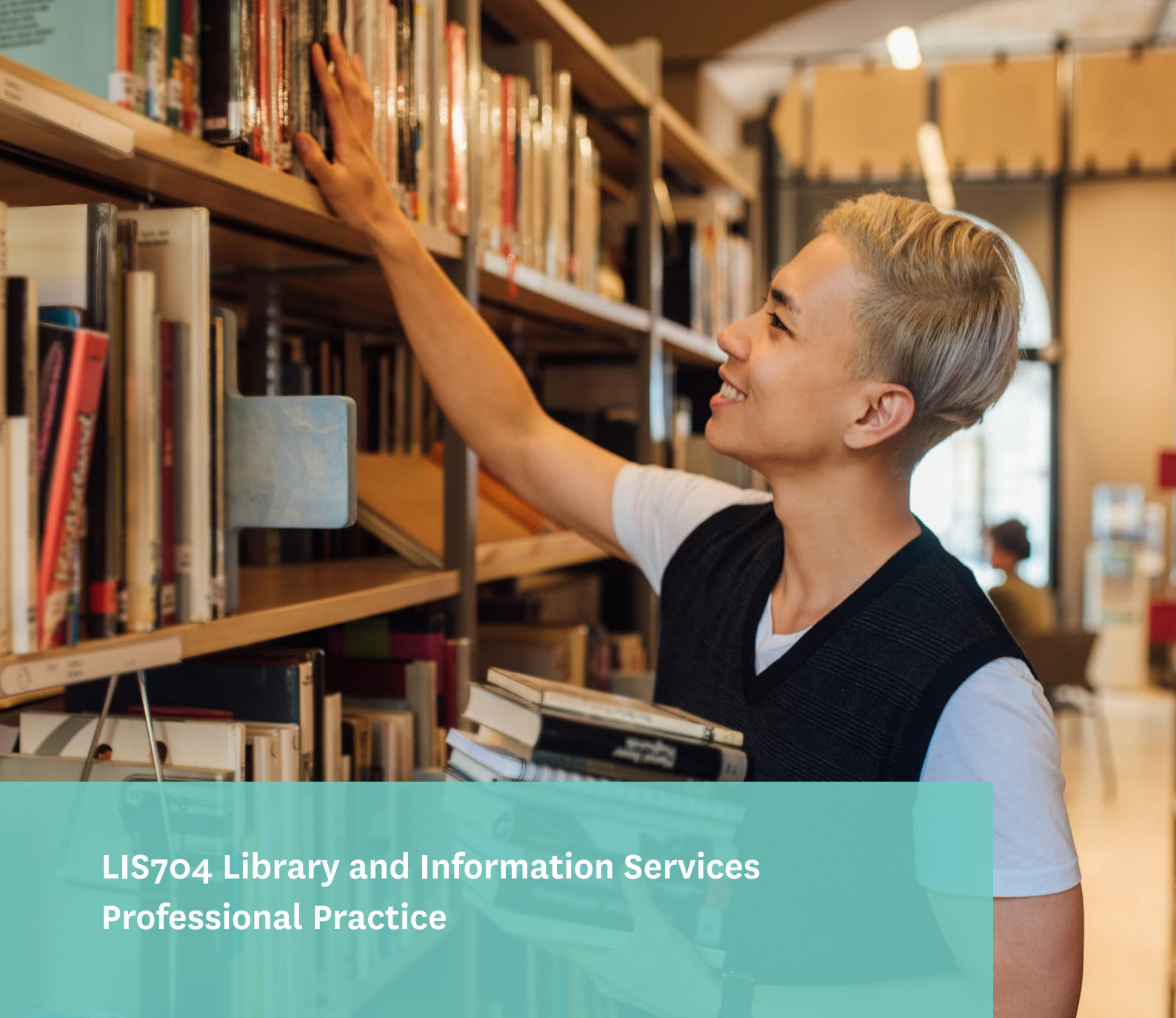




LIS704 Library and Information Services Professional Practice

Professional Practice Handbook
He Puka Ārahi mō te Mahi Ngaio

Library and Information Services Professional Practice will enable students to develop professional practice skills in a relevant area under professional supervision. Students will follow an individual plan of development, guided by an academic supervisor and a professional practice mentor.

Students will engage with professional practice in workplace settings beyond their current role, interacting with library and information service professionals, to extend their understanding and skill-base. They will demonstrate that they can apply communication skills, professional values and ethics, and practice skills to their work.

What is professional practice?

Professional practice can be defined as the ways in which individuals apply professional skills within a workplace/ professional context.

Practical experience, under appropriate supervision or mentoring, is an important part of professional education and training. It enables students to apply the abstract and theoretical knowledge they have acquired through study to practical situations. They will also develop their understanding of professional values and ethics in real-life situations.

This course provides a framework within which students can explore areas of the information sector and develop additional skills to those they need in their current role or enhance existing skills. It uses a model of experiential learning that involves cycles of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation leading back to concrete experience again¹.

