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ABSTRACT

Museum librarians occupy positions in a wide variety of organizations, including art galleries, colleges and universities, government agencies, and historical societies. This study investigated what qualifications and attributes employers wish entry-level museum librarians to possess as they begin their library careers. A questionnaire was mailed to 169 museum library directors, and 93 (57.4%) usable questionnaires were returned. The survey included questions about education, training, and personal characteristics. According to the data, 94.6% of museum library directors want new museum librarians to have at least one Master's degree, preferably in library science. As for the subject of the undergraduate degree, 78.5% preferred art history. Often a proficiency in foreign languages and a second subject specialty are vital as well, along with problem-solving and online searching skills and prior library experience. Personal qualities rated highest were reliability, approachability, intelligence, communication skills, and a strong service orientation. Sample questionnaires are appended, and 15 tables illustrate the data. (Contains 200 references.) (BEW)

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A SURVEY OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED BY EMPLOYERS OF ENTRY-LEVEL MUSEUM LIBRARIANS

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A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Diana J. Duerler

August, 1995

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A SURVEY OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED BY EMPLOYERS OF ENTRY-LEVEL MUSEUM LIBRARIANS

Museum librarians occupy positions in a wide variety of organizations, including art galleries, colleges and universities, government agencies and historical societies. The purpose of this study was to determine what skills and qualifications employers wish entry-level museum librarians to possess as they begin their library careers. Although researchers have conducted numerous surveys about the educational and professional background of librarians in other types of institutions, there is a dearth of information on museum librarians with regard to this topic. The methodology involved a survey of employers of entry-level museum librarians, with the objective of compiling a list of competencies that employers want new librarians to have. The survey included questions about the entry-level librarian's education (e.g. foreign language skills and subject degrees), training (e.g. supervisory experience and management skills) and personal characteristics (e.g. intelligence and commitment to librarianship). According to the data, some of the skills and qualifications that museum library directors want new librarians to have include at least one master's degree, preferably a Master's Degree in Library Science, a proficiency in foreign languages, a subject specialty, problem-solving and online searching skills and prior library experience; they would also like entry-level museum librarians to be approachable, intelligent, articulate and service oriented.

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Master's Research Paper by

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I. INTRODUCTION

Museum libraries are housed in many different kinds of organizations, including aquariums, art galleries, botanical gardens, colleges and universities, government agencies, historical societies, planetariums, science and technology centers and zoological parks. Since these libraries serve a wide variety of institutions, each one's role within its parent organization may differ somewhat, but the basic purpose of every museum library is "to support the curatorial and other professional staff in its study of the museum collections, and to provide research materials and library assistance for museum exhibitions, lectures, and publications" (Usher 1985, 13).

Keeping a museum library running smoothly requires "someone in charge, someone to make short- and long- range plans, to oversee daily operations, and to ensure that the library's collection and services are responsive to the needs of the museum community" (Bierbaum 1994, 11). Museum librarians perform a wide variety of duties, including acting as a liaison with other libraries, answering reference questions, cataloging books and audio-visual materials, developing and maintaining print and non-print collections, performing literature searches, soliciting funds and publicity for the library and supervising the clerical staff. In order to fulfill these duties, as well as many others, it is essential that museum librarians have the appropriate education, experience and training.

Many books, journal articles, reports and surveys have been written outlining the professional and educational background that library science educators and library

employers want entry-level librarians to have when beginning their careers; topics of discussion include whether or not professional librarians need master's degrees in library science, whether or not librarians should be subject specialists and/or have dual degrees and whether or not library science students should have to complete practicums and/or internships before graduating from library school. Unfortunately, library science educators, practitioners and researchers have never been able to agree on these issues; library faculty complain that "practitioners don't necessarily want us educators to educate your new hires, you want us to train them" (White 1983, 520) while library directors argue that "graduates emerge from library school ignorant of the day-to-day workings of a library" (Plaiss 1983, 618).

A museum employer must identify the skills and qualifications that a librarian needs to perform his job satisfactorily. This study will provide the museum director with a checklist of competencies that he can consult when hiring entry-level museum librarians.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine the skills and qualifications desired by employers of entry-level museum librarians. In particular, the study attempted to identify what kind of educational background, personal characteristics and skills that museum directors want new librarians to possess.

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following definitions were used:

- 1) "Competency": Quality of being capable of performing a job satisfactorily
- 2) "Entry-level": A librarian's first professional job
- 3) "Qualification": A distinguishing trait or quality that makes a person suitable for a job
- 4) "Skill": Ability or proficiency

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Competency Studies in Library Science

