

Effective Library And Information Centre Management

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Education and Training of LIS Para-professionals: The Faculty of Information Management, UiTM's Experience.

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Abstract

The Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), formerly known as School of Library Science, introduced the Diploma of Information Management programme (IS 110) in June 1999. The programme is offered to Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) holders. This paper discusses the factors, which contributed to the development of the programme. Also included are the objectives of the establishment of the programme and the mission of the faculty. The programme is meant to train para-professionals in information management, information services provision, records and document management, electronic publishing, multimedia, Internet application as well as library and archival works. The paper also emphasizes on the four main competencies the graduates will acquire in these three-year courses such as basic information communication technology, basic information processing, reference and information handling, as well as interpersonal and communication skills. The faculty core courses and university required courses are structured in a six-semester programme offered via the Diploma of Information Management. Opportunities for the graduates to be employed as Medical Records Assistant, Assistant Library Officer and other related jobs are also discussed. These graduates are also the main feeder to the four degrees programme offered by the Faculty. Details of the enrolment of the Diploma students in UiTM's main and branch campuses such as Kedah, Kelantan, Johor and Sarawak are highlighted.

Keywords: LIS para-professionals; Information management; Information professionals; Faculty of Information Management; LIS curriculum

1. Introduction

The library and information science (LIS) profession is service-oriented and requires continually updated knowledge and skills for effective performance. The efficiency of any library or information centre in meeting the information needs of its clientele, to a large extent, depends on the calibre of its staff. The term "paraprofessional" as used in this paper, refers to LIS practitioners who possess the Diploma In Information Management from local universities.

2. Faculty of Information Management: Experiences

Due to several pioneering initiatives since its inception in 1968 (Table 1), the Faculty of Information Management (FIM), Universiti Teknologi MARA is known as the pioneer in Malaysia in the provision of education and research spanning the fields of information, library, and records management.

In 1968, the Faculty was established as the School of Library Science with the aim of preparing students for the external professional examination of the Library Association (United Kingdom). In July 1972, a three-year Diploma programme was introduced to replace the British ALA Examination. The new curriculum was designed to fulfil the local requirements and needs of the professionals in the country. In 1974, the School introduced the postgraduate programme in library science. It offers an opportunity for graduates from local and overseas universities to enrol in the programme, thereby helping them with their professional career in libraries and information science.

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