The role of mentor is to support the student in developing their objectives and provide support and advice during the practice experience. Mentoring will involve helping the student determine the tasks and activities that will best meet their professional development needs, supporting them in the workplace setting, and providing constructive advice and feedback on their work. The mentor's role may vary depending on the workplace setting but is seen as an important component of the professional practice experience. The principles of tikanga Māori may apply, depending on the student (mentee), the mentor and the workplace setting. (See Appendix 1: Mentoring)

¹ Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.

What can be done for the professional practice in this course?

Students must complete 75 hours of professional practice activity linked to their professional development plan. This practice must be carried out in settings different from their current role if they are already working in the information sector. Students are responsible for identifying the professional practice situation themselves before they enrol for the course.

It will be possible to complete the professional practice in more than one setting if there are limited opportunities where a student lives.

Professional practice can take place in a range of workplace settings. We are interpreting 'workplace setting' widely in this course as any library and information services-related context in which professional practice is carried out, including:

- organisations that are, or have, libraries, archives, records and information centres or functions and (possibly) museums
- library and information studies professional associations
- professional/scholarly publishing
- collaborative LIS projects.

Related contexts may also be considered. Students should contact the course leader to discuss their plans.

Possible library and information studies workplace settings include, but are not limited to:

- placements or experience with a different team in a different role, either in the organisation where the student currently works, or in a different organisation.
- engagement with the work of professional associations, for example:
 - helping to organise regional workshops, hui or events
 - participating in organising a national or international conference
 - participating in international professional association committees.

- contributing to professional publications, for example:
 - being an editor or guest editor of a professional association newsletter (for example, developing a special issue on a particular topic)
 - writing for a professional publication about professional skills, professional development, a case study of the workplace, the learner journey, challenges to becoming more familiar with mātauranga Māori and so on.
- evaluating, updating or revising an existing project (may be done in collaboration with others, for example:
 - repackaging a face-to-face service as a digital service (for example, online chat for reference)
 - creating an online collection
 - preparing and delivering a presentation or training to a user group or professional group; for example, conference or hui presentation
 - evaluating how te reo is used or identifying how to update and develop its use within a LIS organisation or group.
- developing a new project, especially where the project might not be part of the core business, for example:
 - working with a local history group to develop a catalogue or index for their materials
 - creating a holiday programme in a public library
 - working with a marae to organise their archives
 - arranging and describing a particular donation to an archive
 - developing an outreach plan for a particular library/archive/records user group
 - developing a marketing plan on a theme such as Matariki, Te Wiki o te reo, Diwali, Chinese New Year, using referencing software, accessing archival collections.

Roles and responsibilities

Student responsibilities

This is a Level 7 (third year) course and likely to be one of the final courses completed by Bachelor of Library and Information Studies (BLIS) students. However, since it depends on locating suitable workplace settings or projects, it may be taken at any point during the BLIS degree. We recommend that students complete their Level 5 (first year) and Level 6 (second year) courses first, if possible.

Students must contact the course leader at least two months before they intend to take the course to discuss their plans. Last-minute enrolments are unlikely to be accepted.

For those students working in a library and information context, we recommend they talk to their current manager or their organisation's professional development coordinator. These people may be able to provide advice and guidance on what kind of workplace setting will be of most value and/or to suggest suitable mentors.

Students should determine their professional development needs as far as possible, locate a practice placement setting or project they think will match those needs, identify a mentor(s) from that setting(s), and start working with the mentor(s) to discuss possible objectives and tasks.

Students will create a memorandum of understanding with their workplace setting mentor as part of their first assignment (see Appendix 2).

Students will be allocated an academic supervisor by the course leader. Their academic supervisor may help them to identify a suitable mentor, depending on the practice activities chosen. Students should email their academic supervisor once a week during the course.

During the professional practice experience, students will maintain contact with their mentor, follow organisational, professional, ethical, or any other relevant standards, guidelines and practices, and meet any working conditions set by the organisation (as applicable).

Students will keep a record of what they do during the practice activities. Critical reflection is a significant aspect of a successful practice experience.

Students will act professionally at all times in their behaviour and communication, and follow professional association ethics guidelines. They will be cognisant of cultural requirements and practices.

Students will liaise with their academic supervisor or the course leader if there are any problems.

Students will complete three assessment tasks: a professional development plan and memorandum of understanding with their mentor(s), a practice portfolio that documents their activity, and a critical reflection on professional practice.

Mentor responsibilities

The success of the student's experience depends on the mentor as well as on the student. Mentors may be workplace supervisors, committee chairs, journal editors, senior professionals within the student's current workplace or another workplace, or independent professionals who have expertise in a particular area relevant to the student's placement.

Mentors do not have to be currently employed in the information sector but should have relevant and recent experience in libraries, archives or records and information management. Related areas may also be applicable depending on the student's chosen workplace setting.

