

Prospects for a Combined GLAM Curriculum

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Abstract:

The content of museum and art curatorial studies courses offered by Australian universities was mapped against the 32 domain-specific “foundation knowledge, skills and attributes” (KSAs) required by ALIA, ASA and RIMPA. Most of the KSAs were covered by at least one course, though only about half were touched on by a majority. Few curriculum elements could not be mapped onto a KSA. The mapping and the literature suggest a fair degree of subject alignment between LIS and museum studies, but also clear differences of emphasis. Contextual differences affecting interpretation and application need further investigation.



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Introduction

There has been much discussion, over a number of years now, about how galleries, libraries, archives and museums, collectively referred to as the “GLAM” sector, will need to work together to be effective and visible in an increasingly online future. It is clear that institutional boundaries mean little to most end-users in even today’s online world. While this discussion has led to a range of initiatives to further GLAM collaboration, such as the GLAM peak bodies’ “Australian Digital Access to Collections” project, and talk of “convergence”, it is noteworthy that the “G” and “M” parts of the sector remain supported by quite separate programs of education, at the university level, from those supporting the “L” and “A” components. Thus, in Australia, there are degree courses that combine library and archival studies, and there are others that combine museum and gallery studies, but none that explicitly attempts to cover all four fields. These programs are offered by different universities and faculties, and are taught by academics who, for the most part, identify with separate disciplinary traditions and respond to the requirements and expectations of different professional bodies and communities.

The synergies demonstrated by the various sector-wide initiatives, however, would suggest that there might be scope for a greater degree of articulation between LIS and museum studies than there currently is, perhaps even a combined “GLAM curriculum”. While the implementation of such a curriculum has rarely been attempted to date, it is not completely without precedent. Lathan (2015) describes one of the better-known examples, carried out at Kent State University. Commentary and discussion around these attempts, and the feasibility and design of a GLAM curriculum more broadly, is likewise somewhat sparse, but a conversation is certainly under way. Colombati, Carolis and Galeffi, for instance, discuss the possibility of a GLAM curriculum, constructed “in such a way as to allow individuals to choose a context in which to learn skills relevant to the sector” (2016, p. 72), and suggest three macro areas of professional GLAM education to focus on: “(1) management of information and documentary resources, (2) Supply of services and (3) planning and management of services followed by 25 themes for such a course to address” (2016, p. 73). Similarly, Michetti (2015) has suggested an integrated approach to GLAM education through the identification of nine GLAM “professional functions”, including management, description and preservation of resources, user services, design and appraisal of information systems and application, outreach, training and education, research, and management and administration of GLAM institutions. Meanwhile, Aparac-Jelusic (2015) offers insight into the practical aspects of creating a GLAM curriculum from an existing LIS curriculum, outlining the need to consider such a change at “the organizational, structural, conceptual and methodical levels” and to align these with a program that directly meets student and community needs.

This paper reports on a mapping of the curricula found in the various museum and art curatorial studies courses offered by Australian universities against the domain-specific “foundational knowledge, skills and attributes” that the three national library and archives associations require their accredited courses to cover, identifying both commonalities and differences. The paper goes on to review the literature around “GLAM convergence”, both in Australia and in other countries, and discusses the

prospects for a "GLAM curriculum" in light of the findings from both the mapping exercise and the literature review. It concludes with suggestions for further research that might lead to the establishment of an accepted set of common competences as the foundation for a common curriculum.

Analysis of Museum Studies Curricula

Method

Professional-entry courses in curatorial studies were identified using the "Good Universities Guide" database. Searches for courses linked to a "museum curator" or "arts administrator" career were combined with the limit of course titles with either "curator*" or "museum*" (there appeared to be no course titles using the term "museology"). This excluded broader, "cultural heritage" courses. In the case of articulated sets of courses (e.g. with both Masters and Graduate Diploma awards), the full course (i.e. leading to the highest award) was selected. The resulting ten courses were compared with lists of curatorial courses provided in other sources, including the Museums Australia website, and deemed to represent most of the main courses taken as preparation for a career in the curatorial professions. (There is no body in Australia that specifically accredits programs in curatorial studies.) The ten courses are listed below. They are offered by eight institutions; eight are postgraduate, two undergraduate; at least three would appear to focus on art curation, and three on museum studies (as opposed to galleries).