A review of the library science literature indicates that numerous researchers have conducted studies relating to the qualifications and skills that entry-level librarians need in order to be successful in their careers. In 1969, Lilley surveyed forty-one professionals in order to identify basic competencies that information specialists should have in such areas as administration, cataloging, reference, research methods and the structure of publishing; some of the skills that the librarians listed included being able to use reference works, conduct research in information problems and manage a library. Crowe (1973) asked library school graduates to discuss the skills that they used in their jobs; their answers covered a wide variety of abilities, including those used in collection development, management and technical services. In 1984, Nathan Smith studied competencies required by directors of large public libraries; he found that skills "seen as most highly desirable for entry-level professionals in the present included the traditional general reference, bibliography and organizational skills as well as human relations and research skills" (White 1986, 72). A 1986 landmark study, the King Report, focused on the types of skills that all librarians need, whether they be academic, public, school or special librarians. Griffiths and King outlined over 8000 competencies that information professionals use while performing nineteen different functions, including acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, interlibrary loan, reference and serials control. They identified those competencies in terms of

knowledge (e.g. knowledge of communication, languages, the library community, subject fields and technology), skills (e.g. budgeting, reference interviews and time management) and attitudes (e.g. confidence, tenacity and a willingness to accept responsibility) (Griffiths and King 1985, 317-325). In a content analysis of 218 job advertisements in American Libraries, Grace (1994) found that energy, flexibility, initiative, sensitivity to cultural differences and strong organizational skills are important qualities for public services librarians. Not surprisingly, the personality trait listed most often in the position descriptions that he analyzed was "service orientation."

Competency Studies and Library Science Education

The goal of many competency studies has been to determine whether or not practitioners feel that library science programs teach graduate students the skills necessary to be information professionals. For example, Deer (1983) conducted a study asking public school administrators which courses they would like prospective library personnel to take; many of them rated classes in public relations, search strategies and educational technology highly desirable. In her report entitled "Education of the Information Professional: What Employers Want," Preschel writes that industry employers want library science schools to teach information professionals administrative, computer, foreign language and marketing skills (Preschel 1988, 358-361).

Competency Studies and Special Libraries

Special libraries, of which museum libraries are a branch, have been the focus of many discussions and investigations concerning the competencies of entry-level librarians. For instance, Strable was adamant that a person who wanted to work in a special library should "possess education (or equivalent experience) in the topical areas of greater concern to his organization" (Strable 1966, 358-361); if not, he would be at a disadvantage in understanding the literature and terminology of the field, and as a result, he might not be able to help his clientele as effectively. Even Jesse Shera, the renowned librarian, stated that "in preparing for a career in a special library, professional preparation in the subject field or fields involved is more important than library training" (Shera 1976, 118). In his famous report on the education of librarians, Conant (1980) surveyed employers of special librarians in order to identify the knowledge, skills and understanding that they looked for when hiring new staff members; problem-solving techniques, management by objectives, statistical analysis, reference interviews and report writing were among several of the skills that the employers listed as desirable for new librarians. Several researchers have conducted studies of the qualifications sought by employers of health sciences librarians (Schmidt and Swanton 1980, Protti 1984, Stroyan 1987, Roper and Mayfield 1993). According to their findings, medical librarians should have such skills as information needs assessment, space planning, budgeting, personnel management and selection of health information resources, as well as library experience, subject specializations and

Medical Library Association certification. In 1981, Kim conducted a content analysis of job advertisements in four library science periodicals, Academic Libraries, College and Research Libraries News, Library Journal and Ohio Library Opportunities; her aim was to develop a profile of minimum qualifications for professional librarians, including those working in special libraries. According to her research, special librarians need master's degrees in library science, prior library experience, subject master's degrees and foreign language skills. Gabehart (1992) identified double master's degrees in history and library science and training in archives conservation and automation as the qualifications most desired by employers of entry-level archivists. In a 1992 study of the Association of Independent Information Professionals, Green compiled an extensive list of competencies that information brokers need; being able to apply effective interpersonal skills with clients, accurately price information products and services, develop search strategies and conduct appropriate reference interviews were among some of the skills that AIIP members listed as essential for entry-level information professionals. In an attempt to determine what qualifications employers expect in information scientists and/or information specialists, Updyke performed a content analysis of 95 job advertisements in ASIS Jobline and Specialist. Many of the position descriptions in the two journals listed the same skills, including communication and interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, a knowledge of reference tools and networking experience; however, Updyke concluded that "employers are not following an established set of criteria for information professionals, but rather are defining what they think the qualifications are based on their own internal needs and wants"

(Updyke 1994, 31).

Unfortunately, faculty, researchers and employers cannot agree on what competencies and qualifications librarians need, whether they work in academic, public, school or special libraries. As White and Paris concluded, "While some writers call for a concentration on the development of overall intellectual abilities in such broad areas as liberal arts, communications skills, and the ability to deal with societal issues and concepts, others stress a general preparation in the fundamentals of the library profession, with the learning of specific skills to follow, largely through on-the-job training. Still others--perhaps primarily the supervisors entrusted with this training--express a preference for individuals already trained to the specific requirements of the job in question, even if necessary at the cost of other more general qualifications" (White and Paris 1985, 3).

