



## Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from  
The University of Sheffield

1	<b>Programme Title</b>	Library and Information Services Management
2	<b>Programme Code</b>	IJCT017 & IJCT018 MA Library and Information Services Management (Distance Learning, Part-Time) IJCT019 PG Dip Library and Information Services Management (Distance Learning, Part-Time) IJCT020 PG Cert Library and Information Services Management (Distance Learning, Part-Time)
3	<b>JACS Code</b>	P120, P121
4	<b>Level of Study</b>	Postgraduate
5a	<b>Final Qualification</b>	Master of Arts (MA)
5b	<b>QAA FHEQ Level</b>	Masters
6	<b>Intermediate Qualification(s)</b>	Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip), Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)
7	<b>Teaching Institution</b> (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	<b>Faculty</b>	Social Sciences
9	<b>Department</b>	Information School
10	<b>Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme</b>	Not applicable
11	<b>Mode(s) of Attendance</b>	Distance Learning, Part-time
12	<b>Duration of the Programme</b>	2 to 3 years part-time
13	<b>Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body</b>	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)
14	<b>Date of production/revision</b>	February 2015, March 2026

### 15. Background to the programme and subject area

**Libraries and information services** make a vital contribution to effective education, social and cultural services, as well as successful economic, business and commercial activities. The skills of librarians are essential to manage the repositories of both paper and electronic materials, and to identify, organise and make accessible the ever-increasing amounts of information available in electronic, paper and multimedia formats. Technological advances mean that libraries and information services in both the public and private sectors are changing dramatically and library and information professionals need skills and experience in information handling, IT and management, together with strong interpersonal skills.

**The Information School** was awarded an “excellent” score for teaching quality in 2001 by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Review and also has an international reputation for research, having been awarded the highest possible rating in all Research Assessment Exercises carried out by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (including the top 5\* rating in 2001). Students will therefore be exposed to the latest concepts and ideas in the information professions. The composition of research and teaching in the Information School is highly multi-disciplinary, with staff backgrounds in Computer Science, Information Science, Information Systems, Knowledge Management, Librarianship and Business. Further information is available at the School website at:

[www.shef.ac.uk/is/](http://www.shef.ac.uk/is/)

**The MA Library and Information Services Management Programme** equips students with all the knowledge and skills needed to progress professionally in library and information work. Students will generally have one year's relevant work experience prior to starting the degree programme and are aiming to progress in their careers in the library and information professions on completion of the programme.

There are also Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma options within the programme. These serve two purposes. First, they provide exit options for those who are only able to complete 60 credits (PG Certificate) or 120 credits (PG Diploma) of the programme. Secondly, applicants who do not have a first degree but have other appropriate qualifications and experience may register for the Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma and progress to the MA programme, subject to the approval of the Examinations Board.

Within the Library and Information Services Management programme core competencies in IT, management and information handling are taught, together with other specialisms, allowing students to study, for example, particular information sectors in depth. The School has an international reputation for research in library and information systems management, as a result teaching and learning on the programme is research-led and students can be sure that they will be exposed to the latest ideas and concepts in library and information services management today.

Graduates from the MA in Library and Information Services Management are, like MA Librarianship graduates, expected progress in a range of library and information related jobs in a variety of different employment sectors, including:

- *Education sector:* libraries and learning resource centres in universities, colleges, schools and research institutes.
- *Public sector:* public libraries within local authorities, prison and hospital libraries, government departments, national libraries, charitable and voluntary organizations.
- *Private sector:* law/solicitors' firms, banking/financial services organizations and communications/media companies.
- *Professional organizations:* industrial and environmental professional bodies.

Some graduates take the opportunity to extend their study to doctoral level within the Information School. Further information is available at the Departmental Web site at [www.shef.ac.uk/is/careers](http://www.shef.ac.uk/is/careers)

## 16. Programme aims

For all its programmes the School aims to:

- 1) deliver a curriculum for each degree programme that develops in students a broad understanding of the subject area together with a detailed and critical understanding of selected areas;
- 2) provide students with the knowledge and skills required to work as effective information professionals, managers of information or research workers in their chosen field;
- 3) enable those already working in the information field to update and expand their professional understanding and competencies;
- 4) prepare students for professional practice by providing programmes which meet the accreditation requirements of professional bodies and that meet the needs of employers;
- 5) deliver teaching informed and inspired by professional expertise and by the research and scholarship of staff;
- 6) encourage students to become informed citizens and to understand the place of information in society.

