

My experience of Chartership

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In March 2007 after many long months of working towards becoming a Chartered Librarian, I finally achieved my MCLIP. It was a valuable experience, and I learnt a lot. However, it wasn't always an easy one. How I achieved it could be best described as going on a journey - a journey of self development, reflection and evaluation.

In the beginning I found the whole process very vague. Chartership is not like doing a formal qualification. There are no deadlines or set goals to work towards. I registered under the then new 2005 regulations thinking all the information would be in place. This wasn't the case and there was a long wait until CILIP produced all the required information on their website. However, over two years on (time of writing February 2008), the information is comprehensive and regularly updated.

The first challenge was writing my PPDP (personal professional development plan) which I had to submit to CILIP within six months of registering. Luckily there was an example for me to follow on the website which helped a lot and I followed this by choosing various areas of my job I would like to develop. This was accepted by CILIP.

The areas I chose to develop were those that I already had experience of but felt I could improve and expand upon. I chose to concentrate in particular on *training and teaching in information skills*, as this takes up a large part of my job. For this I undertook a 12 week City and Guilds basic teaching qualification, which I have to say has aided me in my job enormously. Two other areas I chose were *serials*

management, an area which was new to me, and management and supervisory skills, another area I had experience in but I could build on and improve.

Then followed the second challenge - the task of finding a mentor. I contacted six people before I came across a librarian with mentee spaces at another University but in a completely different discipline. Having a mentor outside your library discipline means you gain understanding into how another library works.

Prior to finding a mentor I started to attend courses and visit libraries. The most useful courses were *Your Guide to Chartership* run by the West Midlands Career Development Group and *Portfolio Writing* run by the East of England Career Development Group - both directly related to Chartership and run by Chartership Board members and the CILIP qualifications team who were able to answer any questions competently and put us at ease in what seemed at the time a very hazy situation.

The most important tips I learnt from these courses were that you need to evaluate everything, write every course up, keep minutes of meetings attended and be organised. I created a chart that I filled in every time I did something. Other candidates created a blog. I created another PPDP that I could annotate and evaluate what I had done and whether it had been successful or not. It is important to keep a copy of everything you produce. Even though it may seem trivial at the time, it may not be when you come to write up your evaluative statement.

Once I had completed what I considered to be my Chartership period and fulfilled all the personal goals on my PPDP, I began to collate the material I would need to produce my portfolio. I went back to my PPDP and divided my achievements, documents and any other related material into the areas of development according to my plan. This really helped in deciding what I should keep and what I should weed out.

Then the third challenge arose, the evaluative statement. This is a tricky one to write. How do you evaluate your achievements in 1000 words? With this in mind I set to and attempted to write my statement, with the end result being 1800 words. I managed to edit it down to just over 1000 words, which is acceptable, and

linked more of the text to the evidence which is the aim of the exercise.

After four drafts and various people proof reading my portfolio I finally submitted in December 2006. I have to admit I was very apprehensive as to whether I had passed or not due to the size of my portfolio which comprised 188 pages! The portfolios that are posted as examples on the CILIP website are much smaller and very different in style and content from mine, though I have to say they gave me good guidance as to what to include in my portfolio.

Finally in March 2007, two days after the Chartership board sat, I received the good news my portfolio had been accepted. My feelings were of relief, excitement and joy and that it had been well worth the effort. My happiest memory is of my daughters laughing at me as I whooped with delight on opening the letter from CILIP.

If you are considering Chartership or currently pursuing it my advice would be to attend as many courses as possible, especially those directly related to Chartership. Visit libraries in different disciplines and keep as much evidence as possible, even if you don't end up using it all. Set yourself personal goals and take the advice of your mentor and indeed any other colleagues who are able to help you. Most importantly make sure you evaluate everything you do. Ask yourself *why, how and what did I achieve* and most importantly *what could I do better next time?* Once you get in the habit of doing this you will fulfil the aims of your PPDP and can begin building your portfolio.

Following my Chartership experience I then decided to become a Chartership Mentor as I felt I could use my experience to benefit others. In July 2007 I attended a course on Mentorship and then registered as a mentor with CILIP. Currently I have two mentees and I am enjoying the experience from the "other side" very much. I know for a fact that having chartered recently, my mentees feel confident that I have the knowledge and experience they need to produce a successful portfolio.

I have also begun building a folder of evidence which I intend to use when I revalidate in three years time. It is a good habit to get into and also gives you an idea of how much CPD you do.

Personally my journey was extremely worthwhile, I learnt a lot, achieved a lot and the end result is I have become a Chartered Librarian and subsequently a Mentor. Both achievements which will undoubtedly further my career as a professional librarian.

Success in project management: an informative and practical workshop for those wanting to improve their project management skills

Report of the joint Health Libraries Group, Information for the Management of Healthcare and Libraries for Nursing study day held on 24th January 2008 at the University of Salford

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This was an excellent and well organised event with good speakers combining a mix of talks and workshops.

The speakers were Paul Waters from the University of Salford, Jacky Berry Librarian of the British Medical Association and Andrew Booth, Reader in Evidence Based Information Practice, Director of Information Resources and also Programme Director of FOLIO at the School of Health and Related Research (SchARR), University of Sheffield. Paul began the day with an overview of project management and later spoke about Prince2. Jacky spoke about the people aspect of project management