



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Information

Faculty of Arts

Annual Alumni Survey Results 2020

Introduction

The following online survey was distributed to graduates of the Master of Archival Studies (MAS), Master of Library & Information Studies (MLIS), and Master of Archival Studies/Master of Library & Information Studies (MASLIS) graduates whose degrees were conferred between September 2019 and May 2020.

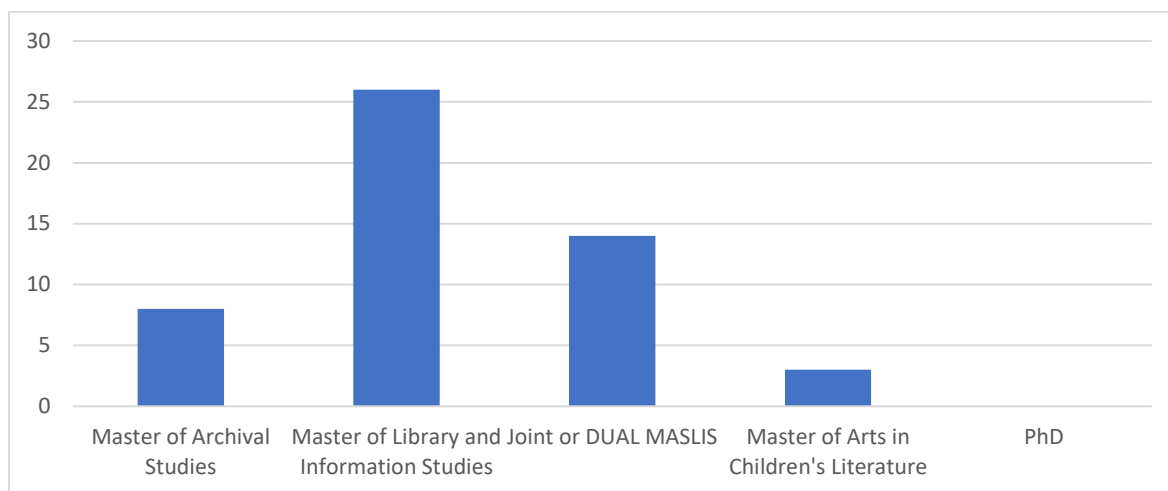
A total of 87 graduates were eligible to complete the survey: 47 MLIS, 15 MAS, 15 MASLIS, 8 MACL, and 2 PhD graduates. A total of 51 graduates completed the survey for a total response rate of 58.62%. Of the 51, 26 are MLIS graduates, 8 are MAS graduates, 14 are dual MAS/MLIS graduates, and 3 are MACL graduates.

Questions about the survey can be directed to the Educational Services Manager at ischool.edsm@ubc.ca.

Key findings

- 74% of the respondents are currently employed, compared to 96% of last year. Of the 38 respondents to the Alumni Survey who confirmed they have obtained employment since graduation, 32 (84%) reported being employed in a position related to their iSchool degrees, compared to 98% of last year.
 - **This drop in reported employment rate is likely due to the pandemic, and is expected to be an anomaly rather than a continuing pattern**
- 73% of respondents were either employed before completing their degree or within six months of graduation.
- 10% of the respondents (5) reported that they transferred programs during their time at iSchool. Those who transferred from DUAL to MLIS reported that they wish to shorten their time spent in school. None of the respondents transferred from DUAL to MAS.
- Responses to the newly introduced question on the School's efforts to foster an inclusive environment were mixed, with some respondents reporting that they felt the School fostered an inclusive and supportive environment, while others also reported that more efforts are required to examine the curriculum and pedagogy.

What degree did you complete at the iSchool?



Responses	51
Master of Archival Studies	8
Master of Library and Information Studies	26
Joint or DUAL MASLIS	14
Master of Arts in Children's Literature	3
PhD	0

Did you transfer from one program to another?

