this objective has not fully realized yet due to the underdeveloped nature of libraries in the country, for which one of the major reasons being the inadequacy of properly trained man power. As such, LIS education at all applicable levels assumes greater significance.

3. Degree programmes in the subject field of Library and Information Science are designed to provide a fundamental education to prepare students for professional posts in library, information, knowledge, or archives management and cognate fields. The broad aim of these programmes is to equip students with a range of knowledge, understanding and skills at a level that will enable them to take advantage of career opportunities in a variety of jobs broadly concerned with the management of information. It is also aimed at giving them an exposure to the historical and theoretical context of the subjects covered.
4. LIS education embodies a combination of theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective it deals with the generation and organization of knowledge including the aspects of classification, cataloguing and indexing, the broader concept of management and its branches as applied to librarianship etc. From a practical perspective, it deals with the operations carried out in developing and maintaining library information services and products. Acquisition and provision of access to individual information objects, representation and recovery of their semantic content and properties through the means of classification, cataloguing, indexing, abstracting and structural tagging and digitization are some of such operations. It also includes the facilitation of physical and logical order of such objects complemented by curatorial functions embodied in librarianship, archives administration and records management, including selection, acquisition, disposal, storage, display, preservation and conservation.
5. Apart from the organization and provision of information objects, the modern information service includes the promotion of information literacy, practice of librarianship within an ethical and legal framework and compliance to standards and codes of practice of the relevant professional bodies.

6. The benchmark statement in Library and Information Science must also take into account the scope and prospects of employability of its graduates. In order to enhance the career prospects of LIS graduates it is essential to provide them with sufficient practical exposure. This could be achieved through a mix of practical components embedded in the curricula supplemented by mandatory in-service training at recognised libraries and information centres etc. As intermediaries handling the flow of information across the society, LIS professionals are required to possess multi-lingual skills with the desirable fluency in Sinhala/Tamil and English languages. Therefore, course work should incorporate learning and evaluating strategies to make sure that the learners are provided with sufficient opportunities to enhance their linguistic and presentation skills. Similarly, LIS graduates should be harnessed with the skills to understand the formation of knowledge, disciplines and subjects including traditional/indigenous knowledge.
7. With the rapid developments taking place in information and communication technologies, the nature and functions of LIS profession are also in a stage of transition thereby making it essential for them to develop competencies in ICT. As such, LIS courses should contain sufficient ICT components with emphasis on information management.
8. LIS graduates are expected to choose their career paths in different types of operating environments such as academic, special and public library service or specialized information management / brokerage situations etc. Therefore, it is required to provide a flexible course structure to ensure the delivery of knowledge and skills at an optimum level of resource utilization enabling graduates to offer their services with strong self confidence. This could be achieved through the provision of mandatory and optional course unit system embodied with sufficient in-service training.

2. SUBJECT AIMS

The main aims of a degree programme in Library and Information Science or including it as a subject in a degree programme are;

- To provide knowledge and understanding in the principles of Library and Information Science and current developments in Library and Information Science and their application appropriate to the type of degree concerned: a general degree; and special degree;

- The ability to recognize and evaluate the role of libraries and information centres created as social institutions by people to serve specific social purposes.
- To make students recognize core values of library profession in contrast to other professions including professional ethics.
- To provide students with analytical and technical skills and an ability to develop and maintain library and information systems and services to suit varying contexts and needs;
- To develop in students a range of transferable skills that will be of value in career enhancement;
- To stimulate students intellectually to appreciate and evaluate the universe of knowledge through the study of Library and Information Science and lead them to apply their understanding to solve a range of problems in a variety of contexts;

3. SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

To achieve the aims of a degree programme in Library and Information Science / teaching Library and Information Science as a subject for a degree programme, it should include the following broad areas of knowledge. The emphasis placed on each area will depend on the disciplinary focus of particular programme:

- Survey of the world of information/universe of knowledge
 - Variety, nature and characteristics of information objects and knowledge in all its forms and formats
 - Needs of the consumers of information
 - Traditional/ indigenous knowledge
- Planning, development and maintenance of library information services and resources
 - Acquisition / access of information objects to suit different contexts
 - Design and use of systems for information storage and retrieval: classification, cataloguing including metadata provision, indexing and abstracting, repackaging of print, non-print, and digital resources
 - Organization and management of information and knowledge