Mentors will have sound communication skills and be willing to provide support, guidance and feedback to the student, and act as a professional role model.

Mentors will help the student determine their objectives within the context of the practice setting and its tasks. These objectives should benefit both the student and the practice setting.

Mentors should also be mindful of the professions' emphasis on integrating bicultural practices into professional practice.

Mentors will liaise with the student's academic supervisor or the course leader if there are any problems.

Mentors will be asked to provide a brief report of the student's performance. The report will be a single page form with check boxes along with a free text comment area. This report should be included in the student's practice portfolio.

Mentors do not need to be physically co-located with their mentees, nor are they expected to continue as mentors after the student's placement is completed.

Academic supervisor responsibilities

Academic supervisors will be allocated to each student by the course leader. They will work with the student and their mentor to support both of them during the practice.

Academic supervisors will advise the student and the mentor on what is feasible during the practice in terms of the course learning outcomes. They will help ensure that the student's objectives are realistic, achievable and add value to both their professional development and to the workplace setting(s) in which the practice is being carried out.

They will consult with the course leader to overcome any problems or to anticipate any potential problems.

Academic supervisors will mark the student's assignments while the course leader will provide a peer review of the process.

Course leader responsibilities

The course leader is the initial point of contact for students, potential mentors, and organisations or groups that have projects suitable for a practice placement.

The course leader will provide the initial approval for enrolment into the course. Students can contact the course leader at any time to seek advice on their proposed practice.

The course leader will support the academic supervisors and mentors, as necessary, and provide a peer review of the formal assessment.

The course leader will support students, mentors and academic supervisors to anticipate and avoid problems or to manage them if they arise.

Course learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

analyse their need for development in practice skills and develop a plan to achieve these in a relevant library and information service context.

operate professionally with library and information service practitioners and library and information service work.

apply practice skills within workplace settings.

evaluate performance and professional interactions with others in a relevant library and information service context.

Mentors will benefit by: supporting a new and emerging professional to achieve professional competencies; developing mentoring skills as part of their own continuing professional development; fostering professional understanding and professional culture; sharing their knowledge and skills; helping create a community of practice.

Organisations and groups will benefit from hosting a practice placement through improved staff development (both of the mentor and mentee, if a staff member); having projects completed that might not otherwise be carried out; improving their social relevance and client service; supporting professional culture; gaining buy-in or support for their aims and activities.

Appendix 1: Mentoring

These resources provide an introduction to mentoring. Both Māori and Pākehā mentoring approaches are covered in the first resource.

- Hook, G. R., Waaka, T., & Raumati, L. P. (2007). Mentoring Māori within a Pākehā framework. *MAI Review*, 3(1). <http://www.review.mai.ac.nz/mrindex/MR/article/download/70/70-183-1-PB.pdf>
- Buchanan, E. A., Myers, S. E., & Hardin, S. L. (2005). Holding your hand from a distance: Online mentoring and the graduate library and information science student. *The Journal of Educators Online*, 2(2), 1–18. https://www.thejeo.com/archive/2005_2_2/buchanan_myers_hardin
- Phillips-Jones, L. (2003). *Skills for successful mentoring: Competences of outstanding mentors and mentees*. <https://mentoringgroup.com/books/skills-for-successful-mentoring.pdf>



Appendix 2: Memorandum of Understanding

Note: The Memorandum of Understanding will be part of Assignment 1.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlines the objectives you, the student, will work towards during your professional practice experience. It is a record of the tasks you, your mentor, and your academic supervisor have agreed will be carried out.

Aspect	Details		
Practice setting [Name of the organisation and team, committee, journal or brief description of other setting]		Number of hours (if more than one setting) and when they will be carried out	
Professional practice objectives [Briefly describe your objectives for the professional practice relating to this setting. Up to 300 words]			
Practice tasks [Briefly describe or list the professional practice tasks that you have agreed with the mentor. Up to 300 words]			
Communication [Briefly explain how you will keep in touch with your mentor and academic supervisor. Phone calls, emails, online meetings and face to face meetings are all possibilities.]			

Organisational or practice setting documents [List any policies or practices that will affect your practice activities. Up to 300 words]	
Any additional considerations	

Student	<i>In signing this, you are agreeing that you have discussed the activity and your objectives with your mentor, that you will complete the designated number of hours, and that you will act professionally and meet all the requirements of the workplace setting.</i>	
	Name:	Student ID:
	Signature:	Preferred phone number:
	Date:	Email address:
Mentor	<i>In signing this, you are agreeing that you have discussed with the student the professional practice experience and their objectives, you will provide them with guidance or supervision (depending on the context) and mentoring, and that you will complete a brief report (one page) at the completion of their professional practice experience.</i>	
	Name:	Preferred phone number:
	Job/role title:	Email address:
	Signature:	Date:
Academic supervisor	Name:	Work phone number:
	Signature:	Email address:
	Date:	