DUAL to MAS	0
DUAL to MLIS	2
MAS to DUAL	1
MLIS to DUAL	2
I did not transfer programs	45

If you did change your degree program, can you please provide your rationale for the decision?

Too much time in school (I did a previous master's), and discovered I liked libraries better than archives

I thought it would provide a more rounded education in the field, especially in terms of outreach/community engagement, and would ensure more job prospects in the long-term.

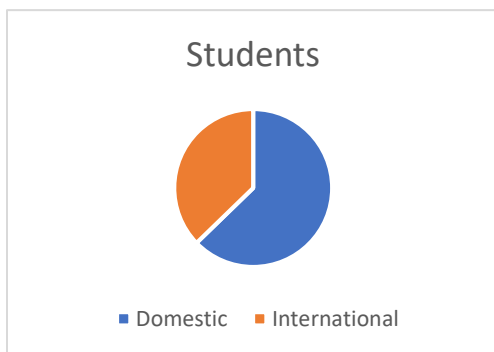
Too long to finish and not enough classes to take!

I wanted to deepen my understanding of heritage systems and be able to navigate both worlds and the intersections between them. I liked everything I'd heard about archives and thought it would be good to have multiple career paths open for me.

Did you complete any sub-specializations or concentrations as part of your degree?

First Nations Curriculum Concentration	6
Designing for People	1

Were you attending as a domestic or international student?



Responses:

Domestic	32
International	19

When was your degree conferred?

Answer	Response	%
November 2019	11	22%
May 2020	40	78%
Total	51	100%

What is your age group?

Answer	Response	%
20-29	31	61%
30-39	13	25%
40-49	4	8%
50-59	3	6%
60+	0	0%
Total	51	100%

The iSchool is actively working to foster an equitable and supportive environment for students of diverse backgrounds, particularly in terms of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and ability. Do you feel that the iSchool provided a supportive environment for students with your background? What could the iSchool do better?

yes

I wasn't a minority in the program but I think (from my perspective) that other groups felt included, though obviously I can't speak for anyone.

N/A to me, but it seems the iSchool certainly accommodated everyone.

More faculty of colour would be really helpful, because our faculty advisors are such an important part of getting through the program in one piece, and non-marginalized mentors can't fully understand the experiences of marginalized mentees.

Yes

N/A for myself, though I have heard of instructors not using preferred names of students.

I felt in good company on the basis of sexuality, and gender. However, I found that the iSchool was often unresponsive to the particular needs of international students (particularly those funding with loans like me) and in making sure final term students were able to register in required classes without being forced into an extra term

The iSchool could do better at supporting students with religious minority backgrounds as well as students who do not hold ultra-left political opinions. I was told by department staff that they were reprimanded for allowing students to pray in the department and were instructed to inform students that prayer in the department is not allowed. I also saw students with conservative political opinions openly mocked, bullied and ganged up on by other students. When reported to faculty and acting Director the best was caring looks but no action taken.

Yes, I did feel that the iSchool provided a supportive environment.

As a woman of colour, I often felt pretty alone in my courses. I did manage to form a wonderful group of friends that consisted of people of colour and other marginalized groups, but we didn't often have the same classes together. It's no secret that the our population is overwhelmingly white/cisgender/heteronormative/etc. In many courses where social justice issues came up, it felt like it was my responsibility to educate others and be patient with them while they virtue signalled at me. To be honest, being at the iSchool was rather exhausting and I'm grateful to be done. We were beginning to form a supportive group through iPoC (which I believe is now IDEAS), but this requires such a monumental amount of work on the part of the students. It would be great if the iSchool provided more institutional support for us, by way of a space to gather, time to be with one another, and leadership at a higher level. I always loved the idea of the FNCC afternoon teas and wish there had been something similar for us.