- Management of Libraries and Information Centres
 - General principles of management as applied to the organization of library and information services
 - Introduction to management techniques and tools
 - Resource sharing and library networking; Library consortia
 - Conservation and preservation of information objects: print, non-print and electronic
 - Library standards and quality control
- User behavior, information seeking process and information retrieval
 - Different types of libraries, their characteristics, philosophy and mission
- Library and information services
 - Introduction to reference and information services
 - Role of libraries and information centres as intermediaries in the communication of information
 - Library advocacy and policy planning to empower the provision of Library and information services
 - Information literacy and user support ; empowerment of library users
- Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for information and knowledge management
 - Basics of ICT as applicable in LIS environment
 - Introduction to open-source and proprietary library management and digital library development software
 - Use of social media for self and community development
 - Research and development issues in digital libraries, including collection development and digitization; mixed mode holdings; access strategies and interfaces
- Issues related to information environment
 - Cultural, ethical, economical, legal, political and social issues
 - Current practices and trends

The areas described above form the basis of theoretical, practical, technical and professional knowledge and exposure which any graduate who wishes to enter into Library and information science career should possess.

It is anticipated that graduates in LIS are given adequate training opportunities in the form of practical work and specialized assignments, in-service training , library visits, field trips etc. to inculcate professional skills to some desirable degree, so that they could be absorbed into appropriate career positions with minimum additional training and guidance.

The programmes should also include;

- Specialization (in depth study) of certain areas such as school librarianship, special librarianship, information profession, archival science etc. required by those who want to be professionals in those areas. They should be provided with opportunities, to follow such courses at the appropriate stages of the degree programme.
- Methods of collecting information and data and processing them with critical analysis and assessment, enabling comprehensive understanding of the subject.
- Guidelines wherever possible for the applicability of Library and Information Science to professional and career development of students.

4. SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

There is a range of skills and attitudes which graduate students in Library and Information Science will acquire during the programme of study. These are;

4.1. Generic Skills

The expected Generic skills are sub divided into the following headings

- Intellectual skills
- Managerial skills
- Communication and language skills
- Information and Communication Technology skills

4.1.1. Intellectual Skills

- Cognitive skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis
- Ability to easily learn new technology
- Research skills

4.1.2. Managerial Skills

- Organizational skills
- Leadership skills
- Public relations skills
- Marketing skills
- Interpersonal and team work skills

- Controlling skills
- Ability to embrace change

4.1.3. Communication and Language Skills

- Language skills
- Communication skills
- Presentation and report preparation skills

4.1.4. Information and Communication Technology Skills

- Integrate and utilize ICT in library and information environments
- Trouble shooting skills
- Web site development and maintenance skills
- Use of open-source and / or proprietary software systems for library management, digital libraries and information services
- Maintenance of library software, hardware and network systems

4.2. Subject Specific Skills

- Technical skills in basic library operations: classification, cataloguing, indexing, abstracting and documentation etc.
- Information and knowledge management skills
- Information literacy skills
- Understanding customer-needs skills
- Awareness of trends and developments in information environment

4.3. Attitudes

- Proactive approach to professional work
- Commitment to ethical and professional practices and be a lifelong learner
- Compassion towards library users
- Enthusiasm to innovate and find best practices
- Motivation for team work and collaboration
- Commitment and responsibility towards society

5. TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

A diversity of teaching, learning and assessment strategies must be employed to realize the main objectives of the programme of study.

The students graduating from the course of study should be competent in a range of knowledge and skills relevant to the major areas of Library and Information Science.

The teaching learning methodology should be designed to encourage the progressive acquisition of subject knowledge and skills through conventional means as well as through independent and self directed study.

A balanced selection of the following teaching and learning methods can be used:

- Courses designed to impart both theoretical and practical knowledge
- Conventional teaching methods and the use of audio-visuals and multimedia
- Seminars, workshops, tutorials
- Assignments / individual and group projects / problem based learning
- Practical work, library visits and field trips, library training and professional placement, and internship
- Directed reading within the specialist literature
- Role play
- Virtual and mobile learning platforms
- Research work, dissertation and publications

Lectures convey subject knowledge, provide core themes and explanation of difficult concepts and make way for students to work independently. Lectures should encourage and enable students to develop skills in listening and comprehension, selective note taking, to appreciate how information is structured and presented.

Practical work including library training should form a substantial part of the programme since LIS is mostly a practical and professional subject. Practical work should be designed to provide opportunities for acquisition of subject specific technical and transferable skills as well as generic skills needed to succeed in career, re-enforcing what is taught in the curriculum. The overall objective should be to develop competencies required in their chosen field with relevant hands-on experience.