University of Adelaide: Master of Arts - Curatorial Studies

Australian National University (ANU): Master of Art History and Curatorial Studies

Australian National University (ANU): Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship

Deakin University: Graduate Diploma of Museum Studies

University of Melbourne: Master of Art Curatorship

Monash University: Bachelor of Fine Art - Art History and Curating

University of New South Wales (UNSW): Master of Curating and Cultural Leadership

University of Queensland (UQ): Master of Museum Studies

University of Sydney: Master of Art Curating

University of Sydney: Master of Museum and Heritage Studies

The abstracts and learning objectives for each of the compulsory units presently included in each of the ten programs were then collected from their official websites, where available. In all cases, either an abstract or a set of learning objectives was provided. Using these courses, the content of each unit was mapped onto the 32 domain-specific "foundation knowledge, skills and attributes" (KSAs; <https://www.alia.org.au/foundation-knowledge-skills-and-attributes-relevant-information-professionals-working-archives>) that professional-entry programs are required to cover by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and Records and Information Management Professionals Australasia (RIMPA). The list was co-developed by the three associations for use in joint accreditation exercises. For the purposes of this study, the KSAs' reference to "information" is interpreted broadly, to include the

"information" embodied by museum artefacts and art works. No attempt was made to determine the extent to which a unit covered a particular KSA, just whether or not it appeared to at least touch upon it.

Results

The results of this mapping are summarised in tables 1-3. Table 1 shows that all but three of the 32 KSAs are touched on by at least one of the curatorial courses, with two KSAs being covered, at least partially, by all ten courses. Just over half (17) of the KSAs were touched on by at least half of the courses. Table 2 indicates the coverage of each KSA across the core curricula, as an average of the number of core units that touch on the KSA divided by the number of core units in the course. Unit volumes were not normalised, but units covering content generically, such as capstone internships, were excluded. One KSA was covered by half of the core curriculum, on average, while 11 of the 32 KSA were covered by at least 20%. These distributions suggest that while there is a difference of emphasis in the knowledge, skills and attributes covered by library and archival courses on the one hand, and curatorial courses on the other (assuming the KSAs are to be regarded as of roughly equal importance to ALIA/ASA/RIMPA), it would nevertheless be possible to construct a program of curatorial studies that more or less met the ALIA-ASA-RIMPA requirements.

Table 1 - Percentage of courses touching on each KSA

Foundation Knowledge, Skill or Attribute	Courses (%)
The contexts in which information is originated, described, stored, organised, retrieved, disseminated, modified and used	100
How the role aligns with government, corporate, social and cultural goals and values	100
The historic context within which information management exists, and the theories and principles by which practitioners have operated in the past	90
How information can be analysed and interpreted by professionals and by users	90
The relevant ethical, legal and policy issues, including privacy and copyright	90
Identify and evaluate information sources, services and products to determine their relevance to the needs of users	90
Use research skills to provide appropriate information to users	90
Turn information into knowledge	90
Understand and explore how information is effectively sought and utilised	80
Design and delivery customised information services and products	80
Understand the underpinning theory and practice of information management	70
Source, capture, manage and preserve records and collections, to create an information environment that has integrity and is accessible, reliable, compliant, comprehensive	70
Facilitate the acquisition, licensing or creation of information in a range of media and formats	70

