The *IFLA Guidelines for Professional LIS Education Programmes*: Competencies Toward Excellence in Professional Practice

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ABSTRACT

Background. "[A] continuous approach to review and innovation is necessary to ensure that LIS programmes reflect changes in LIS professional practice and related LIS education, locally as well as internationally," states the recently endorsed *IFLA Guidelines for Professional Library and Information Science (LIS) Education Programmes* (Chu; Raju et al., 2022; p. 14). The *Guidelines* were authored by the LIS Education Framework Development Sub-Group of the Building Strong Library and Information Science Education (BSLISE) working group. The BSLISE working group is an initiative of the IFLA Section on Education and Training (SET), Section on Library Theory and Research (LTR), and the LIS Education in Developing Countries Special Interest Group.

"Privileging perspectives, insights and knowledges" of local societies, their ways of knowing and lived experiences are important considerations in scholarship (Chiumbu, 2017; para. 5). Accordingly, the *Guidelines* call for, in periodic program reviews, harmonization "with local practices of accreditation, if any, and importantly with institution level programme review protocols. The programme review should also be cognisant of the significance of the LIS field in addressing societal challenges facing local, regional, and global contexts. LIS educators, students, practitioners and stakeholders should be involved in the review as a process of innovation and revisioning of a programme." (Chu; Raju et al., 2022; p. 14) The Guidelines respond to this need for "articulating … to fit local contexts" (Ndege & Onyango, 2021; para. 13) by serving as a framework for developing LIS education programmes, which stakeholders can apply in planning, developing and assessing the quality of LIS education and identify the knowledge areas LIS professionals should have in order to practice and continue to develop. They have been created to be applicable at any level of higher education. They are grounded in the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, and focus LIS education on eight foundational knowledge areas (FKAs). These *Guidelines* will assist programmes as they continue

to adapt to the ever-changing needs of their community, as well as allow for greater degrees of mobility of LIS professionals across the globe.

The *Guidelines* respond to recommendations from the *Building Strong LIS Education: A Call to Global and Local Action – An IFLA BSLISE Working Group White Paper* (IFLA BSLISE Working Group, 2018). The development of the *Guidelines* was informed by the published literature, existing national and international standards, expertise of the BSLISE working group, and consultation with LIS education and professional stakeholders across the globe.

Purpose and Format. The panel aims to engage LIS educators, students, professionals, associations, and other stakeholders in the application of the new *IFLA Guidelines for Professional Library and Information Science (LIS) Education Programmes* for global contexts. This engagement is critical as local contexts around the world all have unique expectations and infrastructures that guide the quality and development of LIS education and preparation for professional practice. The engagement is also important to consider similarities and differences with other LIS education standards/guidelines (e.g., ALA, 2023; ALIA, 2020; CILIP, 2021).

The panel will begin with an overview of the *Guidelines*, its co-existence with existing guidelines/standards, and its location in the global context. This will be followed by small group critical discussions on the *Guidelines'* definition of LIS and Foundational Knowledge Areas (FKAs), their promotion and engagement, and their application in diverse contexts. The panel will conclude with a critical response to the issues raised and ideas shared. This active engagement is critical for translating the ideas into action.

1. Introduction (3 min)
2. Overview of *Guidelines* (8 min)
3. Co-existence of the *Guidelines* with other guidelines/standards (8 min)
4. The Guidelines and quality of LIS education in global context (8 min)
5. Group discussions to address the following three issues from national/regional/institutional contexts (33 min):
    a. *Guidelines'* definition of LIS and Foundational Knowledge Areas (FKAs) - discussion of the LIS definition and FKAs in the context of an evolving field, including social inequities, emerging technologies, and the post-truth era.
    b. Promotion and Engagement of the *Guidelines* - brainstorm ideas to promote and engage with the *Guidelines* in diverse LIS contexts; identify the action(s) the participants wish to take on and others who will collaborate.
    c. Usage of the *Guidelines* as a tool for the development of quality in LIS education - brainstorm ideas to apply the *Guidelines* in local contexts; identify the action(s) the participants wish to take on and others who will collaborate. Each discussion group will need a discussion leader and rapporteur.
    d. Critical review and discussion of shared ideas (20 min)
    e. Translating ideas into action (7 min)
    f. Conclusion (3 min)

Panelists. The three panelists are LIS educators from diverse global locations who have been engaged in the development and stewardship of the *Guidelines*, and are its co-authors. Each will be responsible for presenting different aspects of the *Guidelines* and their implementation.

They are well-versed on the quality of and competencies in LIS education, bringing different regional perspectives to the subject matter, including the Global North and the Global South.

        Relevance and Impact. Panel presentations and participant engagement activities have been designed for diverse participants and are relevant to LIS educators, students, professionals, associations, and other stakeholders. The *Guidelines* presentation and the issues raised will contribute to planning, developing and assessing the quality of LIS education around the world. We hope that a global perspective, based on the newly published *IFLA Guidelines for Professional Library and Information Science (LIS) Education Programmes* and the experience and expertise of the panelists, will make a valuable contribution to global enhancement in the quality of LIS education and professional practice.

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ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

continuing education; curriculum; education programs/schools; pedagogy; standards.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

competencies; foundational knowledge areas (FKAs); guidelines; IFLA; LIS education.