Associateship of the Library Association: a study of Route A training

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ASSOCIATESHIP OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION - A STUDY OF ROUTE A TRAINING.

By

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partial fulfilment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the training of individuals following Route A to Associateship of the Library Association.

Written training programmes from several sectors of information work are compared in content and in structure. The findings highlight the high level of comparability of programmes, independent of their origins. Further examination involving interviews with a selection of the individuals involved in the design and the implementation of the programmes provide insights into the more general problems and advantages of Associateship.

Questionnaires completed by a selection of present registration candidates suggest several areas of variability in training procedure. Differences in the extent of candidate involvement in control of programme content and design are highlighted.

The future of Associateship is considered, combining the perspectives of the trainer and of the trainee. An increased level of candidate involvement, particularly in the initial stages of programme design, is suggested.

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Not forgetting my David, 'all ways' a continual inspiration to me.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

An individual's professional advancement within the field of
Librarianship may be substantiated by the award of Chartered
status. A professional Register of Chartered Members is kept
by The Library Association under the terms of the Royal
Charter granted in 1898 and the Supplemental Charter of
1986. Election to this Register is open to any graduate
member of the Association exhibiting the required level of
professional development, subject to meeting the Byelaws of
the Association and the regulations laid down by Council.

Two levels of Chartered status exist, the first is that of
Associateship and the second of Fellowship. Fellowship is
the highest professional qualification conferred by The
Library Association and requires that applicants have been
Associates for at least five years and made a significant
contribution to the profession. Application for
Associateship generally involves production of a
Professional Development Report (PDR) outlining details of
the individual's progression within the profession after
completion of one of the five possible routes to
Associateship.

Detailed explanations of these routes and the regulations
governing them can be found in The Library Association's
publication *Routes to Associateship*[1]. However, the routes
may be summarised as follows.

ROUTE A - Completion of a Library Association accredited
course followed by one year of supervised work following a
training programme approved by The Library Association.

ROUTE B - Completion of a Library Association accredited course followed by two years of work without direct supervision and without a training programme approved by The Library Association.

ROUTE C - Five years of work experience followed by a Library Association approved course.

ROUTE D - A graduate level course not accredited by The Library Association together with five years work experience at a professional level.

Each of these routes must be followed by submission of a Professional Development Report to The Library Association. This will be used to judge whether the level of competence required for admission to the Register has been achieved.

The fifth route to Associateship is open to holders of Library Association approved overseas qualifications and requires submission of an Adaption Report rather than a Professional Development Report. This places emphasis on both the candidate's professional development and their understanding of the practice and organisation of the library and information service within the United Kingdom. Route E may be summarised in the following manner.

ROUTE E - Completion of a Library Association accredited overseas qualification followed by one year of practice within the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or European Community. Successful submission of an Adaption Report.

Previously there has been much critisim of Associateship, particularly of the lack of guidance and support given by the Library Association[2]. However, recent steps have been taken to remedy this - most notably the publication of a new detailed edition of *Routes to Associateship.*[3] Stronger support networks for candidates and supervisors of Route A followers are developing and the level of general awareness of the importance of staff training is rising.

1.2   Purposes of this study.

With the increasing level of interest in staff training in mind this study attempts to further investigate the advantages of Associateship training and the current problems of the system.

Of the five available paths to Associateship Route A is by far the most heavily used[4]. Furthermore, the nature of this route involves the production of a written programme outlining the details of the training to be experienced. In a study of this nature, with constraints upon time and resources, these factors favoured concentration upon Route A only.

The study attempts to examine Route A training from the perspective of both the trainer and the trainee.

1.3   Study structure.

Initially a comparative study of training was conducted. This involved collection of a selection of Library Association approved Route A training programmes from across several sectors employing information workers. The structure

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and content of the written programmes were compared. Follow up interviews with a selection of the individuals responsible for the design of these programmes provided more detailed information on their production, implementation and training from the supervisor's viewpoint.

Great similarities were found between the training programmes and the experiences of supervisors regardless of the sector of employment involved. This indicates success on the part of the Library Association, in its role of ensuring that, on paper at least, all registration candidates following Route A receive comparable training.