While I feel that in general the environment was supportive for students with my background, I did feel that a lot of the work going into creating this environment was disproportionately being carried out by Jennifer Douglas, Julia Bullard, and Richard Hernandez. I think the iSchool could do a better job of supporting these faculty members in this work, as they consistently

did an excellent job. I also think that other classes could do more to diversify their curriculum and incorporate Indigenous issues into their classes.

Yes, it was supportive.

Yes, I do feel that it was a supportive environment. Faculty, staff, and students were generally supportive of my gender identity and used correct pronouns for me. Some faculty could do better about making sure pronouns are a part of introductions on the first day of class. I also felt that faculty were very flexible and kind when my chronic illness/disability got in the way of completing work on time. I am really grateful for this, and for being able to take fewer classes per term and stretch out the degree without penalty. While I am sure that there is a lot that can be improved, I don't have many ideas based on my own experience and identifies. I'm also white and American, two privileges which of course make me less likely to experience an unsupportive environment.

As a white, straight, cis-gender woman I didn't experience any issues myself. I do think the iSchool could do a better job of integrating people of different backgrounds. It seemed like the default in many classes was for people to group together by ethnic background. I know from speaking to international students from different backgrounds, that some people did not always feel welcome or accepted by some white people, at least in our cohort.

Yes it did. Open discussions in most classes about the importance of reflecting on and identifying bias.

I wish that teachers were required to give their pronouns at the beginning of the semesters, and that they encouraged students to do the same.

As a cis white woman, I felt supported. I do think that the iSchool could do better in help other individuals with a different background from mine. The education is extremely Euro-centric and mainly focused on the voices of white men. A few professors did their best to diversify the curriculum. Besides the curriculum it seemed like the community inside the school was extremely divided between the MAS students and the MLIS students. I think doing more to help the student clubs and orgs would help close that divide.

Decolonialize the curriculum. Highlight books and articles that are written by BIPOC, queer, disabled creators.

I was satisfied.

As an internal student, I have always felt welcomed, and never experienced any kind of mistreatment from the professors, the school or UBC in general. I must also say that I could see the amount of work that has been done by the school to ensure welcoming environment for diverse student population. I felt like the students felt safe in classes because they were often willing to share their personal stories, perceptions and experiences.

Not really. Better minds than mine have spilled a lot of virtual ink on the topic, I would suggest implementing some of those suggestions.

It varied. In some cases I had to do a lot of education and advocacy for myself because the system and instructors were not prepared for supporting genderqueer students. But some aspects of slais (other students and student groups, professors like Julia Bullard, Richard

Arias Hernandez, and Jennifer Douglas) were incredibly welcoming and created the best learning environment I'd ever experienced.

I don't feel that there was enough tangible support for BIPOC students, in particular financial aid to attend conferences/events which can be so crucial for BIPOC in the information field. While many courses made effort to address issues of race and LGBTQ+ in discussions, it at times felt like those conversations were not reflected in action at the school in a meaningful way.

Yes

The unfortunate irony is that despite the often touted values of equality, the demographics at not only this iSchool but others in Canada and the US fail to adequately reflect the racially diverse populations being served. While this lack of racial diversity is not the fault of the UBC iSchool per se, more work certainly needs to be done in terms of recruiting students of colour. Perhaps it is time for a university wide survey to be administered to undergraduate students of colour in order to gauge why (or why not) the library profession appeals (or does not appeal) to them.

I am a straight white dude so I guess this question doesn't really apply to me? For what it's worth, I thought the iSchool worked very hard to be inclusive and never noticed any signs of deliberate or inadvertent discrimination based on students' backgrounds.

I found the most community among my classmates and select faculty members. I also encountered hostile environments in class in terms of course content and faculty and instructors. The iSchool needs to examine its attitude towards "this is how things have always been," and how slow curriculum reviews are in addressing student concerns. The iSchool also needs to address who is hired to be in positions of power.