In addition the **MA Library and Information Services Management** aims to:

- 1) provide students with the knowledge and skills required to work as effective information professionals in library and information services in both the public and private sectors;
- 2) equip students with a broad understanding of the profession and allow them to develop a detailed and critical understanding of selected areas of their choice;
- 3) introduce students to the best current thought and practice in library and information work;
- 4) equip students with research skills relevant to the employment market.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

<b>Knowledge and understanding: Students completing the programme will:</b>	
<b>K1</b>	have developed an understanding of the theory and practice of library and information studies.
<b>K2</b>	be able to demonstrate an understanding of the nature of library and information resources and their uses, the interface between information and its users, and the technology and systems which produce, analyse and communicate information in libraries and information units.
<b>K3</b>	have acquired an up-to-date subject knowledge and understanding relevant to the employment market in library and information services.
<b>K4</b>	have acquired in depth subject knowledge in chosen specialisms.
<b>K5</b>	be able to apply theory and recognise best practice in the library/information workplace.
<b>K6</b>	be able to understand the application of research-based approaches to problem solving and decision making relevant to their professional experience and needs.
<b>K7</b>	be able to re-evaluate their professional practice in the context of current and emerging theory and research in library and information science.

<b>Skills and other attributes: Students completing the programme will:</b>	
<b>S1</b>	have developed a range of practical/professional skills relevant to the employment market in library and information services.
<b>S2</b>	have acquired practical/professional skills in chosen specialisms.
<b>S3</b>	have acquired research skills relevant to their chosen field of work.
<b>S4</b>	have acquired transferable skills of relevance to their studies and for lifelong learning.
<b>S5</b>	have developed communication and interpersonal skills to complement their subject knowledge.
<b>S6</b>	have acquired new skills and approaches relevant to their level and direction of professional development.

Students successfully completing the Postgraduate Diploma programme will be able to demonstrate K1-K5 and S1-S2, S4-S6 above, with the exception of research skills specifically associated with carrying out the Research Methods module and the research dissertation.

Students successfully completing the Postgraduate Certificate programme will be able to demonstrate a more limited range of learning outcomes from K1-K5, and S1, S4-S5, in accordance with their chosen modules, with the exception of research skills specifically associated with carrying out the Research Methods module and the research dissertation.

## 18. Teaching, learning and assessment

### **Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:**

There is a clear need for library and information professionals and managers to develop good communication, interpersonal and information management and technology skills for use in their particular workplace. The programme encourages students to develop these skills through individual work and reflecting on their own practice and learning, combined with collaborative work online with other students in web-based environments.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are acquired through a variety of modules, both core (compulsory) and approved (optional), that involve a variety of teaching and learning methods appropriate for distance learning (K1-4; S3-5 above).

**Online induction sessions and preparatory coursework** during the first weeks of the programme are designed to introduce students to School procedures and standards related to the writing and presentation of coursework, and to provide early formative feedback on performance. (S4, S5, S6 above).

**Online lectures and learning materials** (delivered using Adobe Connect and Blackboard) establish the direction of studies and present information, ideas, case examples and critical analysis. In some cases, these are online lectures are delivered specifically for distance learners, in other cases they are video captured recordings of face-to-face lectures. Multimedia resources are used in lectures and student participation is encouraged. Students are provided with handouts of slide presentations and other lecture notes and materials. As well engaging with the latest theory, real-life examples of information management practice and problems are discussed in order to expose students to examples of good practice. (K1-K7 above).

**Online seminars** which may be staff-led or student-led, are designed to facilitate greater interactivity, allowing ideas to be discussed and challenged. Students are enabled to work through, analyse and respond to information and ideas outlined in lectures, for example through case study analysis. (K1-K7, S1, S2, S6 above).

All modules involve **independent learning**, which encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning, to organise their time and to develop effective learning skills. While online lectures and other learning materials provide the essential information for the module, students are encouraged to extend their reading on the issues raised through directed reading and their own research. (K1-K4; S3-S5 above).

A **professional development module** encourages students to reflect on their professional practice in the context of their learning. (K5-K7; S6 above).

Students use the **networked learning environment** provided for the programme (Blackboard) and online collaboration platform (Adobe Connect) to work collaboratively (S1) on **problem-solving tasks** and **group work** and **individual reflections** (S2) associated with various tasks. This collaborative group work enables students to work on complex multi-faceted professional problems and share multi-disciplinary and multi-professional perspectives. It also provides opportunities to develop professional and interpersonal skills by, for example, allowing teacher-student and student-student interaction, and formal presentations by students to their teachers and peers. (K1-K7; S1-S6 above).

A **research-based dissertation** is carried out often in the students' workplace (S6), under the supervision of academic staff, which allows students to develop and practise research skills. Students have one-to-one online meetings with their supervisors using Skype (or equivalent) and also online group seminars and are able to communicate with supervisors throughout the dissertation using email, and telephone.

#### **Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:**

Each taught module is assessed at the end of the semester in which it is taught. Assessment methods vary from module to module and are designed to measure attainment of intended learning outcomes to meet the aims and objectives of the module. All students experience a range of assessed individual and group assignments. **Knowledge and understanding** are demonstrated through written assignments involving essays and reports. These require students to provide evidence of their ability to synthesise knowledge and learning, organise information and apply critical judgement to evidence. (K1-K7 above).