Appraise and assess the significance of records and collections; establish priorities and implement decisions about their use, retention and disposal	70
Manage and preserve records and information over time in accordance with organisation and community policies, as new theories, principles, practice and technologies emerge	50
Document the context within which information lies – past, present and future; cultural perspectives; legislative and regulatory mandates; ownership and governance	50
Identify and investigate information needs and information behaviours of individuals, communities, organisations and businesses through creation, collaboration and partnerships	50
Create accurate and standards-driven metadata for enhanced and persistent access to information resources in an online environment	40
Assess the value and effectiveness of methodologies, facilities, products and services	40
Potential partnerships and alliances with other stakeholders	30
Enable information access and use through systematic and user-centred description, categorisation, digitisation, storage, preservation and retrieval	30
Provide user services, reference and outreach programs to support accessibility in multiple environments	30
Identify vital records and information as part of business continuity and disaster management planning.	30
Understand the needs for information skills in the population, facilitate the development of information literacy and the ability for critical evaluation, and deliver information literacy education for users	30
Respectfully acknowledge, learn about and understand the important contribution of our first peoples.	20
Understand the importance of information technology, architecture and methodologies to determine the structure, design and flows of information	20
Understand information administration, migration, retrieval, restructuring, manipulation and presentation	20
Identify user requirements and the processes that will meet them, including designing, implementing and evaluating systems and tools, introducing enabling technologies, developing and applying metadata	10
Market information services and products.	10
Analyse information flow and user needs to develop systems and interfaces that adhere to recognised usability and accessibility guidelines	0
Work collaboratively with information technology service providers.	0
Provide and promote free (where appropriate) and equitable access to information and services	0

Table 2 - Mean percentage of core unit per course touching on KSA

Foundation Knowledge, Skill or Attribute	Core units per course (%)
The contexts in which information is originated, described, stored, organised, retrieved, disseminated, modified and used	50.5
How information can be analysed and interpreted by professionals and by users	49.0
The historic context within which information management exists, and the theories and principles by which practitioners have operated in the past	33.2
Turn information into knowledge	33.1
How the role aligns with government, corporate, social and cultural goals and values	32.3
Identify and evaluate information sources, services and products to determine their relevance to the needs of users	30.3
The relevant ethical, legal and policy issues, including privacy and copyright	29.4
Appraise and assess the significance of records and collections; establish priorities and implement decisions about their use, retention and disposal	22.7
Identify and investigate information needs and information behaviours of individuals, communities, organisations and businesses through creation, collaboration and partnerships	21.5
Understand and explore how information is effectively sought and utilised	21.1
Understand the underpinning theory and practice of information management	21.0
Use research skills to provide appropriate information to users	18.3
Source, capture, manage and preserve records and collections, to create an information environment that has integrity and is accessible, reliable, compliant, comprehensive	16.8
Document the context within which information lies – past, present and future; cultural perspectives; legislative and regulatory mandates; ownership and governance	16.3
Assess the value and effectiveness of methodologies, facilities, products and services	15.8
Design and delivery customised information services and products	15.3
Facilitate the acquisition, licensing or creation of information in a range of media and formats	12.9
Manage and preserve records and information over time in accordance with organisation and community policies, as new theories, principles, practice and technologies emerge	9.6
Create accurate and standards-driven metadata for enhanced and persistent access to information resources in an online environment	7.1
Identify vital records and information as part of business continuity and disaster management planning.	5.3
Potential partnerships and alliances with other stakeholders	4.7
Provide user services, reference and outreach programs to support accessibility in multiple environments	4.2

Understand information administration, migration, retrieval, restructuring, manipulation and presentation	4.2
Enable information access and use through systematic and user-centred description, categorisation, digitisation, storage, preservation and retrieval	3.0
Understand the needs for information skills in the population, facilitate the development of information literacy and the ability for critical evaluation, and deliver information literacy education for users	2.9
Respectfully acknowledge, learn about and understand the important contribution of our first peoples.	1.7
Understand the importance of information technology, architecture and methodologies to determine the structure, design and flows of information	1.7
Identify user requirements and the processes that will meet them, including designing, implementing and evaluating systems and tools, introducing enabling technologies, developing and applying metadata	0.9
Market information services and products.	0.8
Analyse information flow and user needs to develop systems and interfaces that adhere to recognised usability and accessibility guidelines	0.0
Work collaboratively with information technology service providers.	0.0
Provide and promote free (where appropriate) and equitable access to information and services	0.0

Table 3 - Number of KSAs covered by each course (core units)