Research in Museum Libraries

Even though there is an abundance of literature on skills and qualifications that librarians in general, and special librarians in particular, need, few people have written about museum librarians; in fact, museum libraries and librarianship have been virtually ignored in library science literature and research. The Museum: A Reference Guide, published by Greenwood Press in 1980, mentions neither museum libraries nor librarians. Even the two most recent books devoted exclusively to museum librarianship reveal nothing new concerning the training and educational needs of museum librarians. In Museum Librarianship, Elizabeth Usher devotes less than a

page to the skills and qualifications that a museum librarian should have. Esther Bierbaum, who has written extensively on museum libraries and librarianship, recently published Museum Librarianship: A Guide to the Provision and Management of Information Services; however, she says little about the competencies that professional librarians need other than that they should be "degreed in library and information science" (Bierbaum 1994, 11).

Those studies that have been performed in museum libraries have focused just briefly on the kinds of skills and qualifications that museum librarians need in order to be successful in their careers. In 1973, Usher conducted an informal survey among several of her colleagues asking whether or not they believed that library schools adequately prepare students to work in museum libraries; however, the emphasis of her report was on the need for library educators and administrators to cooperate in revising the library school curriculum, rather than the specific competencies that new librarians should possess. A 1986 survey of art, historical, science and other museum libraries was more concerned with the financial relationship between the parent organization and the library and the size, composition and control of the collection than with the professional and educational background of the librarians. (Hull and Fearnley 1986, 289-298). Bierbaum's 1988 report on the careers of museum, arts and humanities librarians briefly mentions their educational and work backgrounds, but the emphasis of her survey was on the size and gender of the museum library staff, as well as whether or not the librarians felt that library school had prepared them for their current job positions. In 1991, Oren did a survey of art museum librarians in

which she asked them about their educational backgrounds; however, the main focus of her questionnaire was on the services that art museum libraries provide to the public, not the skills and qualifications of the librarians.

III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive study was to compile as comprehensive a list as possible of the skills and qualifications that directors of museum libraries want entry-level librarians to have when they begin their careers. A mail questionnaire, which is one of the fastest and most economical ways to reach a large, widely dispersed sample, was sent to directors of museum libraries from all over the country.

Sample

Since it is not feasible to send a survey to every museum library in the United States, it was necessary to mail the questionnaire to a small, representative sample of museums. The sample population came from the 1994 Official Museum Directory, which features profiles and statistics on over 7,300 museums in the United States (Official Museum Directory 1994, vii). The directory was reviewed to determine which museums would be included in the sample population. Museum libraries were chosen using the following criteria:

- 1) Museums chosen were members of the American Association of Museums, a nonprofit, national service organization for museums and museum personnel.
- 2) Museums chosen were all located in the United States. Those institutions in Puerto Rico and Canada were eliminated in order to maintain a population within the United States.
- 3) Museums were are accredited by the American Association of Museums. To be accredited by the AAM, a museum must meet the highest professional standards and have the capacity for continuous improvement. In 1994, there were 730 AAM-accredited museums in the United States (Official Museum Directory 1994, xiii).

- 4) The museum's directory listing included a library under "Facilities."
- 5) The museum's directory listing included "Librarian(s)" under "Key Personnel."
- 6) The museum's directory listing indicated that the museum provided library services. Examples of services provided include circulation, interlibrary loan, and reference.

Of the 730 accredited museums in the directory, 169 museums met all of the above criteria, resulting in a sample population of 169 museum libraries.

Questionnaire Development

Since no one has yet surveyed employers of museum librarians about the skills and qualifications that they wish entry-level librarians to have, it was necessary to formulate a questionnaire. Developed from other books, reports and surveys on competency studies in library and information science, the questionnaire included both open-ended and closed questions, focusing on the professional and educational background of entry-level librarians, as well as their personal attributes and characteristics. The survey was checked by a library director with extensive experience in hiring personnel, as well as two experts in the field of museum librarianship; they evaluated the questionnaire for clarity, readability and suitability of the questions and their comments and suggestions were then incorporated into the questionnaire.

Procedures and Design

Museum library employers chosen as part of the population sample were sent a copy of the questionnaire (Appendix A), along with a cover letter (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the study and the assurance that their participation was strictly voluntary and confidential. Questions included both closed and open-ended questions about the training, educational background and personal traits of entry-level librarians; the open-ended questions were included to allow the respondents to elaborate more fully on a topic.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

This descriptive study elicited two different kinds of data, quantitative and qualitative data. For example, quantitative data was collected and analyzed to determine the frequency of occurrence of each answer (e.g. how many employers listed a master's degree in library science as very important).

Out of the 169 questionnaires mailed to museum library directors, a response of some kind was received from 100; this represents a total response rate of 59.1%. Of the 100 surveys returned, seven directors chose not to complete the survey or they did not complete the whole survey, either because they felt that it was not appropriate for their libraries and/or because they do not hire entry-level librarians. This left 93 usable questionnaires, for a response rate of 57.4%.

Type of Museum

The respondents were asked to identify the kind of repository in which their libraries are located. Art museum directors (45, 48%) and history museum directors (26, 28%) accounted for 71 (76%) of the museum library directors responding to the survey. The number of responses categorized by type of institution is shown in Table 1.

