

TUCSIN 2015
Career Focus
LIBRARIAN &
INFORMATION WORKER

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Dear Students

Do you just love books and collecting information? Than the Library and Information Science might just be your future career. Before deciding on a career as a librarian, you need to determine the answers to several questions, including: What level of formal education must I complete to be a fully qualified library professional? What types of jobs will be available once I have obtained my advanced degree? What personal qualities do I need in order to advance in my career? More about this in this weeks edition.

-Martina

Becoming a Librarian & Information Worker:

The librarian selects, collects, acquires, organizes and facilitates access to a vast amount of information sources in published, audiovisual, electronic and other formats. He/she is concerned with making this data and their sources available to the target population as efficiently and timely as possible and whenever needed.

Librarian and information workers select and identify information sources that will satisfy the needs of users. They organize and manage the information sources and facilities for easy accessibility.

Librarian and information workers can work in public libraries, where they attempt to satisfy the educational, recreational and information needs of local communities. They also work in *school media centres* providing for the information needs of pupils and teachers. At *universities, universities of technology and college libraries* they fulfill the information needs of students, lecturers and researchers.

In *specialized libraries and information centres*, they offer specialized and personal service to users, for example, that are attached to research institutions, industries, financial institutions, professional career practices or cultural organisations.

At *national libraries*, they are responsible for the compilation, upkeep and supply of a complete collection of material published in and on specific countries. They may also work in related areas where library training and skills are applicable, for example *freelancing and lecturing*.

Librarianship thus offers a variety of career possibilities that range from the use of a computer and telecommunication technology to the utilization of information for the advancement of the social and economic development of the Namibian community. The work of a librarian and information worker is becoming more complex with the improvement in information technology and therefore there is a need for qualified persons to work especially at research at university and university of technology libraries.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A LIBRARIAN

Librarianship refers to the field of working in a library in various ways. Whether in a basic librarian position or as an administrator, there are numerous positions within the field and numerous types of libraries that one may find employment in. However, while anyone can earn a degree and enter this field, there are certain people who are more well-suited to the job based on their overall personality and their natural skill set. There are also numerous core competencies that make up the knowledge base of a good librarian. These are usually taught within classes that lead to library science degrees. In all cases, understanding the core competencies of librarianship is a good first step towards success in the field.

Personal Qualities : Before one ever sits in a library science related classroom, there are numerous skills and abilities that help highlight someone as being right for a position in this field. Basic personal traits and skills that are important to have include:

- A love of knowledge and learning
- A desire to work around people
- Love of books and have a broad overall knowledge of life and the world
- Strong organizational skills and good with numbers
- Friendly, Ethical & Personable
- Basic affinity for working with large volumes of information & Computer skills

Note that these skills and traits aren't necessarily required to become a professional librarian, but they are important components of thriving in the position and as such it's important to consider the presence of one or more of them in one's own personality to determine if librarianship is a good career choice to make.

Basic Competencies : While those personal qualities are all important aspects of a career in this field, they only make up the foundation on which to build. Learning various skills through class work is a must for entering a position as a librarian and there are numerous core competencies worth taking a look at. These basic competencies include:

- Ability to use technology and to use it to enhance the overall effectiveness of a library,.
- Good overall knowledge of archiving and filing information as well as maintaining databases and reference information.
- Capable of evaluating resources and finding the best ones for addressing different questions or issues.
- Ability to quickly and professionally search databases, internet resources, and catalogs to find needed information.
- Ability to communicate well with library staff as well as with all patrons and guests
- Deep knowledge of books. Good librarians usually read a variety of genres and types of books so that they can help to advise readers as to good books for their reading level and their interests.
- Ability to promote reading, present information clearly and in an interesting manner
- Some public speaking skills may be required as well and strong level of customer service skills
- Ability to adapt to new tools, systems, and situations as they arise – library and information technology is constantly evolving and shifting and librarians must be able to evolve along with it
- Team player and ability to help overcome issues by focusing on solutions instead of on the problems
- Organizational skills that are enhanced through regular additional efforts
- Must maintain a solid overall understanding of different issues that confront libraries of all sizes

Obviously some of these competencies are taught while others are gradually learned and mastered during an education and on the job experience. Additionally, some of these skills may not be as important as others. The place of employment will have a large impact on exactly what is needed to thrive in a particular position in a particular job and the specific competencies most important in that occupation.