I do feel that the iSchool provided a supportive environment for students with my background, but I hold many intersecting privileges and do not think my experience was universal. I think the iSchool could continue to improve in how it represents and teaches non-Eurocentric information practices. While I see these perspectives coming in to the classroom, the whole program is still oriented around old norms. I think a lot of the burden still falls on students to advocate for diverse readings, practices, etc.

Yes, there are very few courses or resources that cover anything other than the 'average' person or 'average library patron' and thus do not really prepare students for working with colleagues and patrons from different backgrounds

Yes!

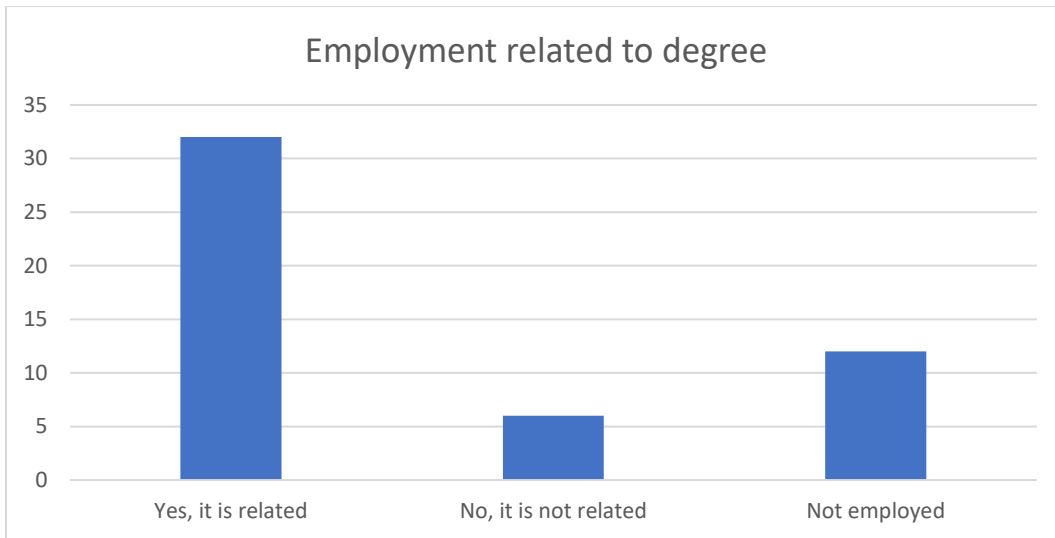
I feel that the school is definitely making an effort to be widely inclusive, although there continues to be an issue in the field with attracting candidates from these various groups.

Are you currently employed?



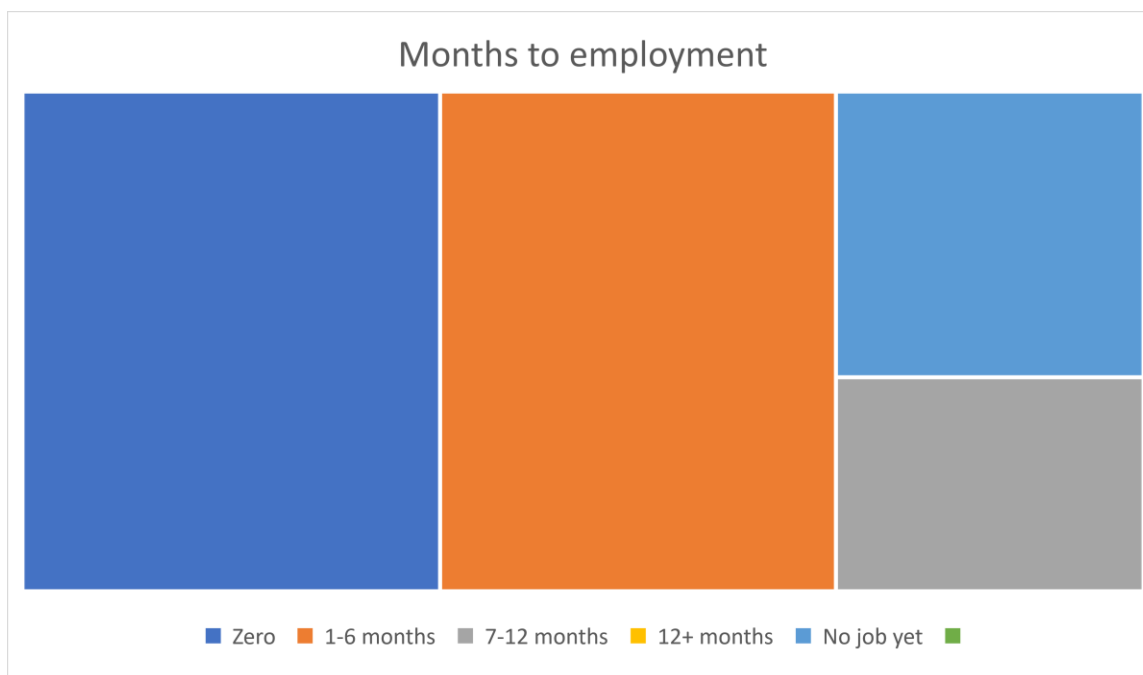
Yes	37 (74%)
No	13 (28%)