When asked to specify what kind of repository their libraries are housed in, the seven (8%) library directors who marked "Other" categorized them as Botanical Gardens (2), Archaeology and Anthropology (1), Maritime (1), Military History (1),

Music Archive (1) and Native American Art and Culture (1) museums.

Table 1.--Response Rate by Type of Museum

Type of Museum	f	%
General	5	5%
Art	45	48%
History	26	28%
Natural History	10	11%
Science	0	0%
Other	7	8%
Total	93	100%

Number of Librarians

There was a total of 260 professional librarian positions in the 93 institutions responding to the survey, 211 full-time and 49 part-time positions. Forty-seven (50.5%) libraries had only one full-time or one part-time librarian, supporting Larsen's statement that in many museum libraries, "one person, with clerical help, must assume the full range of operational responsibilities" (Larsen 1985, ix).

Minimum Educational Qualifications

The respondents were asked to select both their required and their preferred minimum educational qualifications for entry-level museum librarians. Even though 88 (94.6%) of the library directors would prefer that new librarians have at least one

master's degree, only 75 (81%) actually require them to have at least a master's degree. In both cases, a Master's Degree in Library Science (MLS) was the most frequent response, with 65 (70%) requiring an MLS and 54 (58.1%) preferring an MLS. See Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2.--Minimum Educational Qualifications: Required

Educational Level	f	%
High School Diploma	1	1%
Undergraduate Degree	17	18%
Master's Degree, any field	7	8%
Master's Degree, Library Science	65	70%
Double Master's Degree	3	3%
Ph.D.	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	93	100 %

Not surprisingly, when given a preference, many library directors would prefer that new librarians be very well-educated. For example, thirty (32.3%) of the respondents would prefer museum librarians to have double master's degrees, while only three (3%) actually require new staff members to have double master's degrees.

See Table 3.

Table 3.—Minimum Educational Qualifications: Preferred

Educational Level	f	%
High School Diploma	0	0.0%
Undergraduate Degree	5	5.4%
Master's Degree, any field	2	2.1%
Master's Degree, Library Science	54	58.1%
Double Master's Degree	30	32.3%
Ph.D.	2	2.1%
Other	0	0.0%
Total	93	100%

Major Subject of Undergraduate Degree

With regard to an entry-level museum librarian's undergraduate degree, an overwhelming majority of the ninety-three (73, 78.5%) directors had a preference for the major subject of the degree, with Art History being the most frequent response. Nineteen (20.4%) respondents had no preference and one (1.1%) indicated that an undergraduate degree was not required. Some directors specified more than one subject; each response was tabulated. See Table 4.

Table 4.—Subject of Undergraduate Degree

Major Subject	(N=73)	f	%
Art History		31	42.47%
History		13	17.81%
American History		6	8.22%
Art		6	8.22%
Humanities		6	8.22%
Anthropology		4	5.48%
Biology		4	5.48%
Fine Arts		4	5.48%
Studio Arts		3	4.11%
Zoology		3	4.11%
Archives/Special Collections		2	2.74%
Natural Science		2	2.74%
Sciences		2	2.74%
American Anthropology		1	1.37%
American Art		1	1.37%
Asian Art		1	1.37%
Asian History		1	1.37%
Asian Language		1	1.37%
Botany		1	1.37%
Ethnography		1	1.37%
Geology		1	1.37%
Hawaiian/Pacific Studies		1	1.37%
Languages		1	1.37%
Maritime History		1	1.37%
Native Studies		1	1.37%
Subject of major focus in library		1	1.37%
Western History		1	1.37%

Accredited vs. Non-accredited MLS

Of the 65 respondents requiring an MLS for entry-level museum librarians, an overwhelming majority (62, 95.3%) preferred that new librarians receive their degrees from accredited library schools, an even higher percentage than the one found in

Gabehart's survey of ARL academic libraries. According to his results, 82% of the institutions surveyed favored a policy of hiring employees with an accredited MLS over employees with a non-accredited MLS (Gabehart 1990, 240).

Reasons Why Museums Do Not Require an MLS

Those library directors who do not require entry-level museum librarians to have a Master's Degree in Library Science were asked to specify why their institutions do not require an MLS. Respondents could check more than one answer. Two of the most popular responses were that the MLS, while desirable, is unrealistic (11, 30%) and other qualifications are more important (9, 24%). See Table 5.

Table 5.--Reasons an MLS is not Required

Reason	f	%
MLS is desirable, but unrealistic	11	30%
Other qualifications are more important	9	24%
Difficulty in recruiting MLS graduates	3	8%
No library school in region	3	8%
Other	11	30%
Total	37	100%

The eleven answers marked "Other" can be grouped into three different categories: Money (5), unimportance of the MLS (4) and subject specialization (2). For example, several of the library directors maintained that their institutions do not have the resources to pay MLS holders. Others felt that it is more important for an entry-level museum librarian to have a degree in the subject field(s) of major interest to his or her parent organization. And lastly, still others stated that the MLS is not as important as other considerations, such as an employee's experience or educational background; as one director put it, "Hire the person, not the certificate."

Second Master's Degrees

Those respondents who required or preferred entry-level museum librarians to have a second master's degree in addition to an MLS had a decided preference for the subject of those advanced degrees; twenty-four (47%) of the library directors would like entry-level museum librarians to have a Master's Degree in Fine Arts. Although it was assumed that they would only check one subject, many marked more than one response; each answer was tabulated. See Table 6.

Of the ten answers in the "Other" category, each of the following subjects was specified once by the respondents: American Anthropology, Anthropology, Art History, the Environment, Hawaiian/Pacific Studies, Museum Research Areas, Museum Studies, Science, Subject relevant to the museum's mission and Zoology.

Table 6.--Subject of Second Master's Degrees

Subject	f	%
Biology	2	4%
Business	0	0%
Chemistry	0	0%
Fine Arts	24	47%
History	13	25%
Languages	2	4%
Mathematics	0	0%
Medicine	0	0%
Music	0	0%
Philosophy	0	0%
Physics	0	0%
Sociology	0	0%
Other	10	20%
Total	51	100%

Foreign Languages

Each library director was asked to indicate both the required and the preferred foreign language qualification(s) for employment as entry-level museum librarians in his or her institution. Respondents were instructed to check every answer that applied

to each segment of the question. In response to the required foreign language qualification, 81 (76%) stated that no foreign language is required. For those libraries requiring a foreign language, modern European languages accounted for the two most popular answers: French (9, 8%) and German (7, 7%). See Table 7.

Table 7.—Foreign Language Qualification: Required

Language	f	%
None	81	76%
Chinese	2	2%
French	9	8%
German	7	7%
Italian	2	2%
Japanese	1	1%
Russian	0	0%
Spanish	1	1%
Other	3	3%
Total	106	100%

When asked which foreign languages were preferred for employment as an entry-level museum librarian, 42 (24%) still indicated that no foreign language ability was

preferred. Once again, the directors preferred French (39, 23%) and German (34, 20%). See Table 8.

Each of the following responses was listed at least once under the category designated as "Other": Any (2), Hawaiian (1), Hebrew (1), Korean (1) and Latin (1).

Table 8.—Foreign Language Qualification: Preferred

Language	f	%
None	42	24%
Chinese	5	3%
French	39	23%
German	34	20%
Italian	18	10%
Japanese	5	3%
Russian	5	3%
Spanish	18	10%
Other	6	4%
Total	172	100%

Library Science Courses

Each director was asked to rate the importance of particular library science courses for entry-level museum librarians. In Table 9, the course listed the most often under

the category "Very Important" was "Reference" (63, 67.74%); the course listed the most often under the category "Not Important" was "Government Documents" (53, 56.99%).

Table 9.—Rating of Library Science Courses by Library Directors

Course (N=93)	Very Important		Important		Not Important		No Opinion	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Acquisitions	20	21.51%	31	33.33%	21	22.58%	21	22.58%
Archives	27	29.03%	32	34.41%	14	15.05%	20	21.51%
Automation	42	45.16%	31	33.33%	4	4.30%	16	17.21%
Cataloging	53	56.99%	26	27.96%	0	0.00%	14	15.05%
Collection Dev.	24	25.80%	35	37.64%	13	13.98%	21	22.58%
Govt. Docs.	1	1.08%	10	10.75%	53	56.99%	29	31.18%
History of Libs.	0	0.00%	19	20.43%	44	47.32%	30	32.25%
Management	16	17.21%	39	41.94%	15	16.12%	23	24.73%
Preservation	31	33.33%	43	46.25%	4	4.30%	15	16.12%
Reference	63	67.74%	16	17.21%	0	0.00%	14	15.05%
Research Meth.	35	37.64%	29	31.18%	10	10.75%	19	20.43%
Special Libraries	18	19.36%	30	32.25%	18	19.36%	27	29.03%

Twenty-three (24.7%) directors listed other courses that they would like entry-level museum librarians to have taken while in graduate school, including some that are

repetitions of the courses in the previous question and others that are not library science courses, but that the directors felt were important enough to list. See Table 10.

Table 10.—Additional Library Science Courses

Course	(N=23)	f	%
History of Books and Printing/Rare Books		7	30.43%
Accounting/Fiscal Management		2	8.70%
Cataloging (e.g. Original, Manuscript)		2	8.70%
Museum Librarianship		2	8.70%
Reference Service		2	8.70%
Visual Resources		2	8.70%
Adult Services and Programming		1	4.35%
Archival Administration		1	4.35%
Audiovisual Equipment		1	4.35%
Bibliographics		1	4.35%
Bibliography		1	4.35%
Collections Maintenance		1	4.35%
Computer Usage		1	4.35%
Database Management and Construction		1	4.35%
Database Searching		1	4.35%
Fundraising		1	4.35%
Humanities Reference		1	4.35%
Indexing		1	4.35%
Internet		1	4.35%
Intrapersonal Communications		1	4.35%
Library Departments and Functions		1	4.35%
Museum Automation and Systems		1	4.35%
Non-book Materials/Cataloging		1	4.35%
Online Database Searching		1	4.35%
Public Service		1	4.35%
Rare Book Bibliography		1	4.35%
Science and Technology Literature		1	4.35%
Slide Cataloging and Management		1	4.35%
Space Planning		1	4.35%
Special Collections		1	4.35%
Specialized Bibliography Courses		1	4.35%
Specialized Collection Management		1	4.35%

Library Schools

When asked whether or not they believe library schools adequately prepare students for entry-level museum library positions, 43 (46.3%) of the museum library directors answered "Yes," 19 (20.4%) said "No" and 31 (33.3%) had no opinion.

