

## EDUCATION IN LIBRARIANSHIP IN GREAT BRITAIN

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The kind of technical preparation and the standards of competence most widely accepted in the British Isles as qualifications for officers and staff in libraries are represented by the Syllabus of studies and examinations drawn up by the Library Association.

The Council of the Association has decided that an organised Course of Training in Librarianship shall involve :

a) Study in various prescribed subjects, namely :

- 1) Literary History.
- 2) Elements of practical Bibliography.
- 3) Classification.
- 4) Cataloguing.
- 5) Library History, Foundation, and Equipment.
- 6) Library Routine.

b) Examinations in each subject, and the writing of a satisfactory Essay upon some aspect of each subject.

c) Practical experience of not less than twenty-four hours a week for at least three years as a member of the administrative staff of one or more Libraries approved by the Council of the Library Association.

The method of study is left to the discretion of the individual student. It may be by private reading, by correspon-

dence classes, or by attendance at oral classes; but in order to obtain the full Certificate or Diploma it must include the examinations, the prescribed essays, and the practical experience. In order to guide teaching institutions which may be disposed to provide, either wholly or in part, courses of training, and as a means of help to the private student, a detailed syllabus has been prepared indicating the standard of knowledge required by the Council before they will testify to the intellectual and technical equipment of persons who have undergone such courses of training. The syllabus, together with specimen examination papers, will be found in the « Year-Books » of the Library Association.

This scheme was adopted by the Library Association in 1903, since which date three candidates have been awarded the Diploma; many others are almost qualified to obtain it, and, as the new system of registration approved by the Privy Council enacts that at the end of 1915 the Diploma shall be a qualification for Fellowship of the Library Association, it is anticipated that the number of successful candidates will increase largely in the near future.

The following have been the results of the annual examinations held on the lines of the Syllabus :

| <i>Candidates sat.</i> | <i>Nº of Subjects</i> | <i>Candidates passed</i> | <i>Nº of Subjects</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1905                   | 51 . . . 86           | 39 . . . 65              |                       |
| 1906                   | 98 . . . 152          | 80 . . . 120             |                       |
| 1907                   | 155 . . . 217         | 92 . . . 122             |                       |
| 1908                   | 223 . . . 303         | 95 . . . 111             |                       |
| 1909                   | 210 . . . 270         | 122 . . . 138            |                       |

### PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

This department of the work of the Association is entrusted to the Education Committee. It is devoted in the main to the following objects : *a*) determining the lines on which education in librarianship should be conducted; *b*) organising, either directly or indirectly, educational facilities for library assistants and others; and *c*) the examination of students in librarianship.

As the Association has no special fund for educational work, it is unable to engage and pay lecturers, or carry out schemes which would involve it in large expenditure. The summer schools, the correspondence classes, and the examinations are, accordingly, so arranged as to be to a considerable degree self-supporting, and the Education Committee endeavours by co-operation with Technical Schools and University Colleges to have lectures and classes provided as far as possible by public authorities — a policy that will, it is hoped, be pursued still more extensively in the future.

The examiners are appointed by the Council of the Association, which also has two representatives on the Committee at the London School of Economics, under which courses of lectures are given periodically by specialists in all sections of the syllabus.

Under the auspices of the Council, also, Correspondence classes are held yearly in Classification, Cataloguing, Library Organisation, and Library Routine; prizes are offered by the Council for the best work by students in both these classes and those held at the London School of Economics. At the Manchester School of Technology and the Liverpool Technical College, classes in Librarianship are held and students prepared for these examinations. Lectures on some portions of the syllabus are also given at the Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and will probably be established at other University colleges in the near future. Some of the local Library Associations also hold summer schools from time to time, and the Library Assistants' Association similarly promotes the educational work prescribed by lectures on technical subjects and by organised visits to libraries, binderies, etc.

Before 1903, the Library Association held several summer schools and conducted various courses of lectures on Bibliography, Cataloguing, and many other branches of library economy. A number of examinations were held also and certificates granted. This preliminary work was organised and amplified on the issue of the present syllabus and the

establishment of the courses of lectures at the London School of Economics.

Should our municipal libraries ever become centralised or co-ordinated under State control, some general scheme of training and examination would undoubtedly be inaugurated, and the plan adopted by the Library Association would probably be accepted as a basis and the Diploma as the standard of qualification for the higher appointments.

The Library Association scheme is almost universally accepted as presenting the kind of training best adapted for officers in municipal libraries, and to a less extent for workers in public and private libraries of other kinds.

In the Government and University libraries different conditions apply. Appointments in the former come under Civil Service regulations and are filled from the clerks admitted to the Service on the results of open competition, which takes the form of an examination in general knowledge.

Appointments in the British Museum are made on the results of a limited competition, small groups of candidates previously selected on the advice of the Principal Librarian being examined in the usual elements of a university education with special requirements in foreign languages.

As to appointments in University libraries the selections are made by the different Senates or governing bodies according to regulations in respect to academical attainments, business experience, and other personal qualifications, drawn up specially for the purpose. Most of the appointments to librarianship in connection with the learned societies are made on similar lines.