If you are currently employed, is your employment related to your iSchool degree?



Yes, it is related	32 (64%)
No, it is not related	6 (12%)
Not employed	12 (24%)

How many months elapsed between the completion of your degree and your first job placement?



Answer	Response	%
Zero – I obtained the position before completing my degree	19	37%
1-6 months	18	35%
7-12 months	6	12%
More than 12 months	0	0%
I have not received my first job placement	8	16%
Total	51	100%

What best describes your work status?

Answer	Response	%
Employed full-time in a single position	26	51%
Employed full-time in multiple positions	3	6%
Employed part-time in a single position	7	14%
Employed part-time in multiple positions	2	4%
Not employed	13	25%
Total	51	100%

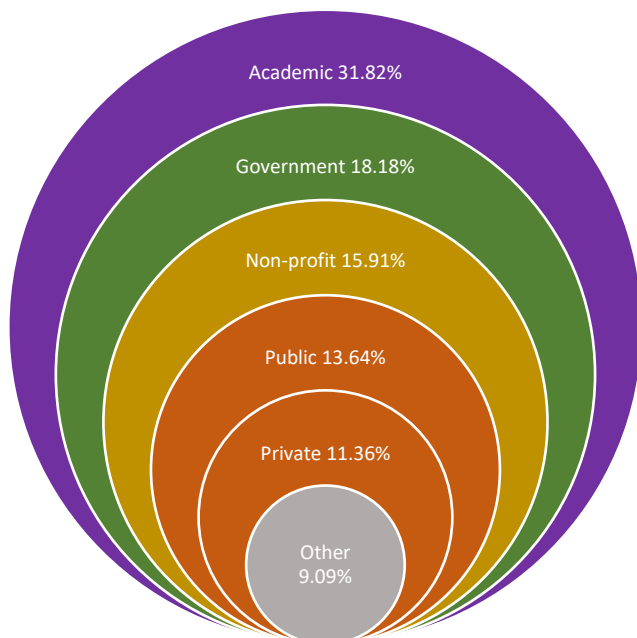
Did you obtain your full-time position as your first job placement?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	22	49%
No, I worked multiple contract positions prior to obtaining full-time employment	6	13%
No	17	38%
Total	45	100%

What is your current salary range?

Answer	Response	%
Less than \$25,000	17	34.69%
\$25,000-49,999	16	32.65%
\$50,000-74,999	15	30.61%
\$75,000-99,999	1	2.04%
Total	49	100%

In what type of organization is this position?



Answer	Response	%
Academic	14	31.82%
Public	6	13.64%
Private	5	11.36%
Government	8	18.18%
Non-profit	7	15.91%
Other	4	9.09%
Total	44	100%

Where is this position located?