Seminars, workshops, tutorials and oral presentations provide opportunities for interactive learning and allow students to explore the current development of the subject in depth. They also provide opportunities for development of interpersonal skills such as retrieval of information, problem solving, communication and team working.

A significant proportion of student study time should be set for independent study, assignments and self directed study, individually or within groups. This will give them training in locating, selecting, evaluating, synthesizing, comprehending, using and presenting information available in all forms and formats.

In-service training / internship / professional placement play a vital role for students in Library and Information Science and enable them to acquire a variety of skills needed for their personal and career development.

6. ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

A variety of assessment technique may be employed to test subject knowledge and skills acquisition. They also provide valuable information to the general public and employers about the performances and quality of the graduates.

Assessment method should be designed to test the learning outcomes of the subject/courses and may include some or all of the following modes;

- Close book examination
- Practical examination
- Compilation of bibliographies, indexes, abstracts, databases etc
- Project reports
- Field work reports
- Work experience reports/ internship reports/ professional placement reports
- House tests (mid- term quick tests)
- *Viva-voce* examination

A combination of continuous assessment and end course assessment may be employed.

7. MAINTAINING STANDARDS

It is anticipated that programme designers monitor the progress of the programme and student performance, to achieve the goals set for standards of achievements, by taking following measures.

- Involvement of external examiners/ peer reviewers
- Periodic subject review
- Interaction between departmental resource persons and professional bodies and employers.

8. STUDENTS ATTAINMENT AND BENCHMARK LEVEL (STANDARD)

The standards required for the subject benchmark describes the transferable and core skills and subject specific expected skills of graduates in Library and Information Science. The standards required by students have been divided into two groups in accordance with the nature of the degree programme conducted in Universities in Sri Lanka.

The threshold level describes the minimum standard of acceptable knowledge and the level of skills to be attained by anyone following Library and Information Science as a subject for the Bachelors degree programme.

Good honours level students are expected to show excellent performances with achievement of a range of competencies and skills including subject specific skills at **an enhanced level, in addition to those indicated for threshold level.**

(a) Threshold level

On graduating with Library and Information Science as a subject for the Bachelors degree the students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the knowledge and practices covered by their programme of study.
- Apply the understanding, knowledge and skills gained through the programme to suit different work environments
- Design, develop and maintain library and information services with the optimum use of available resources
- Work as a team member with necessary transferable skills
- Identify ethical considerations in the provision of library and information services to the society including professional ethics
- Realize the need for continuous professional development and manage self learning
- Use of research instruments to carry out research on subject issues
- Recognize and articulate the ever changing nature of LIS with reference to the existing body of knowledge

(b) Good Honors Level

On graduating with a good honors level degree in LIS, students **in addition to achieving all aspects indicated for threshold level** should have ability to;

- Demonstrate a sound understanding of the knowledge and practices covered by their programme of study and to exercise critical judgments across a range of issues
- Analyze critically and apply the understanding, knowledge and skills gained through the programme to suit different work environments
- Analyze, design and develop systems, processes or procedures which are complex, to meet varying needs
- Critically evaluate and review own work as well as that of the others
- Apply appropriate strategies for continuous professional development and self learning
- Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
- Demonstrate transferable skills including the leadership and decision making skills
- Conduct surveys and research on issues in the subject area and the use of research instruments

9. ANNEX1. MEMBERS OF THE BENCHMARK GROUP

Prof. Piyadasa Ranasinghe	University of Kelaniya
Mr. L. A. Jayatissa	University of Kelaniya
Mr. D. C. Kuruppu	University of Colombo
Dr. (Ms.) P. Wijetunge	University of Peradeniya
Ms. N. D. Wijesundara	University of Sri J'Pura
Ms. R. C. Kodikara	University of Moratuwa
Ms. S. Arulanantham	University of Jaffna
Mr. Ananda Karunaratne	University of Ruhuna
Ms. T. Arulnandhy	Eastern University of SL
Mr. M. M. Rifaudeen	South Eastern University of SL
Ms. A. S. Siriwardene	Rajarata University of SL
Ms. T. N. Neighsoorei	Sabaragamuwa University of SL
Mr. W. G. P. Gamlath	Wayamba University of SL
Dr. (Ms.) Wathmanel Seneviratne	Open University of SL
Mr. G. R. Padmasiri	University of Visual and Performing Arts
Ms. Kumari Kulatunga	Uva Wellassa University

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Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council

65/4, Kirula Road, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

Tel: +94-11-2368794; Fax: +94-11-2368621

E mail: colinpeiris@qaacouncil.lk

Website: www.qaacouncil.lk