THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Information

Faculty of Arts

Annual Alumni Survey Results 2021

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 2020 and May 2021.

A total of 80 graduates were eligible to complete the survey: 53 MLIS, 6 MAS, 18 MASLIS, 2 MACL, and 1 PhD graduates. A total of 39 graduates completed the survey for a total response rate of 48.75%. Of the 39, 28 are MLIS graduates, 2 are MAS graduates, and 9 are dual MAS/MLIS graduates.

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

Key findings

- **94.87%** of the respondents are currently employed, compared to 74% of last year. This is closer to the 2019 findings of 96%, indicating that **the low employment rate of last year was potentially an anomaly due to the pandemic**. Of the 37 respondents who indicated they are employed, 35 (92%) reported being employed in a position related to their iSchool degree, compared to 84% of last year.
- 87% of respondents were either employed before completing their degree or within six months of graduation, compared to 73% of last year.
- 8% of the respondents (3) reported that they transferred programs during their time at iSchool. 2 transferred from the DUAL to MLIS, and 1 was admitted to the DUAL from the MAS.
- Alumni' self-assessment of iSchool Competencies align with last year's trend for the most part. In particular, the management Competency increased to 3.34 from last year's 2.98 on a 5.0 scale.

What degree did you complete at the iSchool?
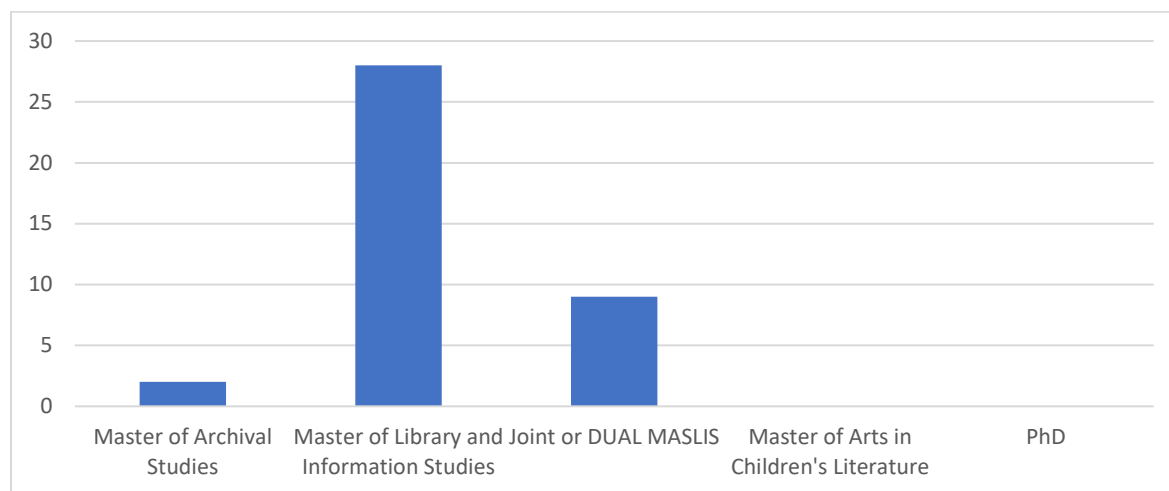
Responses	39
Master of Archival Studies	2
Master of Library and Information Studies	28
Joint or DUAL MASLIS	9
Master of Arts in Children's Literature	0
PhD	0

Did you transfer from one program to another?

DUAL to MAS	0
DUAL to MLIS	2
MAS to DUAL	1
MLIS to DUAL	0
I did not transfer programs	36

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

To have more academic opportunities to explore topics and to expand career options related to my iSchool degree.

I had some not great interactions with faculty on the archival side of the program. Especially when a core course was only taught by one instructor who had talked negatively about diversity in archives. I also had concerns about the profession generally.

Chose to do PhD and didn't want a third year beforehand.

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

First Nations Curriculum Concentration	8
Designing for People	2
Blockchain@UBC	1

Were you attending as a domestic or international student?
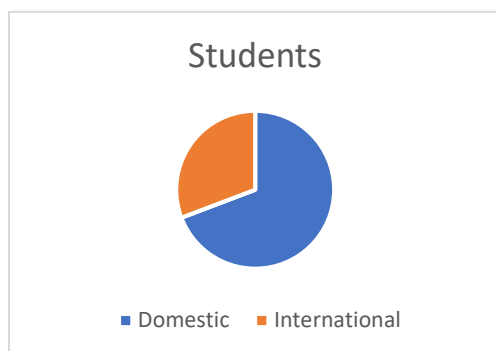
Responses:
Domestic   27
International   12

When was your degree conferred?