**Professional/practical skills** are demonstrated through case study analysis, creation of websites, and the completion of problem solving exercises. (S1, S2, S6 above).

**Transferable skills (e.g. intellectual, technical and professional skills)** are demonstrated through exercises including case study analysis, problem-solving, creation of websites and the research dissertation report (S1-S6 above).

**Interpersonal skills** are generally incorporated within modules and related to relevant assessments as appropriate. Examples include oral presentations, group exercises, student-led seminars, the use of research-based teaching materials and methods, and problem based case studies.

**Research skills** are assessed through the core module: Research Methods and Dissertation Preparation and the Dissertation itself.

## **19. Reference points**

#### **The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:**

##### **Internal**

- Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield, as presented in its Corporate Plan.
- The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-16 of the University of Sheffield.
- The Faculty of Social Sciences Learning and Teaching Strategy 2013-16.
- Sheffield graduate concept.
- Current research and scholarship of School staff.
- Discussions with members of the Information School Advisory Panel (comprising senior members of the information professions) and formal/informal relationships with practitioners.
- Regular analysis of the employment market through the Advisory Panel and investigation of job adverts in the professional press.
- School annual student programme and module evaluations.

## External

- The aims and objectives of the MA programme are consonant with, and address a significant proportion of, the CILIP Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB), available from <http://www.cilip.org.uk/jobs-careers/professional-knowledge-and-skills-base/pages/professional%20knowledge%20and%20skills%20base.aspx>
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008) <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

## 20. Programme structure and regulations

The MA in Library and Information Services Management Programme equips students with all the knowledge and skills needed to progress professionally in library and information work. Students will generally have one year's relevant work experience prior to starting the degree programme and are aiming to progress in their career in the library and information professions on completion of the programme. The programme starts in late September each year and normally takes two or three years to complete.

**Core modules** are compulsory and ensure a coherent programme structure providing all students with the key concepts and essential tools they need to work as competent professionals in their chosen field.

**Approved modules** allow students to follow professional and personal interests in specialised areas in greater depth. In consultation with staff, students choose modules to design an academically coherent programme consistent with their own career aspirations and interests.

All core and approved modules are worth 15 credits and are designed on the basis of approximately 150 hours of work per credit (including contact hours, private study and assessment) in order to ensure an appropriate and uniform workload. The dissertation is worth 45 credits. Students aiming for a Masters degree must register for modules to the value of 180 credits.

Successful completion of the programme leads to the award of the Masters' degree, with either a 'pass', 'pass with merit' or 'pass with distinction' grade. The Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma level awards are available after successful completion of taught modules to the value of 60 credits and 120 credits respectively (excluding the Research Methods and Dissertation Preparation module and the Dissertation module), for students who do not wish to progress further.

Please refer to the Programme Regulations, General University Regulations and the Online Directory of Modules for detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules.

## 21. Student development over the course of study

Students who begin the programme will have had relevant experience in a library or information related environment. This is intended to provide a basic knowledge of professional issues and practice on which the MA in Library and Information Services Programme can build.

**Core (compulsory)** modules ensure that students take a coherent course, and introduce them to fundamental principles, key concepts and techniques. There is also an emphasis on work-related learning.

**Approved (elective)** modules enable students on the programme to pursue their developing interests and career aspirations in depth. Students may elect to take Independent Study modules, which offer the opportunity to follow work-related interests, and on many other modules they have the opportunity to select assessed assignments of particular relevance to their workplace interests.

All students registered for the MA in Library and Information Services are required to complete a research-based dissertation of 10,000-15,000 words. This enables students to apply appropriate research techniques to a real-world related problem, for example a gap in knowledge, a disagreement between 'the experts', a hypothesis which has not been adequately tested, or a question which previous research has left unanswered. This is normally carried out during the period from June to September in their second year or during their 3<sup>rd</sup> year on the programme. Students may develop their own dissertation topics, in consultation with staff, or select from a list of possible topics generated by academic staff and employers.

## 22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/is/pgt>.

Applicants will normally be expected to have at least a second class honours degree (or its equivalent) in any subject discipline, and to have had practical experience in a library, information unit, or in an information-related role in another organization before joining the School. Applicants without first degrees will be considered for entry onto the PG Diploma and PG Certificate programmes in the first instance.

Additional requirements relating to English language proficiency are also be required, IELTS 6.5 or above.

## 23. Additional information

The University of Sheffield offers a wide range of information and learning resources, and support services online. These will be essential in ensuring that the distance learning students have access to materials they require to carry out their work on the Programme.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at [www.shef.ac.uk/ssid](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid).