
Recognition for your library's Continuing Professional Development programmes – a new award from CILIP



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INTRODUCTION

CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) has introduced a new Seal of Recognition scheme to strengthen the relationship between CILIP and the many excellent providers of continuing professional development (CPD) for the library and information science sector.



Before introducing the scheme, CILIP consulted widely in all sectors of the library and information domain, and professional groups (including SCONUL), academic and public institu-

tions, individual trainers and a range of training organisations were all invited to comment on the scheme. The feedback that was obtained was extremely valuable to CILIP and enabled us to review the proposed scheme and to address any issues and concerns. A common comment was that the initiative was very welcome, but that the process should not be too burdensome for the applicant, especially since many CPD activities were organised by volunteers who were rich in energy and enthusiasm but poor in time available. We were encouraged by the enthusiastic response

and incorporated the feedback by making small adjustments to the process and procedures.

HOW THE SCHEME WORKS: PREPARING AN APPLICATION

All types and sizes of organisation are encouraged to apply for the CILIP Seal of Recognition, and all appropriate formats of CPD event of any duration can be included as examples of activities to support the application, for example skills updates, training courses, conferences and seminars.

Academic and national libraries which offer CPD events that are also open to delegates from other campuses and libraries in the region or nationwide are all able to apply.

Applicants are invited to complete an application form and a questionnaire and to submit supporting material for one or more typical programmes within their training portfolio – this may include the day's programme, PowerPoint presentations, examples of case studies, training exercises and, for programmes delivered electronically, temporary access to the course content on the VLE.

Often applicants are unsure of the type of material to include to support the statements made on the application form and we are pleased to advise on this if requested. This is especially the case when the programmes selected to support the application are delivered remotely or are more loosely structured, with a high degree of facilitation and audience participation. In these cases it is very important that the assessors are able to have a strong sense of how the programme is working in practice, and material such as flipchart bullet points, key themes used to stimulate discussion and the projected learning outcomes all provide additional support to the application.

A very important part of any application is the feedback from participants, since this is a reliable indicator of how the programme is working in practice and includes suggestions on ways in which it may be enhanced in the future. It is also helpful to provide evidence of how the feedback has been incorporated in the development of future programmes. The feedback can be provided as (anonymised) sample feedback forms, or more commonly as a collated set of evaluation-questionnaire results – which are usually routinely collected and passed on to the organiser and/or programme leader.

HOW THE SCHEME WORKS: ASSESSMENT

The main criterion is that the sample CPD activities included in the application are of value to the library and information profession and demonstrate engagement with at least one element of CILIP's 'Body of Professional Knowledge' (BPK). This document defines the specialist subject knowledge that practitioners are expected to acquire for current and future professional practice. The knowledge base defined in the BPK has been adopted by CILIP and establishes the unique knowledge that distinguishes library and information professionals from professionals within other domains. The BPK is available on the CILIP web site at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/qualificationschartership/bpk> and printed copies are also available on request.

Independent assessors from the CILIP Accreditation Board review the submitted material to ensure that the content meets the above criteria and is relevant and up to date – members of the CILIP Accreditation Board are experienced senior members of the profession drawn from a wide range of professional practice. The focus throughout the review is on the course content – all other aspects (for example, the choice of venue, catering and specialist equipment) remain the responsibility of the provider. The assessors will look particularly closely at the relationship between the activity content and the learning outcomes and the BPK, and may ask for the applicant to supply additional information if there are any queries. In some cases, an applicant may be invited to take more time to collect additional supporting material, such as more examples of delegate feedback or an updated version of the content of the CPD programme, before submitting an updated application.

If an application is successful, the Seal of Recognition is awarded at the organisational level, and the organisation can apply the seal to additional relevant events within its CPD portfolio as long as it continues to meet the assessment criteria. This is subject to regular monitoring by CILIP, and organisations are routinely requested to provide CILIP with a list of CPD activities to which the seal has been applied. This more streamlined procedure for applicants was introduced in order to reduce the administrative burden and to address the concerns raised during the consultation phase. Successful applicants are sent a certificate that is valid for up to three years and a CD containing the CILIP Seal of Recognition logo, in a range of formats, which they can use in their electronic and

printed promotional material. Initial application fees cover the assessment process and reduced fees are available to educational institutions and registered charities; further information on this is available on the CILIP web site.

BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS

The Seal of Recognition provides many incentives for developing and enhancing courses. The award of the seal indicates that the content of typical programmes provided by the organisation has been assessed by a third party. The scheme is attractive to both large and small organisations who offer appropriate training programmes for the library and information sector. Of course, the success of any training programme in attracting delegates is often highly dependent upon marketing and promotion, and successful applicants can use the Seal of Recognition logo as a valuable promotions tool for their print and electronic marketing materials. Examples of innovative uses of the logo in marketing material can be seen in some of the web pages of organisations that have already been awarded the Seal of Recognition and links are available from the CILIP web site.

BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STAFF

When a training provider includes the Seal of Recognition logo alongside appropriate programmes in their training portfolio, this can be a very helpful indicator for library and information staff when selecting appropriate CPD programmes. It alerts potential delegates that the providers are directly addressing the Body of Professional Knowledge in these programmes. For library managers, the Seal of Recognition helps you to present a case for effective use of the training budget, knowing that the CPD activity has been independently reviewed and assessed.

EARLY SUCCESSES AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

We introduced a pilot scheme prior to launch – this gave us an opportunity to test how the new scheme would work in practice and, equally importantly, gave the Accreditation Board experience in assessing applications so that a consistent procedure for assessment could be agreed. Participants in this phase included a higher education institution (the University of Ulster) and you can read more about these early experiences in the *Gazette* article on the CILIP web site at www.cilip.org.uk/seal.

We officially launched the scheme at Online Information in London and the scheme has been running since the beginning of 2007. A glance at the list of successful applicants on the CILIP web site reveals the range of the types and sizes of organisations from all parts of the sector that have already made successful applications. The sample programmes that have been included in applications cover many library and information science skills and competencies, and are delivered locally, nationally and remotely, using seminars, e-learning, projects, group discussions and video conferences. We have been very pleased with the high level of interest in the scheme across the sector and new applicants are always encouraged. Although the foundations are now firmly in place, we will still continue to monitor the scheme to ensure its continued success.

FIND OUT MORE

For more information about the CILIP Seal of Recognition please visit the special section of the CILIP web site at www.cilip.org.uk/seal. This resource includes additional information about the scheme and a helpful link to a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section. The page also includes a list of training providers that have already been awarded the CILIP Seal of Recognition, with links to their own web sites. These reciprocal links provide valuable additional publicity for both CILIP and the training provider, and also include examples of the valuable impact of the Seal of Recognition in web-based promotional material. We will be pleased to provide further information and an application pack on request – please e-mail us at seal@cilip.org.uk or contact the Qualifications and Professional Development Department at CILIP.

ERRATUM

In issue 41 we ran the article 'What tangled webs...: redesigning the University of Warwick Library website' by Simon Speight and Hannah Perkins. Hannah has now moved to Coventry University, something we did not make clear with her author affiliation. We would like to apologise for any confusion caused.

Antony Brewerton
SCONUL Focus Editorial Board