Answer	Response	%
November 2020	12	31%
May 2021	27	69%
Total	39	100%

What is your age group?

Answer	Response	%
20-29	13	33%
30-39	19	49%
40-49	6	15%
50-59	1	3%
60+	0	0%
Total	39	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?

I volunteered at Out on the Shelves Library which is closely connected to the iSchool so I felt I was supported.

I am the most milquetoast and privileged cisgender Caucasian male from the suburbs so I don't feel particularly suited to answer this question.

I have a disability in the form of a hearing loss. I was never uncomfortable asking for help or assistance when needed. The school could perhaps be clearer in class that there are concessions or assistance available to students.

The FNCC group was very supportive and Amy Perreault and Lisa Nathan were both excellent. It would be great to see more Indigenous faculty.

I think that the iSchool could be more welcoming / accommodating to mature students.

It tries. It did pretty well for me, but I heard that some other people had issues around these kinds of things. Perhaps a mandatory cultural sensitivity training or something could be useful. Also, ensuring that it seems as if or that actually all opinions/perspectives are accepted and not just pushing the mainstream one.

It was good enough.

I felt supported.

Yes

Not especially supportive of disabilities. Continue hybrid option for all classes.

Yes

My answer will disclose my identity. Sorry for not answering.

I think some instructors told some jokes that are hard for international students to understand and I felt very embarrassed when the whole class laughed together.

Avoid using cultural materials for class activities, as students from different culture may not understand which minimize the degree of student participation. Try to use something that are universal known among all students, so that students from different backgrounds can contribute equally.

Yes, and I believe the iSchool is doing a solid job in dismantling barriers and leading UBC.

As a new comer to Canada, I would say the ischool could be more welcoming to non-Canadian students by:

- advising faculty against using illustrative examples that are Canada/West-specific. - developing and communicating clear internal code and set of procedures that would align with

both the school and university's vision and objectives with the purpose of addressing racist incidents as they happen. - accepting and admitting more students from marginalized groups and communities.

I found the iSchool did a good job of making us aware of the need for equitable and supportive environments for diverse students, but I found that, in most cases, faculty appeared too preoccupied/overwhelmed/oblivious to truly engage with the day-to-day reality of being 'diverse' and coexisting with diversity in the school.

I felt somewhat supported. I wish UBC (not only the iSchool) provided more support for international students transitioning to the Canadian Scholarly environment - writing in English is one thing, writing in Academic English is a whole different one. If professors are to grade international students' grammar as they do grade domestic ones, please, support our Academic Writing process.

Also, I have ADHD and transitioning to studying at home was very difficult - professors and colleagues were nice and collaborative, but UBC didn't provide any support whatsoever for students like me.

Despite the iSchool best efforts to be inclusive of diverse backgrounds, some students and instructors, our white colleagues, seem to be happy to have BIPOCs, people experiencing homelessness and struggling to make ends meet, as patrons at libraries and to show them how incredible Canadian libraries, librarians and culture are, which is great. However, having people with diverse backgrounds seating next to them at the iSchool might be insulting to some of them. "English, please", I had to hear once from a co-hort peer. "I can't grade you like I could grade my students in Europe", said an instructor to my colleagues in one course. "Would you help an arab to find a book on bombs?", said another instructor to my colleagues in another course. Fortunately I never faced racism from iSchool staff and Faculty, but many of my BIPOC peers did. Now I know that I shouldn't quietly experience racist attitudes, but, when I just joined the iSchool, my first term in Canada, a newcomer, I certainly didn't know I could speak up for myself. Fostering international students meetings could be of great help, maybe having an international peer tutors would help – but you should be mindful about marketing those programs as the Language is completely new to newcomers. Obvious things for native English speakers (e. g., drop-ins, bursaries and scholarships) are not obvious for international students.

Yes, but I'm white/het/abled

It was comfortable for me, but not always for my friends who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. The iSchool could ensure that ALL professors are practicing compassion and aware of the vast inequities in our chosen profession to those who are not WASPs.

Are you currently employed?