Associateship training was later examined from the perspective of the candidate. Individuals who are presently undergoing (or have recently undergone) Associateship contributed to this section. Questionnaires were completed by some candidates and informal written and verbal communication was held with others. The differences between candidates' experiences was far more marked in this section of the study, particularly in the extent of input permitted into the programme design and the control of its contents .

Finally the findings from both perspectives were combined. Attempting to identify the problems and successes of the process of Associateship and to make informed suggestions as to improvements, changes and the future of the system.

It is also hoped that this work will be of use to present candidates in serving as a useful insight into the process of Associateship enabling them to learn from the problems and successes of previous candidates.

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2. THE BACKGROUND TO ASSOCIATESHIP.

2.1   Development of the present routes to Associateship.

The structure of the present qualification procedure is a relatively recent development. Routes A, B and C were approved by Council in September 1986 and came into force in January 1987, with Route D following later in the year. Route E is the newest addition created in 1991.

These introductions replaced a procedure which had its first effects on students commencing post graduate courses in January 1981. Prior to that, the system leading to qualification as an Associate was open to abuse. The signature of a Chartered Librarian who would confirm the individual's professional advancement a minimum of twelve months after leaving library school was all that was necessary to gain Chartered status. Undoubtedly many candidates were given admirable training and throughly deserved to become Associates but there was little monitoring of the scheme and it was possible for poorly trained or untrained candidates to qualify.

Subsequent changes were made to the system based on the work conducted by a Library Association appointed Working Party in 1977[1].

These changes led to a more rigourously controlled system of qualification. Under this system the majority of candidates on leaving library school had to complete a pre-licentiate year in an institution with a Library Association approved training programme. On completion of this training year the

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individual could become a Licentiate if their supervisor was satisfied with their progress. The following two years were spent gaining further professional experience after which the candidate was required to submit a report to the Library Association outlining their professional progress. Only after acceptance of this report by the Library Association would Associateship be granted.

This system had undoubted advantages over its predecessor in that it ensured structured training and professional development had occured before Associateship was granted. However, the system had many critics who argued that it changed Associateship from a qualification previously far too easy to obtain into one far too difficult[2]. The main arguements around this structure focused upon the length of time taken to qualify.

> It now takes longer to become a qualified
> librarian than to become a doctor or a
> lawyer. This lengthening of the path
> has reduced salaries to a level comparable
> with that of a school leaver and also barred
> promotion to a higher scale.[3]

Also highlighted were problems for new graduates in finding employers willing to provide pre-licentiate training.

> In recent LA Vacancies supplements about one
> third of jobs have not asked for Chartered
> Librarians but of this third some are non-
> professional posts for library assistants and
> not all employers want to take on pre-
> licentiates for such positions believing that
> the new employee will move on and the post
> require further recruitment.[4]

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The earliest date by which Associateship could be reached by those first able to qualify by this pathway was calculated as January 1985[5]. By this time further changes in the routes to Associateship were in progress.

In the early 1980's The Library Association found itself in danger of becoming out of step with developments in the library and information community, particularly in areas of education, manpower and membership policies. In an attempt to bring the policies of the Association into line with both current and future needs a Working Party was created whose terms of reference were as follows.

> To consider the scope and future manpower
> requirements of the library and information
> community: the implications for the policies
> of the Association including education: the
> ways of expanding membership[6].

This Working Party became known as The Futures Working Party and presented its first report to Council in November 1984[7]. Having assessed the situation of The Library Association it proposed that changes in policies, membership profile and structure were necessary if the Association was to stay abreast of current trends. Amongst many other proposals the Report of the Futures Working Party called for a revision of the qualification structure recognising that the new process was deterring some young librarians from joining the Association.

The report recommended a restructuring of the qualification procedure. It suggested that the title of Associate, but not Chartered status, should be granted to all individuals who

had received a Library Association approved training
programme lasting at least one year after leaving library
school. Chartered status would be granted with the award of
Fellowship - given automatically to all existing Associates.
To reach this higher status individuals would be required to
have attended a minimum of ten Association approved courses,
produce evidence of professional achievement or to submit
acceptable publications and be nominated by five of the
newly titled Fellows. The title of the highest qualification
given by the Library Association would become Companion,
with all existing Fellows immediately granted this title but
with no further entries to this level given.