Answer	Response	%
Metro Vancouver	22	50%
Lower Mainland (Whistler to Hope)	3	6.82%
Other part of BC	6	13.64%
Other Canadian province/territory	2	4.55%
Outside Canada	11	25%
Total	44	100%

Job titles

Data Steward

Sales Associate - Retail

Records Analyst

Traineeship

Collections Data Management Intern and Private Researcher (two jobs)

Currently unemployed

Records Analysr

Librarian

Program Coordinator

Laid off from first post-grad position due to c-19. It was only a 90-day contract, though.

Archives and Reference Assistant

Government Records Archivist

Librarian

Digital Archivist

Research and Information Coordinator

Operations Associate

Manager of Library Services however position was cancelled due to COVID

Casual Youth Librarian

Music, Modern Language, and Library Teacher

Research Assistant

Casual Youth and Computer Services Librarian

Technical Services Coordinator

Coordinator, Marketing and Recruitment

Discovery and Metadata Coordinator

Research Specialist

Records Assistant

Digital Systems Consultant

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Currently a PhD student at a university in the UK.

Special Collection Archivist

Video Recording Studio Coordinator

Answering this question would directly identify me

Archivist

Public and Technical Services Librarian

Administrative Assistant

Illustrator

Committee Archivist

On-call Reference Librarian

Library Assistant

Special Collections and University Archives Intern

Digital Systems Consultant

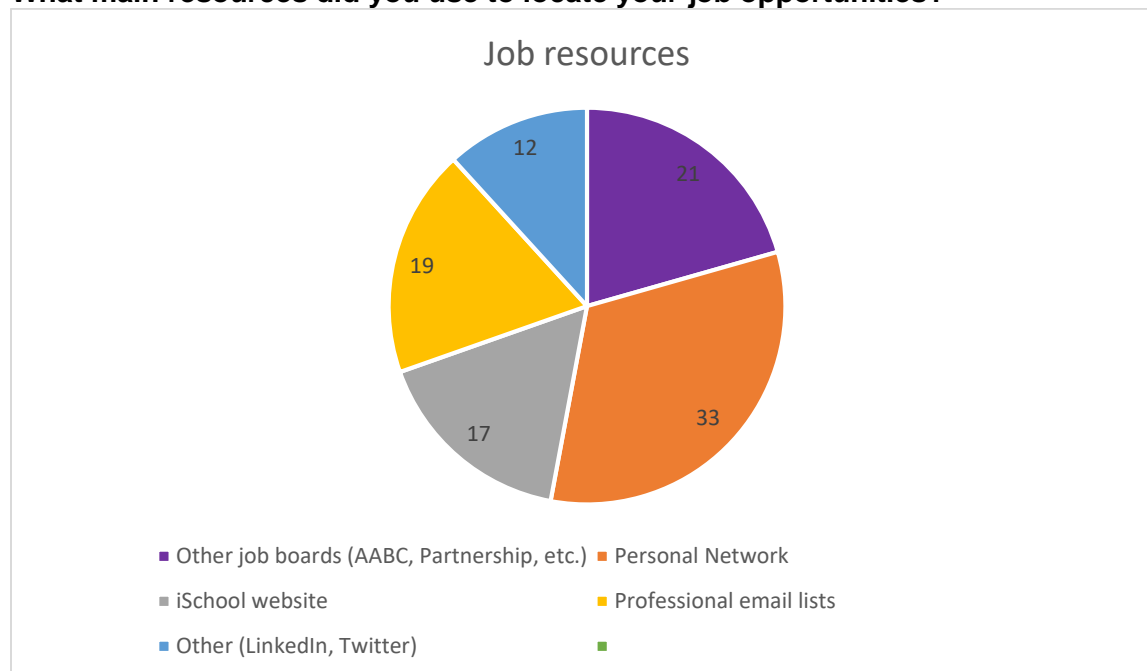
Librarian 1

Research and Archives Manager

How would you rate your job satisfaction in your current role? (10 being a perfect job, and 1 being the worst job possible)

Answer	Response	%
10	4	9.3
9	6	13.95
8	18	41.86
7	9	20.93
6	0	0
5	3	6.98
4	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
Total	50	100%

What main resources did you use to locate your job opportunities?