Currently employed

■ Yes ■ No

Yes	37 (95%)
No	2 (5%)

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

Employment related to degree
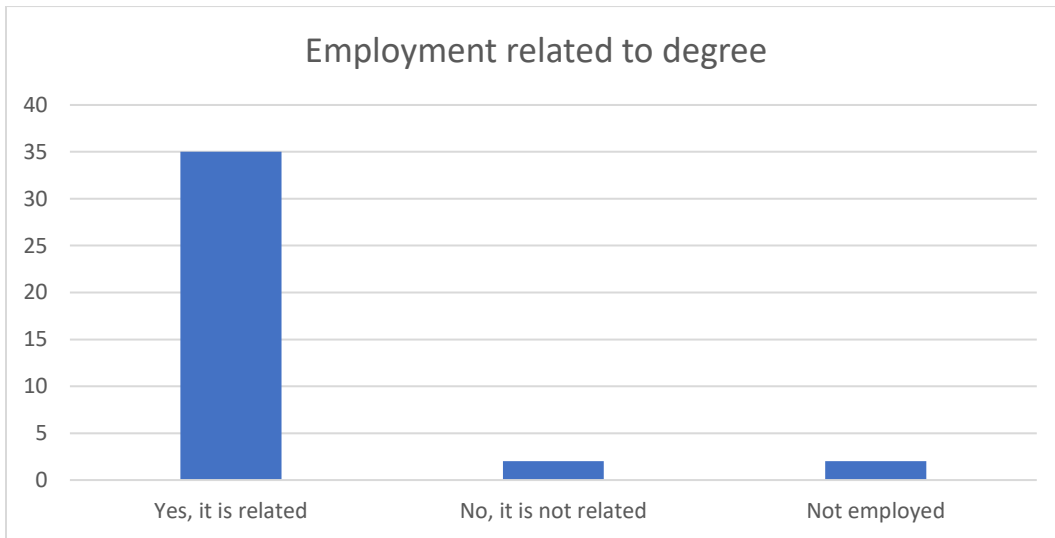
Yes, it is related	35 (90%)
No, it is not related	2 (5%)
Not employed	2 (5%)

How many months elapsed between the completion of your degree and your first job placement?
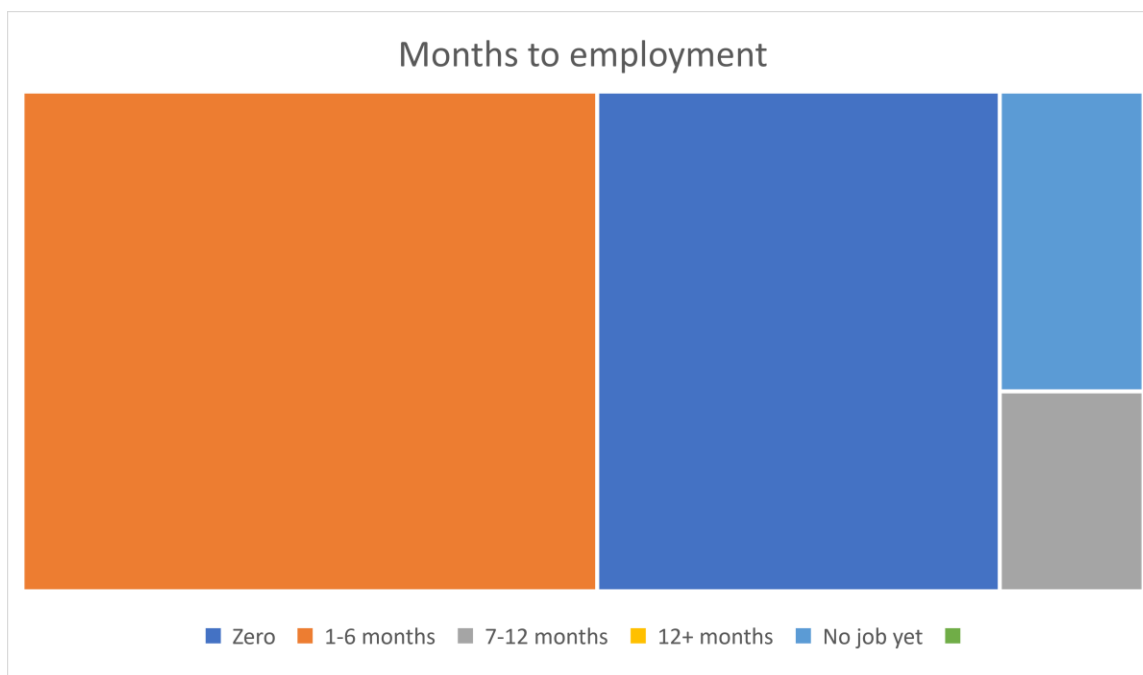
Answer	Response	%
Zero – I obtained the position before completing my degree	14	36
1-6 months	20	51
7-12 months	2	5
More than 12 months	0	0
I have not received my first job placement	3	8
Total	39	100%

What best describes your work status?