REQUIREMENTS & TRAINING

SECONDARY EDUCATION

An above average pass on **HIGCSE/NSSCH** Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, with matriculation exemption is required to study at a South African university. **UNAM** requires a HIGCSE or IGCSE Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, with passes in five subjects and a minimum of 25 points on the UNAM point evaluation scale.

To be accepted for the Special Diploma in Information Studies, offered by UNAM, students should be in possession of a HIGCSE/IGCSE Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, and at least one year's appropriate experience.

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

No compulsory subjects

RECOMMENDED SUBJECTS

Mathematics (South Africa)

TERTIARY

Most South African universities offer either a four-year **B. Bibl.** degree, or a three-year **B.** degree and a one-year postgraduate diploma in Library Science. UNAM offers a four-year B. Information Studies degree with specialization in Library Science and Records Management, as well as a two-year Special Diploma in Information Studies.

Technikons such as ML Sultan, Port Elizabeth, South Africa and Witwatersrand offer a **N. Dip.:** Library and Information Practice. Diploma: N.Dip.: Library and Information Studies- DUT, TUT. Course takes 3 years.

Postgraduate: Information Science Honours, Masters and doctorate can be followed at UNISA and UJ

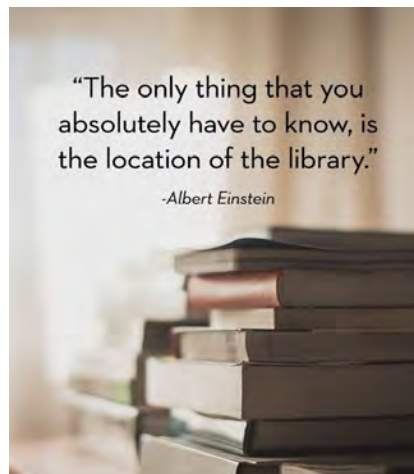
It is expected that students at both universities and universities of technology will gain practical experience in a library for a specified period.

PERSONALITY

The prospective candidate should have an inquiring mind, be neat, and have good communication skills. He/she should have good general knowledge about a wide variety of fields.

WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Librarians and information workers are employed in schools, tertiary and other educational institutions, parastatals, government structure such as the city councils, as well as private organizations.

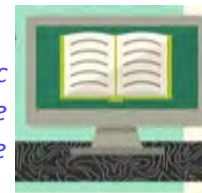


FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Librarians in a Digital world



The rising popularity of digitized archive, web-based content creation and electric media has shifted the way communities use libraries in the 21st century. But have computers made the librarian a fixture of the past? Hardly. Learn more about the unique role librarians play in digital information management.



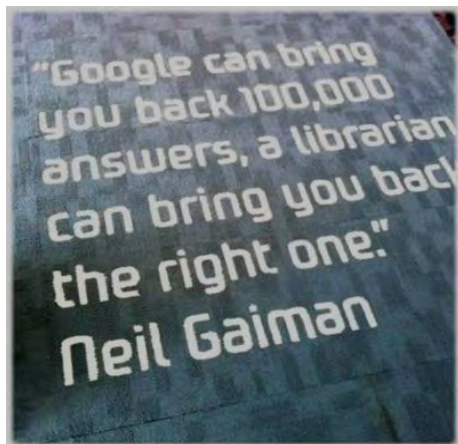
“Today, with the Internet, the librarian’s job of sorting and providing access has become even greater. Not that paper-based information has been replaced; in fact, there is more printed paper produced today than 20 years ago. But the real changes have been brought about by the so-called digital revolution.

Fortunately for librarians, the new developments in information technology that have led to such explosive growth in information have also come to their rescue by revolutionizing the way information is stored and accessed. The creation of bibliographic databases, the digital catalogues to complement the trusty Kardex, and the use of bar-codes to store books, are just a few valuable innovations. The new challenge is how to manage and alleviate the already existing problem for researchers of “information overload”.

The Internet and search engines like Google or Yahoo may have brought sorting and retrieval of front-line information into the living room, but deeper searches demand patience. Given the plethora of information available, the Internet has heightened the need for more and better librarians to filter the wheat from the chaff.”

Excerpt from :

http://www.oecdobserver.org/news/archivestory.php/aid/2149/Librarians_in_the_21st_century.html#sthash.wl2dJ5Ub.dpuf



Reference: Min of Labour & Social Welfare - Careers in Namibia 2005/2006



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