



Library Association of Ireland: Professional Standards Committee

### Guidelines for Accreditation

The Library Association of Ireland (LAI) accredits courses and programmes leading to graduate and postgraduate qualifications in Library and Information Management.

Accreditation is a valuable asset for course providers and prospective students: it assures students that their selected course is approved by the national professional body, that it reaches professional educational standards and that the accredited course will be validated in other jurisdictions with which the LAI has agreements in place.

Accreditation lasts for a period of five years. Accreditation can only be undertaken for courses and programmes which meet the academic quality assurance requirements of the bodies responsible for quality assurance in the Republic of Ireland e.g. the universities and QQI. Post-accreditation, the provider must meet with the Professional Standards Committee annually to update the Committee on course developments and to discuss matters of common interest.

Courses for accreditation must satisfy agreed criteria and will be assessed accordingly. The LAI recognises the CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) Professional Knowledge & Skills Base as covering the core professional and generic skills which should be provided in degree level (levels 8 and 9) courses and approves the use of this resource as a basis for the assessment of courses and programmes.

Procedures for accreditation:

1. The course provider should make a formal application by post or email to the LAI Professional Standards Committee.
2. Guidelines for the accreditation exercise will be provided to the applicant body.
3. The Professional Standards Committee will convene a meeting with the provider to discuss course content, institutional educational policy, resourcing etc. in general terms.
4. An accreditation timetable will be drawn up by the Committee and approved by the applicant body.
5. The provider will map core content provision as nearly as possible to the Professional Knowledge and Skills Base, approved by the LAI.

6. The provider will be advised by the LAI of other key courses which in the opinion of the Professional Standards Committee would be important in the context of course delivery in Ireland.
7. The provider should supply detailed information as to the content of all courses, topics and fields of knowledge covered during the course year.
  - 7.1 The modules should be clearly titled and flagged as core or elective.
  - 7.2 The objectives of each should be clearly outlined and aligned with the PKSB and with the current demands of employers.
  - 7.3 The methodologies to be used should be described in detail in the case of each module.
  - 7.4 The number of hours devoted to lectures, tutorials and practical work should be supplied in detail.
  - 7.5 The proposed assessment measurements should be outlined, whether continuous assessment, examination, or a combination of the two.
  - 7.6 The marks awarded to each module should be detailed.
  - 7.7 The type and scope of project work should be described, together with an account of the objectives of this type of activity, the supervisory methods in place and the measures used for assessment.
  - 7.8 Details of the role of placements in the course schema should be provided, whether these are elective or mandatory, the minimum approved period for placements should be outlined etc.
8. The provider should supply details of the staff involved in course provision, both full-time and part-time, their qualifications and details of their own CPD. In particular, the person with responsibility for overall course design should be identified. Details should also be provided of staff drawn from other departments within the institution.
9. The provider should show evidence of engagement with practitioners, employers and leading figures in the information field.
10. Depending on the circumstances obtaining at the time of application, the provider should supply data as to the expected number of students or the number of students already registered.
11. Data should be supplied re the resources and facilities available to the school.
12. Evidence of institutional backing and support for the course should be shown.

- 13.** A date will be set by which the course documentation should be sent to the LAI Professional Standards Committee for review and assessment. Documentation should be submitted in electronic format to the chair of the Professional Standards Committee.
- 14.** The Committee will revert to the provider with the result of this stage of the assessment, with further questions and points for clarification as required. Any element of the course which at that stage does not reach an acceptable level will be subjected to further assessment prior to sign-off on that stage. This stage of the assessment should be completed in four to six weeks. Provided that this stage of the process is successful, nominees of the Professional Standards Committee will participate in a site visit, preferably in tandem with assessors from the appropriate academic quality assurance body.
- 15.** On completion of the site visit, at which at least two nominees of the Professional Standards Committee will be present, the Committee will convene a final meeting to deliberate the outcome. The applicant will be informed of the Committee's decision as soon as possible thereafter.
- 16.** A non-refundable accreditation fee of €1,000 is payable to the LAI on submission of course documentation.
- 17.** The accreditation panel will consist of the members of the Professional Standards Committee or their nominees; no less than three members of the Committee should take part in the assessment process. No more than three members should participate in the subsequent site visit; these three members must have already participated in the initial assessment process. Affiliation with an academic body accredited by the LAI will preclude members from participation in any accreditation process involving that body and members of the Committee are bound to declare any potential conflict of interest prior to commencement of an accreditation process.

Issued by the LAI Professional Standards Committee, February 2014