Library Science Education

Even though they might have answered "Yes" or "No Opinion" when asked whether or not they felt library schools adequately prepare students for entry-level museum library positions, many of the directors still acknowledged that there is a lot of room for improvement in library science education. When asked how schools could improve their curriculum, 55 (59.1%) directors answered that students should be required to take practicums, 44 (47.3%) responded that library schools should include courses taught by practitioners and 41 (44.1%) recommended that library schools should include courses on museum librarianship; only three (3.2%) responded that no changes are necessary. See Table 11.

Answers specified under the category designated as "Other" were most often of a practical nature. According to the respondents, library science students need more experience doing such things as operating computers, managing budgets, publishing papers, preparing grant proposals, writing job descriptions and cataloging original library materials.

Table 11.—Ways to Improve Library Science Education

Improvement	f	%
Accept Credit for Courses from Other Fields	25	13%
Include Courses Taught by Practitioners	44	23%
Include Museum Library Science Courses	41	21%
Increase Number of Credit Hours Required for Graduation	2	1%
Require Independent Research	9	5%
Require Practicums	55	28%
No Changes are Necessary	3	2%
Other	14	7%
Total	193	100%

Personal Characteristics

The library directors were asked to rate the importance of different personal characteristics for entry-level librarians. Personal characteristics that respondents rated most highly were reliability (72, 77.42%), approachability (68, 73.12%), and intelligence (65, 69.90%). Respondents did not feel that it is as important that new librarians be assertive (22, 23.65%), participate in professional organizations (18, 19.36%) or be creative (8, 8.60%) or persistent (8, 8.60%). See Table 12.

Table 12.--Rating of Personal Characteristics by Library Directors

Characteristic (N=93)	Very Important		Important		Not Important		No Opinion	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Approachable	68	73.12%	22	23.65%	0	0.00%	3	3.23%
Articulate	63	67.74%	28	30.11%	2	2.15%	0	0.00%
Assertive	17	18.28%	45	48.40%	22	23.65%	9	9.67%
Confident	28	30.11%	55	59.14%	4	4.30%	6	6.45%
Comm. to Lib.	36	38.71%	44	47.31%	6	6.45%	7	7.53%
Creative	43	46.25%	33	35.48%	8	8.60%	9	9.67%
Enthusiastic	46	49.46%	39	41.94%	3	3.23%	5	5.37%
Innovative	39	41.94%	39	41.94%	6	6.45%	9	9.67%
Intelligent	65	69.90%	24	25.80%	0	0.00%	4	4.30%
Participation In Prof. Orgs.	13	13.98%	53	56.99%	18	19.36%	9	9.67%
Persistent	14	15.05%	60	64.52%	8	8.60%	11	11.83%
Reliable	72	77.42%	19	20.43%	0	0.00%	2	2.15%
Serv. Orientation	61	65.59%	26	27.96%	0	0.00%	6	6.45%
Team Player	56	60.22%	29	31.18%	3	3.23%	5	5.37%

When asked to name other personal characteristics, forty-two (45.1%) listed additional attributes that they feel are important for entry-level museum librarians to

possess. Many respondents put more than answer. In order to show the wide variety of their responses, all the answers were tabulated. See Table 13.

Table 13.--Additional Personal Characteristics

Characteristic	(N=42)	f	%
Flexible		12	28.57%
Sense of Humor		5	11.90%
Able to Get Along with Others		3	7.14%
Attentive to Details		3	7.14%
Organized		3	7.14%
Patient		3	7.14%
Broad Personal Interests		2	4.76%
Common Sense		2	4.76%
Neat Appearance		2	4.76%
Realistic		2	4.76%
Willing to Learn		2	4.76%
Able to Deal with Backlogs		1	2.38%
Able to Deal with Routine Tasks		1	2.38%
Able to Function with Shrinking Budgets		1	2.38%
Able to Juggle Numerous Responsibilities		1	2.38%
Able to Plan		1	2.38%
Able to Survive Constant Interruptions		1	2.38%
Adaptable		1	2.38%
Appreciates the Past		1	2.38%
Dedicated		1	2.38%
Friendly		1	2.38%
Good Listener		1	2.38%
Good Manners		1	2.38%
Good Social Skills		1	2.38%
Humble		1	2.38%
Initiative		1	2.38%
Interest in Rare and Out-of-Print Books and Ephemera		1	2.38%
Knowledgeable about Museums in America		1	2.38%
Leader		1	2.38%
Likes Work		1	2.38%

(Table 13 continued)