Are you a member of a professional organization?

Yes 30 (59%)
 No 21 (41%)

Upon graduation, please rate the level to which you felt prepared for the job market in the following areas:

Ability to assess the needs of diverse groups of people and respond to those needs through the design and provision of information resources, services and systems							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	0	2	18	28	3	51	3.63
Ability to organize and manage information for effective preservation, discovery, access and use							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	1	2	13	24	11	51	3.82
Ability to apply knowledge of information technology and resources to real world situations							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	1	4	13	25	8	51	3.69
Ability to reflect in a critical and informed manner on the role of information professions in society							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	1	0	10	19	21	51	4.16
Ability to communicate effectively							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	0	0	3	26	22	51	4.37
Ability to be an effective manager							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	3	8	28	11	1	51	2.98
Ability to conduct research and assess information resources							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	0	2	6	23	20	51	4.2
Ability to represent your chosen profession through advocacy initiatives, professional development, teaching, research, etc.							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	0	4	20	16	11	51	3.67

What continuing education or professional development activities have you participated in since graduation? (check all that apply)

Answer	Response	%
Participated in a course or workshop	29	42.03
Delivered a course or workshop	3	4.35
Attended work-related conference	24	34.78
Other continuing education activities	13	18.84

What, if any, of the following activities during your iSchool degree contributed to your career success to date?

Answer	Response	%
Co-op	23	18.85
Professional Experience (for credit)	23	18.85
Internship or Practicum (for credit)	10	8.2
Employment at SLAIS (such as STA or research assistant-ship)	6	4.92
Employment at UBC (such as GAA or student librarian)	30	24.59
Student Leadership (such as LASSA, ACA Student Chapter, ASIS&T Student Chapter)	13	10.66
Networking with graduates and other professionals during your time as a student	17	13.93

Thinking of your education at the iSchool, what areas or topics best prepared you for the positions you have been in since graduation?

Work Experience: 34 Group Work: 13 Children's Service: 5 Management: 4 Cataloging: 14 Research: 16 Arrangement and Description: 14 Communication: 11 Reference Services: 14 Public Librarianship: 4 Info Design: 7 Programming: 7 Database Design: 9 Collection Management: 14 Legal Courses: 4 Information Technology: 10 Records Management: 12	Archival Theory: 13 Project Management: 9 Preservation / Digital Preservation: 25 Aboriginal Literature / Material: 9 Marketing: 1 Info Visualization: 1 None: 1
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Please indicate below any additional feedback you have about the UBC iSchool degree programs.

Research Data Management was the key class I took that set me, and at least 3 of my classmates that I know if, on my career path. The iSchool should endeavour to have this class offered permanently, as it is one of the niches of the field offering immense growth and opportunities in the current and future employment landscape.

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It was tough graduating in May 2020- my summer co-op that I had lined up was canceled, so I was rushed to graduate in May without the work experience I wanted into a pretty terrible job market. This isn't necessarily UBC's fault, but it's been hard.

It'd be great if the iSchool did more to assist grads in finding work... job application workshops, mock interviews, hiring managers from LibraryLand coming in for Q and As with students, etc.