University	Course	KSAs covered	%
Adelaide	Master of Arts - Curatorial Studies	27	84.4
Sydney	Master of Museum and Heritage Studies	24	75.0
Deakin	Graduate Diploma of Museum Studies	20	62.5
UNSW	Master of Curating and Cultural Leadership	16	50.0
ANU	Master of Art History and Curatorial Studies	15	46.9
Melbourne	Master of Art Curatorship	15	46.9
UQ	Master of Museum Studies	13	40.6
Sydney	Master of Art Curating	13	40.6
Monash	Bachelor of Fine Art - Art History and Curating	12	37.5
ANU	Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship	9	28.1

Table 3 shows that the degree of content concentration, at least within the KSA framework, varies widely across curatorial courses offered by Australian universities. However, this would appear to be, for the most part, a function of the extent to which they focus on museums, or on art and galleries: museum studies seems more aligned with the library and archives curriculum than are courses in art curation. One reason for the difference would be that art curation courses tend to devote a significant amount of their curricula to art history and criticism. Interestingly, the

spread of the curatorial curriculum across the ALIA-ASA-RIMPA KSAs does not appear to be a function of course size particularly, given that the undergraduate courses touch on fewest KSAs, and that, for instance, Deakin's Graduate Diploma of Museum Studies covers more KSAs than does the University of Queensland's Master of Museum Studies.

Perhaps most notably, it was found that there was only one element of any of the core course units that could not be mapped onto a KSA, namely the art history and criticism content covered by a number of units in the more art-oriented programs. This content is not about managing information, but about the "information" itself. Although not covered by the ALIA-ASA-RIMPA KSAs, a parallel can be found in many LIS courses, at least amongst their elective units, such as those covering children's literature, in which the literature itself is studied, rather than the management of the literature.

Nevertheless, there were elements common to a number of course units, across multiple programs, which the authors considered were emphases not present in a typical LIS program (admittedly using their own University's programs as a yardstick). These elements were identified as follows:-

Knowledge

- Museums, galleries as institutions, including their history
- Curation as a profession (including its history)
- Interpretation of information objects (cf. "bibliographic" information literacy)
- Art production
- Ecology of art/museum information (wider environment, including institutional networks)
- Cultural policy, including funding policy
- Funding sources, including sponsorship
- Art markets

Skills

- Exhibitions (as information products)
- Conservation
- Writing for publication

GLAM Skills, Knowledge and Attributes in the Literature

In line with the findings of the mapping exercise, a review of the relevant literature suggests that skills and knowledge in areas such as digitisation, curatorship, community outreach and education, and information access and provision, are desirable for many GLAM professionals. Many of the sorts of skills and competencies called for in the LIS literature, such as those pertaining to Wilkin's "four pillars" for twenty-first century research libraries (Wilkin 2015), would appear to be applicable to what is needed in museums, for instance. Conversely, the new skills and aptitudes discussed in the museums literature, such as "facilitating community wellbeing", cited by the CSIRO's innovation study of the GLAM sector (Mansfield et al. 2014) as a key focus, would appear to be relevant to the work of libraries and other GLAM institutions.

In this vein, the literature identifies a number of common themes around the GLAM sector's current and future workforce requirements. These themes include knowledge and skills for information organisation and management, digitisation and digital collections, legal and ethical matters associated with the mission of institutions, such as disability access and copyright, data skills, such as visualisation and preservation, and content design and production (Howard 2015; Howard et al. 2016; Bertot, Sarin & Percell 2015; Weatherburn & Harvey 2016). To this extent, the literature identifies many of the areas of alignment shown in the mapping exercise.

However, the literature suggests that there may also be specific activities, such as collection deployment and interpretations, which require domain-specific skills and knowledge associated with different GLAM professions (Robinson 2012). Furthermore, there is considerable discussion about how differences in interpretation, context and professional understanding may impact upon the accurate identification of common competencies. This discussion highlights the need to fully investigate these different contexts and applications, across the GLAM sector, before a case for educational convergence can be made.