Characteristic	f	%
Meticulous	1	2.38%
Non-judgmental	1	2.38%
Openminded	1	2.38%
Pleasant Public Image	1	2.38%
Proud of Profession	1	2.38%
Proud of Quality of Work	1	2.38%
Stamina	1	2.38%
Supportive of Staff Research	1	2.38%
Systematic Working Methods	1	2.38%
Tactful	1	2.38%
Task Oriented	1	2.38%
Tenacious	1	2.38%
Versatile	1	2.38%

Skills

The respondents were asked to rate the importance of certain skills for entry-level museum librarians. Communication skills were listed the most frequently under "Very Important" (63, 67.74%). Other skills that the library directors felt were highly desirable were problem-solving skills (58, 62.36%), online searching skills (33, 35.48%) and public relations (29, 31.18%). Marketing skills were listed most often under "Not Important" (50, 53.77%), while supervisory experience (48, 51.62%) and the ability to operate A-V equipment (48, 51.62%) were seen as less important than other skills. See Table 14.

Table 14.—Rating of Skills by Library Directors

Skill (N=93)	Very Important		Important		Not Important		No Opinion	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
A-V Equipment	1	1.08%	32	34.40%	48	51.62%	12	12.90%
Bib. Instruction	19	20.43%	49	52.69%	19	20.43%	6	6.45%
Comm. Skills	63	67.74%	28	30.11%	2	2.15%	0	0.00%
Computer Prog.	16	17.21%	29	31.18%	40	43.01%	8	8.60%
Fiscal Management	14	15.05%	39	41.94%	34	36.56%	6	6.45%
Library Experience	28	30.11%	50	53.77%	10	10.75%	5	5.37%
Marketing	1	1.08%	33	35.48%	50	53.77%	9	9.67%
Online Searching	33	35.48%	47	50.54%	9	9.67%	4	4.31%
Problem-Solving	58	62.36%	31	33.33%	3	3.23%	1	1.08%
Public Relations	29	31.18%	47	50.54%	14	15.05%	3	3.23%
Supervisory Exp.	11	11.83%	29	31.18%	48	51.62%	5	5.37%

Twenty-five (26.8%) of the library directors chose to list additional skills that they felt were important for entry-level museum librarians to possess. All of the responses were tabulated, even though some of them were repetitions of answers to earlier questions. See Table 15.

Table 15.—Additional Skills

Skill	(N=25)	f	%
Foreign Languages		3	12%
Ability to Recruit, Direct and Manage Volunteers and Assistants		2	8%
Cataloging		2	8%
Computer Experience (as Opposed to Computer Programming)		2	8%
Familiarity with Computer Software		2	8%
Internet		2	8%
Knowledge of General and Subject Reference Tools		2	8%
Ability to Make Decisions		1	4%
Ability to Prioritize Tasks		1	4%
CD-ROM		1	4%
Critical Thinking Skills		1	4%
Desire to Continue Learning and to Cope With Change		1	4%
Experience with New Technology and On-line Sources		1	4%
Fundraising		1	4%
General Teaching/Instruction/Lecturing		1	4%
Grant Writing		1	4%
Knowledge of the History of Books and Printing		1	4%
Management of Multiple Priorities and Varied Collections		1	4%
Practical Skills		1	4%
Preservation		1	4%
RLIN		1	4%
Research		1	4%
Typing		1	4%
Willingness to Learn about the Total Organization with which the Library is Affiliated		1	4%
Word Processing		1	4%
Working with Potential Donors		1	4%
Writing		1	4%

Additional Comments

The respondents' additional comments concerning the skills and qualifications that they feel are important for entry-level museum librarians to possess were of particular interest. Most of the library directors who did provide additional comments stressed the fact that it is very important for an entry-level museum librarian to have practical experience in both the technical and public services departments of a library; since many museum library staffs are small, one librarian could be responsible for a variety of duties, including cataloging library materials and answering reference questions.

Several of the respondents expressed regret that the staff members and the administrators of their parent institutions often do not see the museum library as an integral part of the organization nor do they take advantage of the library's resources or the librarian's skills. This compares to Bierbaum's findings in a 1984 survey of natural history and science museums and nature and science centers; she received responses from two museum librarians whose directors had reported no library staff (Bierbaum 1984, 107).

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Museum librarianship is a specialized area of study that has been virtually ignored by the library science literature. This study has filled a definite void, in that it has drawn attention to the fact that more research needs to be done concerning museum libraries and librarians.

There is obviously a need for this particular research, since no one has ever before attempted to identify the skills and competencies required by entry-level museum librarians. Several groups could benefit from the results of this survey, including library educators, who could use the data to tailor courses for students interested in becoming museum librarians; library employers, who could use the information to recruit prospective library employees; practicing librarians, who could use the results to decide whether or not to change from one type of library to another; and library science students, who could use the information to determine whether or not they have the skills and competencies necessary to become successful museum librarians.

