

Chartering and Workplace Libraries

At the ICLG AGM held at Linklaters in March this year, we promised to make sure we continued to support ICLG members who were about to start, or were in the process of, or had been trying to complete, the Library Association's Chartership programme. True to our promise, we have been organising a number of visits to libraries, such as the library at News International, the British Library's new Business Information Service and the City Business Library. So popular did the BL visit in July prove that we immediately organised a second visit in September. Although these were not exclusively designed for chartership candidates, we discovered that during the breaks from the official tours, people were networking and comparing progress with their PDRs, portfolios and training programmes whether candidates or supervisors!

Some informal lunchtime discussion groups were being developed e.g. by Jacky Berry at Linklaters and informal exchange visits for small groups of candidates to Westminster Reference and neighbouring law firm libraries by supervisors, e.g. Janet Scoones and Paul Pedley. However, we wanted to widen the net and to include those who had requested a follow-up workshop. This would include those who had attended either the CPD talk by Marion Huckle, from the LA's Professional Qualifications Department at the BIALL Conference, or the September introductory Chartership meeting at LAHQ organised by Ian Hunter (North Thames Regional Liaison Officer (RLO)).

Janet Scoones provided an excellent venue for the workshop on the top floor of Trowers & Hamlins, overlooking the area of the City near the Tower of London. Marion Huckle led the discussion by outlining our various options, giving tips and handouts on how to get started e.g. find a folder and start putting together the essential appendices e.g. current job description, CV, courses attended and other creative possibilities e.g. articles written or contribution to promotional literature or library page on Intranet. She is keen to encourage Route B candidates who have no in-house supervisor to contact her so that she can put them in touch with mentors who have volunteered to give support and guidance. She referred to the LA's website, which covers professional issues, hot topics and in particular the Careers and Qualifications section which includes the Help for Registration Candidates, a reading list and the LIS/LA-charter discussion list, available to everyone chartering, whatever the sector. Anna Atkinson, the Career Development Group's Learning Co-ordinator, was also present. She is responsible among other things for the network of Regional Liaison Officers whose names all appear on the CDG site. She has seen many a professional development report in her time and had several tips on what to do and what to avoid. She advised showing your PDR to a non-librarian friend or willing family member to ensure it contained no LIS jargon.

Ian Hunter then emphasised certain key points that should be included in the PDR/proforma / portfolio if you wish to ensure success. He had brought examples of PDRs with him and handouts from workshops on chartering. The evening was very informal with contributions from supervisors Jacky Berry, Paul Pedley, and Janet Scoones. As well as plenty of opportunity for the candidates who attended to ask questions as we went along and to discuss difficulties with other Workplace librarians over refreshments (the chocolate biscuits proved very popular).

This article also offers me a chance to thank publicly Getrud Erbach and her staff at News International, and Ros Cotton at the British Library. I would also like to thank Gary Humphries and his staff at the City Business Library and Janet Scoones at Trowers & Hamlins for hosting the visits and workshops over the last few months.

A summary of tips for chartership success:

For those unable to attend the workshop, Ian Hunter has provided the following summary of his hot tips for chartership success:

1. **Professional awareness** - i.e. awareness of issues affecting the wider profession - is one of the most common reasons for your submission not being accepted. To gain this awareness, you should try to visit other services in another sector (e.g. a university library), preferably in person, but a 'virtual visit' to a website may suffice, to compare and contrast how they do things with your own service. Try to read the professional literature, be aware of government initiatives like the National Grid for Learning and the establishment of the Library and Information Commission, how do you think these initiatives will affect the profession, if at all? Talk to friends from college (library school) who are working in the same sector and in other sectors, what are their experiences of being an information professional? The fundamental point is that you've got to get out there!

None of this needs to be very in-depth: you are just comparing your service against others and showing that you know what is going on outside your sector.

2. **Aims and objectives** - of your service and the wider organisation - is the other area that gives people problems. You need to get a mission statement or similar, or make one up if there isn't one (but say that this what you have done), and discuss it. There is no way round this! It has to be done. All that is needed is a few paragraphs saying if you feel the mission statement is clear and easily understood, and if your service and the wider organisation are fulfilling the aims set out in the mission statement. If there is a separate mission statement for the service itself, how does this fit in with the one for the whole organisation? Are there any contradictions?

3. **Writing the report** - my final suggestion is that when you've got to the point of actually writing your PDR or proforma, or organising the material for your portfolio, take a couple of days off to concentrate only on doing this: it's far easier than trying to do an hour after work for weeks on end.

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