Contextual differences

While generally accepting that "[G]LAMs have come from a shared past and are exploring a shared future" (Trant 2009, p. 25), commentators such as Doucet (2007) and Trant (2009) argue that convergence is not clear cut. Their concern is that the apparent convergence in the language and activities of GLAM institutions obscures a much deeper philosophical and cultural difference that superficially is not apparent. This perspective argues that the issues around convergence are not necessarily practical ones or even ones associated with skills and knowledge per se (Mansfield et al. 2014, p.40). Instead, they are to do with the historical and professional constructs and culture of the various GLAM traditions. Their arguments suggest that to fully understand convergence as it relates the GLAM sector, a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of the mission, cultural, community and political imperatives, and professional skills and knowledge, is needed.

Doucet (2007) and Trant (2009) support the view that identifying and defining differences in libraries, archives and museums is fundamental for tackling the question of GLAM convergence and that within their "distinct historical traditions, archives, museums, and libraries have established different communities of users who expect divergent things" (Trant 2009, p. 371-372). Likewise, the differing nature of collections in museums, archives, and libraries has contributed to diverging professional practices that have not been acknowledged in cultural policy (Trant 2009).

Robinson (2012) also argues for a focus on the differences between the institutions and their domain-specific practices, highlighting

“domain-specific approaches to the cataloguing, description, interpretation and deployment of collections that lead museums, libraries and archives to engage with history, meaning and memory in significantly different ways. By applying the work of scholars in library

and information science, archival studies and museology, I argue for a more analytical discourse around convergence that avoids generalizations about libraries, archives and museums and acknowledges nuance, diversity and polyphony in the representation of history and cultural memory” (Robinson 2012, p. 414).

Education and the workforce

Clear differences also emerge around the educational structures that underpin each of the constituent professions of the GLAM sector, based not just on different skills and knowledge requirements, but also on the historical development of each within broader educational and training structures and the expertise needed in particular institutions. In turn, the differing pathways that have been established in the GLAM professions have created cultural differences in the requirements for the workplace and the definition of expertise. Librarianship, and to some extent archives, were early adopters of the professional training and higher education route, with courses accredited in relation to professionally defined benchmarks of skills and knowledge, as exemplified by the KSAs used in this study. Museums and galleries, on the other hand, while present in the training and education arena, have continued to value and emphasise discipline-based knowledge and expertise, with on-the-job training a key element in the education of their workforce, and professional membership not critical to entry into professional practice (Urban 2014). These structural differences mirror early debates in librarianship about the appropriateness or otherwise of undergraduate qualifications in the discipline, with those promoting the post-graduate model advocating the need for discipline knowledge before professional qualifications. Although this model for professional practice was adopted in the Library Association of Australia’s 1964 statement, *Minimum standards for recognition of courses in librarianship*, it was soon superseded by the current model of education and accreditation, due to prevailing community and government attitudes, and workforce needs (Carroll 2016). This appears not to have been the case, however, with the other GLAM professions: the decisions made around the direction of librarianship education in Australia at this time represent one of the critical points of cultural and professional divergence within GLAM.

While librarianship uses its professional associations and their accrediting requirements to direct its curricula, museum education is informed by the standards in place for the performance of the museums themselves. Thus the place of the museum professional is to support the outcomes of the institution rather than to work according to a set of external standards. Barrett (2011) states, "Underlying the discussion about the history of curriculum for museum studies has been the expectation that professional staff assist museums to meet certain standards and to be recognized by funding agencies and the sector" (para. 17). Addressing standards in museum education in the United States, Welsh believes that despite 30 years of education for the sector, "standards for curriculum content or quality assessment have never been agreed upon" (Welsh 2013, p. 438). Some work on developing standards has occurred through international organisations, but this has done little to clarify minimum educational requirements for professional entry. For example, in the 2008 report, *Museum professions: a European frame of reference*, the requirements for employees within the sector are described as

- “a university degree for the majority of museum professions;
- competence in museology;
- practical experience in the respective fields;
- language skills (basic knowledge of at least one foreign language in addition to the native language)” (Ruge 2008, p. 12).