My work experience has mainly focused on digital repositories and digital collections, which I did gain a foundational knowledge of through the iSchool. However, as an MLIS student and not a dual or MAS student, I was never able to take any courses on archival theory, which would have been invaluable for my current position where I will be digitizing and creating a digital repository of archival materials, most of which have not been arranged. Although I understand the reasoning behind separating the archival and library courses, the reality is that a lot of jobs (especially in smaller repositories and in the digital world) draw on both. I know that LIBR 579G (Intro to Archives for Librarians) could fill that gap, but the course was only offered once during my degree, during the summer when I was at a CO-OP position. Going forward, I believe students would benefit from the opportunity to take any courses on archival theory as well as bringing more of the foundational theory from both disciplines into the coursework of tech-focused courses (such as LIBR 582).

Most helpful for finding work so far has been my experience as a UBC Library GAA and connections made through my Professional Experience and Practicum.

I wish there had been courses or a specialization in Business Information such as Knowledge Management Practices, Competitive Intelligence or Business Research and Resources.

I really feel that there is not an effort to integrate MACL students into the wider SLAIS community. On the one hand, we are separated from others, but at the same time we were not given our own courses or seminar that felt like it was really ours. Please please PLEASE think of adding a special course just for MACL students.

I really enjoyed my time at the UBC iSchool (although there has been a lack of consistent branding at the school since it became The School of Information, which is confusing). Because the pandemic has complicated everything, it's hard to know whether I would be having this much difficulty finding work in a normal year. I will say that perhaps more could be done to prepare students over the age of 30 for finding jobs, since there are SO many positions funded by Young Canada Works grants. I wonder how accessible the archival profession is to new archivists over the age of 30, since it seems really hard to get one's foot in the door...

I wish the technology courses had been better. They felt rushed and confusing.

Due to the Pandemic I have yet to obtain a position with the field of my degree. I'm still applying and it's a lot of work. I think part of the issue is that I networked in Canada but did not network with those in the United States, where I am from. The little time I did have to network with those from the US I was unable to converse with those individuals because of other tasks I need to do at conferences. This is my own fault, of course. I think it would be helpful in the future however if advisors or other staff at the iSchool could help students plan for careers ahead of graduating, especially having a focus of helping those that will not stay in Canada. I think at least having a career advisor in house could help students. I was so focused on completing my degree that I neglected looking forward a job until after I completed my last assignments.

While the iSchool broadly had many opportunities, few were oriented towards the Children's Literature Program. Many of the opportunities I had there I had to make myself or outside of the department (such as a TAsip in the Creative Writing Program). Please provide more opportunities to the Children's Literature cohorts.

N/A

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I believe putting theory into practice more frequently would benefit students. My work experience is the main reason I obtained my position so quickly.

I think incorporating hands-on experience as much as possible is invaluable, but this in part should happen through compensated opportunities for students who cannot otherwise afford it. I think the internship program in particular needs to be reconsidered to be more accessible.

There has been little to no ongoing support for people affected by Covid-19 or anything in the way of regular support or facilitating ongoing relationships between graduates and the school.

The following questions are UBC Faculty of Arts Co-op Education related questions.

Did you apply to and were you accepted into the Arts Co-op program during your time at the iSchool?

Yes 59.18% (29)
 No 40.82% (20)

How many Co-op terms did you complete?

Answer	Response	%
Zero	23	48.94
1 term	13	27.66
2 terms	9	19.15
3 terms	2	4.26
Total	47	100%

Why did you not do any Co-op terms?

Answer	Response	%
Applied for jobs but did not get hired	1	2.38
Did not see suitable jobs to apply for	3	7.14
My plans changed	4	9.52
Found a job outside of co-op	6	14.29
Other	9	21.43
I did complete at least 1 Co-op	19	45.24
Total	46	100%

Did you feel the Co-op Program (training, advising, and work experience) gave you a competitive edge when searching for a full-time work?

Yes 42.50% (17)
 Maybe 30.00% (12)
 No 27.50% (11)

After your experience in our Co-op Program, would you recommend other students to participate in the Co-op Program?

Yes 46.51% (20)
 Maybe 11.53% (5)

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No	4.65% (2)
No comment	37.21% (16)