Answer	Response	%
Employed full-time in a single position	14	36
Employed full-time in a single contract position	12	31
Employed full-time in multiple positions	1	3
Employed part-time in a single position	3	8
Employed part-time in a single contract position	2	5
Employed part-time in multiple positions	6	15

Not employed	1	3
Total	39	100%

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

Answer	Response	%
Yes	20	74
No, I worked multiple contract positions prior to obtaining full-time employment	7	26
No	0	0
Total	27	100%

What is your current salary range?

Answer	Response	%
Less than $25,000	6	15
$25,000-49,999	9	23
$50,000-74,999	15	41
$75,000-99,999	7	18
$100,000 or more	1	3
Total	39	100%

In what type of organization is this position?
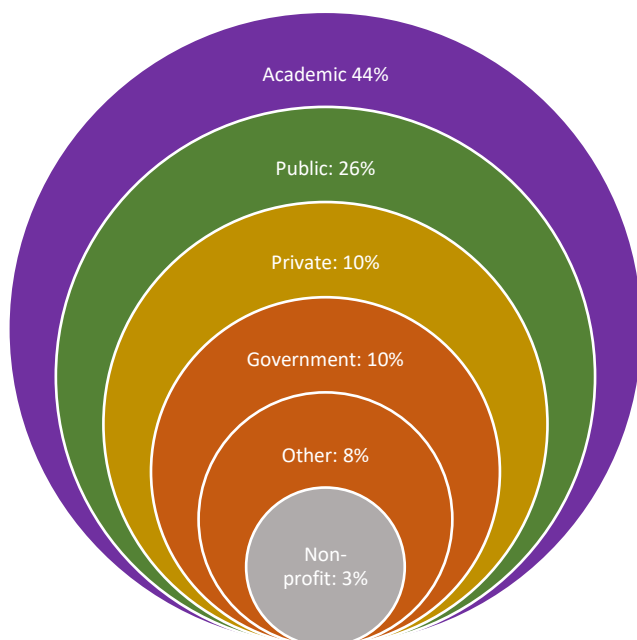
Answer	Response	%
Academic	17	44
Public	10	26
Private	4	10
Government	4	10
Non-profit	1	3
Other	3	8
Total	39	100%

Where is this position located?

Answer	Response	%
Metro Vancouver	21	54
Lower Mainland (Whistler to Hope)	3	8
Other part of BC	4	10
Other Canadian province/territory	5	13
Outside Canada	6	15
Total	39	100%

Job titles

Software developer

Branch Services and Engagement Intern

Archives and Reference Assistant

Public Services Librarian - Teen and Adult Services (temporary role, unfortunately)

Shared Print Archive Network Assistant; Contract Librarian

Temporary Full Time Library Technician

Indigenous Initiatives and Services Librarian

Research and Client Services Librarian

Records manager

Research Specialist

Digital Access Librarian

Librarian

Digital Archivist

Rare Book Collection Consultant

Information Services Librarian and Library Technician - Cataloguing and Systems

Librarian 1

Library Assistant

Librarian

Instruction Librarian

Part-time Librarian

Research Specialist

Librarian

Information Specialist

Research Associate

Associate Consultant

Librarian 1, Auxiliary

University Access Program (UAP) Liaison Librarian

Librarian

Librarian

Records management administration

Web Librarian

Bookseller & dog counselor

Cartographic Metadata Librarian

Software developer

Branch Services and Engagement Intern

Archives and Reference Assistant

Public Services Librarian - Teen and Adult Services (temporary role, unfortunately)