There did seem to be a consensus among the library directors surveyed concerning the skills and qualifications that they would like entry-level museum librarians to possess when beginning their careers. For example, 88 (94.6%) respondents would like new librarians to have at least one advanced degree and 65 (70%) require entry-level librarians to have an MLS. Subject specializations and fluency in foreign languages were also desirable to the directors. Personal characteristics rated highly

by the respondents included reliability (72, 77.42%), approachability (68, 73.12%) and intelligence (65, 69.90%). Directors would also like entry-level librarians to be able to communicate well, search online computer databases and make decisions using problem-solving techniques.

An entry-level librarian should concentrate on developing the skills and qualifications desired by the library directors responding to this survey if he or she is contemplating a career in museum libraries. Of course, new developments in the field of library and information science, including rapidly changing technology, more sophisticated patrons and fewer resources, will require the entry-level museum librarian to make a commitment to acquire new knowledge and skills throughout his or her career.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

A SURVEY OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED BY EMPLOYERS OF ENTRY-LEVEL MUSEUM LIBRARIANS

Please take a few minutes to complete this brief questionnaire. "Entry-level" is defined as a librarian's first professional library position.

1. Indicate the type of institution which best describes the kind of repository in which your library is located.

(Check only one answer)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural History Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Science Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |

2. How many professional librarians are employed in your library?
 _____ Full-time _____ Part-time

3. Check the minimum educational qualification for entry-level museum librarians in your institution.
 (Check only one answer in each column)

REQUIRED

- ☐ High School Diploma
- ☐ Undergraduate Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree, any field
- ☐ Master's Degree, Library Science
- ☐ Double Master's Degree
- ☐ Ph.D
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

PREFERRED

- ☐ High School Diploma
- ☐ Undergraduate Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree, any field
- ☐ Master's Degree, Library Science
- ☐ Double Master's Degree
- ☐ Ph.D
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

4. Do you have a preference for the major subject of an entry-level museum librarian's undergraduate degree?

- ☐ Yes (Specify major subject) _____
- ☐ No
- ☐ Undergraduate degree not required

5. If an MLS is required for entry-level museum librarians, does your institution prefer to hire applicants from accredited library schools over applicants from non-accredited library schools?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No preference
- ☐ MLS not required

6. If your institution does not require an MLS, please explain why. (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> An MLS is a desirable, but unrealistic, requirement | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in recruiting MLS graduates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other qualifications are more essential | <input type="checkbox"/> No library school in region |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ | |

7. If your institution requires or prefers entry-level museum librarians to have a second master's degree in addition to an MLS, please specify which field. (Go to question 8 if your institution does not require nor prefer advanced degrees)

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology | <input type="checkbox"/> Languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Physics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy | _____ |



12A. Rate the importance of the following personal characteristics for entry-level museum librarians.

	<u>VERY IMPORTANT</u>	<u>IMPORTANT</u>	<u>NOT IMPORTANT</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>
Approachable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assertive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confident	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committed to Librarianship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enthusiastic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intelligent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in Professional Organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persistent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team player	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12B. Please list any other personal characteristics that you feel are important for entry-level museum librarians to possess.

13A. Rate the importance of the following skills for entry-level museum librarians.

	<u>VERY IMPORTANT</u>	<u>IMPORTANT</u>	<u>NOT IMPORTANT</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>
A-V equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bibliographic Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiscal Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Library Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online Searching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem-Solving Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisory Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13B. Please list any other skills that you feel are important for entry-level museum librarians to possess.

14. Please use the back page to provide any additional comments and suggestions concerning the skills and qualifications that you feel are important for entry-level museum librarians to possess.

Your prompt response to this survey is very much appreciated. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope within the next ten days to:

Diana Duerler
4176 Beechgrove Drive
Grove City, OH 43123

APPENDIX B
COVER LETTER



**A SURVEY OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED BY
EMPLOYERS OF ENTRY-LEVEL MUSEUM LIBRARIANS**

April 10, 1995

Dear Librarian:

This letter is directed to the person responsible for hiring entry-level museum librarians in your organization. If you are not that individual, please forward it to the appropriate person.

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of the requirements for my master's degree, I must complete a research project. The enclosed questionnaire is designed to elicit information concerning the skills and qualifications that employers want entry-level museum librarians to have upon beginning their first professional jobs. The information would be useful to educators, practitioners and graduate students in the field of library and information science.

Your responses to the questionnaire will remain strictly confidential. Anonymity is guaranteed because you do not have to sign your name to the survey and only the investigator has access to the survey data. The return envelope has been coded to monitor returns; it will be separated from your completed survey and discarded immediately upon receipt. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose not to participate in this study or if you decide to withdraw from the study at any time. Your cooperation is voluntary; however, it is essential both to the accuracy of the survey data and to the success of this study.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (614) 466-4399 [day] or (614) 875-3516 [night] or Dr. Lois Buttlar, my research advisor, at (216) 672-2782. If you have questions regarding research at Kent State University, you may contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at (216) 672-2851.

Thank you for your cooperation; it is very much appreciated. You may return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope to me at the following address:

Diana Duerler
4176 Beechgrove Drive
Grove City OH 43123

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Duerler".

Diana Duerler
Graduate Student

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