

What's in it for me?

As the Library and information industry prepares to receive its first national competency standards, we are beginning to ask 'So what?', 'What's in it for me?'

Answers to these questions will vary somewhat from workplace to workplace but some of the potential benefits are that you will have:

- Proof of competence — this will help if you want to move within or across sectors of the industry or even to allied industries.

- Clearly identified and stated outcomes of training programs.
- A framework for identifying training needs and a means of avoiding unnecessary training.
- Training which will be more closely aligned to work place needs.
- Credit for competencies achieved through prior learning, practice and experience.
- Clearly defined career routes — you will be able to analyse your strengths and weakness and plan what you need

to achieve your career goals. This in turn should benefit your personal growth and development and add to your level of job satisfaction, as training can be built into your career progression.

Employers will also reap potential benefits. These might include:

- Providing clear goals for employees and recognition of those who attain stated goals.
- Ability to identify training gaps and to provide training which is more tightly focussed.
- Avoiding unnecessary training, that is, those who can demonstrate that they are competent. This not only saves time and money, but avoids employees feeling frustrated as well.
- Clearly articulated selection criteria for recruitment.
- Better utilisation of employees' skills.
- Better succession planning and progression.
- Ability to codify the skills held in the workplace.
- Ability to match competency standards against the strategic directions of the organisation and identify career paths and provide career planning and development.

Competency standards will also be useful in describing what we do and how we do it to others. This is an important issue for those of us who work in parent organisations whose core business is not information provision. The standards will help us communicate our roles to our key stake-holders.

The standards will undoubtedly be very helpful in planning our own continuing professional development. Not only will they help us to select appropriate CPD activities, but training providers who are responsive to industry needs will use the standards to design and evaluate their offerings.

Many of us were involved in the development of the standards. It's up to us now to see that we make the best and most appropriate use of them.

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Competency standards workshops

In light of the proposal to launch the Library Competency Standards nationally in July 1995, the Board of Education resolved at its meeting in February 1995 to provide a series of workshops which would inform members of the Association of the issues relating to library competencies in particular, thereby offering to members assistance in the implementation of standards. Rather than update the competency kit, a new series of workshops is being prepared. A proposed outline for the workshops was presented to the Board of Education meeting in June 1995 which determined that workshop packages be developed as outlined below.

Purpose

The purpose of the workshops is to enable ALIA members:

- to develop a perspective on the position of competency standards within the total framework of the National Training Reform Agenda.
- to apply the standards in a meaningful way to their situation, either at a personal level, for their professional development or in a work-related situation.

Organisation

There are five workshops each of which can be completed in approximately two hours. The workshops are designed so that they may be delivered individually or, as succeeding workshops will build upon previous ones, as part of a sequence. Each workshop consists of a self-paced learning package which includes information and practical exercises. The practical exercises focus primarily on the key competencies and National Library Industry Standards. The workshops may be completed by groups or individually. A group approach to learning allows for comparison and discussion of results which may lead to specific division activities to suit group members. A set of facilitator's notes containing overhead transparencies, suggested group activities, and discussion pointers is being prepared to accompany each workshop.

Workshop 1:

An Insight into Competencies and Competency Standards

- introduces the concept of competencies and competency standards, in particular key competencies in relation to the National Training Reform Agenda.
- overviews training and assessment issues related to competency based training.

Workshop 2:

An overview of the National Training Reform Agenda: the National Training Reform Agenda and the LIS workplace

- examines the National Training Reform Agenda in relation to the LIS environment.
- reviews ASF levels and the structure of library competency standards.
- offers practice in matching tasks against the competency standards in order to identify skills and knowledge and, as well, training and development needs.

Workshop 3:

Workplace Assessment and the Library Competency Standards

- examines workplace assessment techniques and reporting and the role of assessment in on-the-job and off-the-job situations.
- discusses techniques for assessment of skills and their adaptability to a range of LIS environments.
- relates to ALIA's CPD framework.

Workshop 4:

Linking competency standards to your organisation

- examines in detail activities carried out in the LIS workplace and matches these to the relevant Competency Standards applicable in the LIS workplace.

Workshop 5:

Preparing for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment

- alerts supervisors to the RPL process and methods.
- assists candidates to prepare for the RPL process.

Workshops will be available from the National Office from September 1995. ■

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