Shared Print Archive Network Assistant; Contract Librarian

Temporary Full Time Library Technician

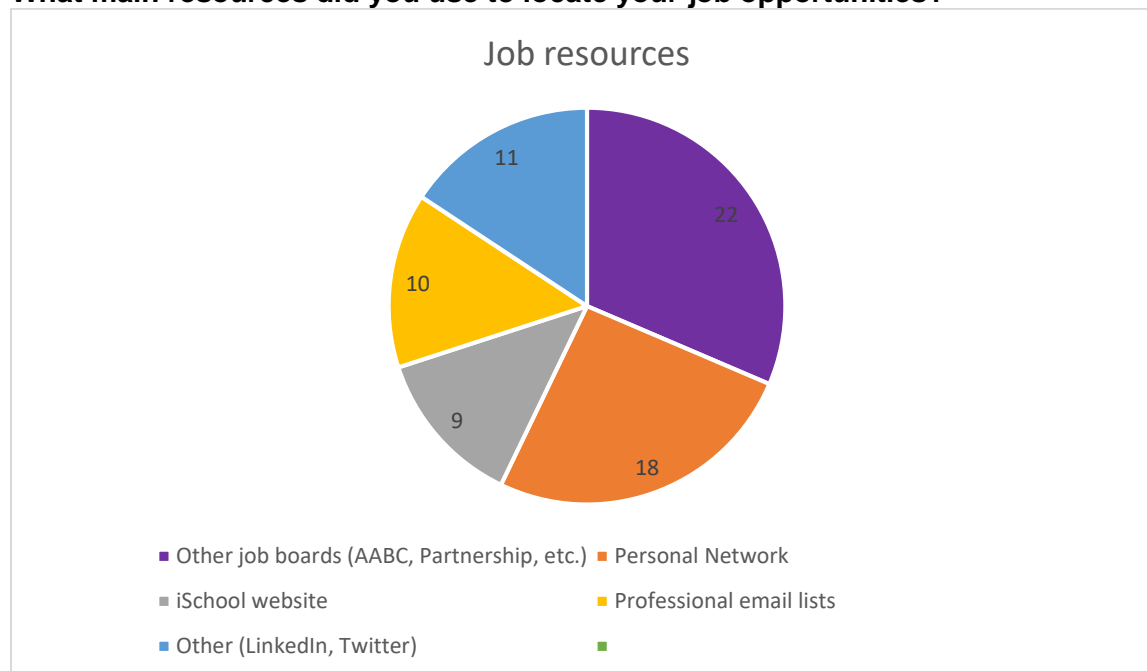Indigenous Initiatives and Services Librarian

Research and Client Services Librarian

Records 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	6	16
9	5	13
8	12	32
7	10	26
6	2	5
5	2	5
4	1	3
3	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
Total	38	100%

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

Job resources

- Other job boards (AABC, Partnership, etc.)
- Personal Network
- iSchool website
- Professional email lists
- Other (LinkedIn, Twitter)

Are you a member of a professional organization?

    Yes   28 (72%)
    No   11 (28%)

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
	1	2	10	22	3	38	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
	0	4	12	19	3	38	3.55
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
	0	3	10	21	4	38	3.68
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
	0	1	5	18	13	37	4.16
Ability to communicate effectively							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	0	1	6	16	15	38	4.18
Ability to be an effective manager							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	1	4	17	13	3	38	3.34
Ability to conduct research and assess information resources							
Scale (5 fully prepared, 1 unprepared)	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Average
	0	1	6	17	14	38	4.16
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	3	15	14	6	38	3.61

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	20	34
Delivered a course or workshop	8	14
Attended work-related conference	17	29
Other continuing education activities	14	24

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

Answer	Response	%
Co-op	16	18
Professional Experience (for credit)	18	20
Internship or Practicum (for credit)	8	9
Employment at SLAIS (such as STA or research assistant-ship)	4	4
Employment at UBC (such as GAA or student librarian)	19	21
Student Leadership (such as LASSA, ACA Student Chapter, ASIS&T Student Chapter)	6	7
Networking with graduates and other professionals during your time as a student	20	22

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: 28 Group Work: 12 Children's Service: 8 Management: 10 Cataloging: 9 Research: 21 Arrangement and Description: 10 Communication: 12 Reference Services: 16 Public Librarianship: 9 Info Design: 8 Programming: 5 Database Design: 11 Collection Management: 12 Legal Courses: 6 Information Technology: 12 Records Management: 11	Archival Theory: 7 Project Management: 10 Preservation / Digital Preservation: 12 Aboriginal Literature / Material: 6 Marketing: 6 Info Visualization: 1 None: 0

Please indicate below any additional feedback you have about the UBC iSchool degree programs.