A lack of specificity can be found in Australia as elsewhere. Highlighting differences between the library and archives approach, and that of museums, Barrett (2011) states:

"In Australia, this issue of standards may inform the curriculum of museum studies programs but is not monitored or formally guided by any particular area of the museum sector. Museum studies programs are, however, wise if they choose to remain informed by the developments in this area and to consult accordingly. Similarly, the sector can elect to inform or involve museum studies programs in such processes and discussions" (para. 18).

This approach is also evident in *The national standards for Australian museums and galleries* (2014), in which there appears no indication of an expected minimum or a recognised entry level of education for staff. Principle A3 (p. 15), which covers the workforce, states:

- "The museum defines its key roles and tasks, and recruits and appoints suitable people for specific roles.
- The museum defines and communicates the duties, rights and responsibilities of the museum and its workers.
- The museum acknowledges that museum work involves special skills, and gives workers opportunities to acquire or enhance these skills."

Expanding on this, the standards state:

"Appropriate training is provided for workers, and its costs are subsidized by the museum where possible. Training can take many forms, including:

- providing access to industry journals, websites and other sources
- formal inductions
- mentoring
- supporting workers to attend refresher courses, seminars and workshops presented by peak bodies, and conferences" (p. 34).

One consequence of the early push for the professionalisation of librarianship and professional qualifications in library studies was the decline of the use of untrained staff and volunteers in libraries. Central to the seminal 1930s report, *Australian libraries: a survey of conditions and suggestions for their improvement* (Munn & Pitt, 1935; popularly known as the Munn-Pitt report), was the establishment of educational standards, professionalisation of staff, and the establishment of a

professional association to oversee this, which altered the previous practices of Australian libraries. Other GLAM professions developed (or continued) the scholarly tradition of university educated discipline experts with a strong reliance on volunteers and specialist support staff with qualifications in associated or complementary disciplines such as conservation, exhibitions, marketing and management. This left professional entry quite distinct from that of the requirements for librarians. Accordingly, even in the 1990s, commentators such as Stephen Weil were questioning the appropriateness of university programs in museum studies for professional entry, highlighting the long-standing differences in approach in the museum profession. Weil stated that it would be a mistake to control the entry of new practitioners to the museums field by "licensing or certification procedures" (Weil, cited in Barrett 2011). The reliance on volunteers and unpaid interns in some parts of the GLAM sector points to some key differences in the education and training needs of personnel.

Convergence or collaboration?

While the arguments around "convergence" are numerous, there are those who see the future of the GLAM professions more as closely linked through collaboration, than as converged. Urban takes a somewhat centrist position in the debate, viewing the commonality found in libraries and museums as more of a pragmatic adoption of practices by the museum community, which sees librarianship as a "kindred" profession, rather than as a total replication of requisite skills and knowledge. He believes that "museums borrowed as needed from libraries, resulting in diversity in the ways that library concepts were implemented across the museum community" (Urban 2014, p. 610). Meanwhile, Whyte views opportunities for both convergence and partnership. The strength of each profession can be brought to bear according to a common goal. Libraries and archives have the technology assets and museums have the presentation skills; they should work together to realise a common goal of "helping people to explore the world" (Whyte, cited in Trant 2009, p. 41).

The issue of intra-sectoral diversity alluded to by Urban, in terms of need, profile, audience, funding, staffing, skills knowledge, mission and purpose, adds an additional layer of complexity to discussion about the future needs of the GLAM sector. A "one size fits all" model to meet these needs may not be totally suitable. If we consider the ongoing and often acrimonious debates around library education and the need to educate for specific library sectors, and extend this across the GLAM environment, then these complexities become all the more apparent. Similarly, within the museums environment, diversity of workforce needs is often highlighted, as they are in the UK report, *The tomorrow people*:

"As in other loosely structured sectors, the specific skills, knowledge and experience expected of new entrants vary from job to job and place to place. The requirements for a curator/manager in a small local museum are very different from those for an education officer, marketing assistant or junior curator in a large one. And even within the same types of museum, staff structures and responsibilities vary widely. Salaries do, too" (Davies 2007, p. 18).