I was lucky enough to come in with a strong personal network. If there's any tips I'd give new iSchool students it's to build that network up, it is absolutely invaluable. If you don't have work experience already, then pursue internships, practicums, professional experience, co-op, volunteer and leadership opportunities, with a vengeance. They will help your career prospects much more than most classes.
Honestly I don't feel like the UBC iSchool job program has done a very good job at preparing me for the professional job market. As someone looking to get into academic/special libraries I would have liked more focus on providing reference services, as well as gaining hands on experience with various info. management platforms and ILSs. There were some very good courses offered, particularly by adjuncts and sessionals, however the required courses felt very poorly put together and were largely a waste of time.
I did not receive good career advice from the co-op office: their standards for creating a good resume are not reflective of the current employment landscape in libraries, nor was it evident to me that any staff person in the department was knowledgeable in the information management sector. Belief that there would be an abundance of co-op jobs actively hindered me from applying for on-campus jobs, to which I would have been better suited. I had a very good experience at the school of information, but the co-op office should not be promoted as heavily as it is. It was not at all helpful.
I finished my last two semesters during Covid which was extremely challenging as I felt that UBC/iSchool had significant challenges adapting to the virtual learning. It was challenging as a student as well. I enjoyed my time there. I was disappointed that many courses listed on the ischool website were never offered during my tenure. It would be helpful to keep those lists updated/current especially having stats as to when the course was last offered, or if it is anticipated that it will be offered again, etc. Also it would have been better if more technology, ILS, and related courses were offered. Beyond just databases, Python, and block chain.
They were fine. They could use a second half-way feedback point during the courses.
The theoretical archival courses (e.g., diplomatics) and archives related IT courses (e.g., digital diplomatic) were of high value. General IT courses (e.g., database design) were also useful for understanding the subject and for the job market.
Please, let the students know that with a high probability they would have to agree to roles to be below their master degree qualifications, unfortunately. Or at least it was the job market situation at my times. Also, let them know that networking is key!
I have a Bachelor's degree in Library Science so I expected my graduate program of MLIS to be more in-depth. But I feel somehow upset about my MLIS because what we learnt is too basic for me. Also, we were not provided with any information about the thesis option when we entered the iSchool. I did not know that we should contact professors at least one year before we graduate. It was a pity that I did not complete a thesis due to time constraints.
Too few courses were offered in areas I was interested in (academic librarianship). Also, a lot of the course assignments had little educational value/were too low level and mostly felt like busy work.
I like the recent changes made to requirements like 504 as that was a major issue for many students, and it is great that the school has addressed it and now given students more options. I would like to see some more variety in classes as some very important classes are not taught too often, while some are almost every year etc.

Regarding abilities: I feel fully prepared for most things (except technology and real world situations). However, most abilities were mostly developed during my Bachelors in Librarianship in a different country. My work experiences and the courses delivered by professional Librarians were the most helpful ones (Instructional Role of the Librarian, Marketing for Information Organizations, Community-Led Librarianship, Science & Technology Information Sources and Services, Services for Families and Early Literacy in the Preschool Years and basically all courses taught by Kathie Shoemaker and Tess Prendergast). LIBR 559L (3) Issues in Scholarly Communications and Publishing was also awesome. I'd like to recommend the iSchool to offer a Reference Services course. I wanted to suggest it when you were taking applications for elective courses in academic libraries, but I didn't have the time to elaborate a proper course setting, and hope to propose it whenever the iSchool runs a "call for participants" again, if no one else delivers it. I have a good experience (theoretical and practical) in Reference Services but I heard from many, many managers, my supervisors, that they wish student librarians had taken this course at UBC, as many people lack people / public service skills, and reference skills are vital for librarians in all fields.

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   56% (22)
       No   44% (17)

How many Co-op terms did you complete?

Answer	Response	%
Zero	22	58
1 term	7	18
2 terms	7	18
3 terms	2	5
Total	38	100%

Why did you not do any Co-op terms?

Answer	Response	%
Applied for jobs but did not get hired	0	0
Did not see suitable jobs to apply for	3	8
My plans changed	4	11
Found a job outside of co-op	10	28
Other	5	14
I did complete at least 1 Co-op	14	39
Total	36	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   44% (15)
       Maybe   21% (7)
       No   35% (12)

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

       Yes   47% (16)
       Maybe   15% (5)
       No   9% (3)

No comment   29% (10)