Highlighting the importance of this aspect of the GLAM convergence discussion, Weatherburn and Harvey challenge the GLAM professions firstly to "define the field (or fields)" and then suggest that once this has been defined an important question is, "Can one qualification hope to cover the whole field (or all of the fields)?" (2016, p. 253).

Generic attributes

The literature discussing the skills and knowledge needed for the future of the GLAM sector reveals a raft of opinions and perspectives. The most common view drawn from the literature about future workforce need is for what has been characterised as "aptitude and attitude" (Bertot, Sarin & Percell 2015, p. 12), or the need for what are often referred to as "soft" or "generic" skills, as well as "hard" or "professional" skills or knowledge. Appearing throughout the literature (Howard 2015; Howard et al. 2016; Bertot, Sarin & Percell 2015; Weatherburn & Harvey 2016) on the future needs of the sector are characteristics or aptitudes such as:

- passion
- problem solving capacity
- critical thinking
- communication skills (both oral and written)
- understanding of various learning styles and literacies
- flexibility
- leadership
- adaptability
- understanding of ethical and social responsibilities
- community engagement
- creativity
- conflict management
- research skills
- advocacy
- activism
- project management
- understanding of the sociocultural context.

Such aptitudes are difficult to map and to some extent reflect wider expectations of university education generally, so can be seen as part of a larger set of desirable professional employability traits. Reflections of these can be found in the "general employability skills" subset of the ALIA-ASA-RIMPA KSAs, but mapping their application and translation across the GLAM environment is difficult, as the nuances of what each means for the different professions have yet to be fully explored. This exploration is required, however, to fully ascertain the extent of skills convergence across the sector, and involves an investigation as to how concepts such as "education", "community" and even "information" are conceptualised and operationalised in different GLAM contexts.

Towards a "GLAM Curriculum"?

This preliminary examination of the evidence for convergence in the requisite skills and knowledge needed across GLAM sector points to the possibility of establishing a common core of professional skills that constitute an educational standard, jointly developed and adopted by the different GLAM communities. This development would be driven by shared goals and needs, such as those around new technologies. It would be predicated, however, on a deeper exploration of the "nuance, diversity and polyphony" (Robinson 2012, p. 414) that exist at an institutional level, and at more particular levels in the various GLAM professions. Furthermore, the application of a core set of competencies in any curriculum would require an extensive examination of domain-specific approaches to the relevant skills and knowledge.

The mapping and literature suggests a number of areas that would be prime candidates for further consideration, if the development of a common GLAM skill set were attempted. These include digitisation and digital collections, data skills, content design and production, and information organisation. Equally, there are some areas where differences of emphasis and context would need to be studied and addressed in any "GLAM curriculum", outside of a common core. Such areas include the broader socioeconomic and political environment, collection management, educational programs and collection promotion.

Given the success of some curricula that have accommodated the needs of both librarianship and the archives community, it might be tempting to conclude that the rest of the GLAM sector can be similarly accommodated. However, the GLAM sector represents a continuum of varying institutional and professional needs and outlooks, rather than simply four letters that happen to form an attractive-sounding word. A further step, beyond L and A, may be possible, just as a further step beyond M and G may be, but this additional step could well be a much larger step, requiring a great deal of study, thought and conversation, across and between all of GLAM's constituent communities.

This paper has reported on a component of an initial exploration being conducted by academics at the School of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University. The findings emerging from it are all pointing to the value of further research, as outlined above. Ideally, this would be led by a team with representation across the sector, and involve the participation of a wide range of institutions and associations, as well as individuals, within each profession. Such a project would require significant funding, as well as the support of leadership at national and state levels, and grass-roots engagement with the concept of "GLAM education". Anecdotal evidence from the web and social media suggests that GLAM professionals are interested in discussing institutional linkages and potential synergies with their colleagues from other parts of the sector, and that the time is therefore right for a broad, directed conversation on the education needed to sustain the GLAM professions as a whole, in the twenty-first century.

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