These suggestions made it yet more demanding to reach
Chartered status, as did the further suggestion that for an
individual to remain as a Chartered Librarian a compulsory
number of Library Association approved courses must be
attended each year. After studying the report Council issued
the following statement.

> Council agrees with the objectives of
> the Futures Working Party but without
> commitment to the specific recommendations.
> It asks the Working Party to initiate
> consultation with the membership on the
> report and itsrecommendations and to
> present a final report to Council by
> the end of 1985.[8]

The proposed changes were not welcomed by a wide selection
of people and numerous complaints were voiced.[9,10] The
consultation process suggested by Council involved upwards
of three thousand people through meetings across the United

Kingdom and letters from both individuals and representatives of large groups. The proposals for changes in the qualification structure contained in the report were mentioned in 83% of the written responses and took up a large proportion of the discussions held in the consultation meetings[11]. As a result the structure of professional qualifications was rethought and new proposals made in the final report of the Futures Working Party.

The recommendations from this final report formed the basis of today's Routes A to D and were implimented, after further slight modification, in 1987. Steps were taken to ensure a smooth cross over to this new structure in an attempt to ensure that candidates already embarked on the previous pathway were not made to suffer[12]. In general members were more satisfied with the new structure than the old[13].

2.2 The aims behind Associateship.

To function at a professional level an information worker or librarian needs to exhibit both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The assessment of an individual's theoretical knowledge is determined largely by their ability successfully to complete a Library Association accredited course. The individual's ability to apply this knowledge in practice, the lessons learned from such experience and general professional progression are the aspects most throughly examined via the production of a Professional Development Report.

The Professional Development Report is expected to include...

i) Details of the candidate's practical experience.

ii) An evaluative account of the professional work undertaken in these posts.

iii) Awareness of current professional issues.

iv) Involvement in professional affairs.

v) Assessment of training received and future training needs.

vi) Assessment of professional development in the period covered by the report.

vi) An understanding of the objectives of the employing organisation.

In brief the aim of the Professional Development Report is to illustrate that in the eyes of The Library Association the candidate has developed a satisfactory level of professional judgement and professional maturity.[14]

Of the five available routes to Associateship Route A is by far the most heavily used.

Table 1: <u>Applications for Associateship across the available routes. (1991).</u>[15]

ROUTE	ACCEPTED	REJECTED	TOTAL
A	294	13	307
B	56	4	60
C	15	1	16
D	8	0	8
E	0	0	0
TOTAL	382	19	391

Route A is also the most intensive route, with only one year of post-library school work necessary before Chartering, and the most structured, with the year spent following a Library Association approved training programme. The structured approach of the route has undoubted benefits,

> Candidates following Route A to
> Chartership, have Potentially an
> excellent start to their career in
> the profession because they gain a
> personal commitment from an experienced
> Chartered Librarian, to act as their
> supervisor and to undertake delivery
> of their training programme.[16]

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and the intensive nature of the course can be a motivation
to candidates.

> Anything which brings forward the date at
> which a Librarian may be qualified to
> apply for any of the (relatively) more
> lucrative jobs which happen to be advertised
> is therefore to be welcomed by the candidate.[17]

2.3 Route A training programmes.

Each registration candidate, regardless of the route to
Associateship followed, is assessed by identical criteria
using the information expressed in their Professional
Development Report. However, candidates following Route A
are able to apply for Chartered status after only twelve
months of practical experience, by far the shortest route.
This indicates that following a training programme, approved
by the Library Association, will produce an individual
worthy of professional qualifications at a significantly
faster rate than the other routes available.

Devising a training programme to cover the wide variety of
topics important to professional development needs a great
deal of careful thought and consideration. Each individual
will have slightly different needs dependent upon their
previous experience and aptitude. Similarly the experience a
candidate is likely to encounter over the training period
will differ as a result of the wide variety in the nature of
posts available to information workers. It is therefore
impossible to produce a single ideal training programme.
Hence it can not be ensured that all candidates will receive
identical training before qualifying as Associates. Some
attempts have been made to produce generalised training
programmes within particular information sectors[18,19,20].
However, even the workers producing such models realized the
great differences between work situations. Thus a

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generalised model can only form a broad basis on which a more detailed training programme must be built after consideration of the candidate's individual needs and working circumstances.

However, for Associateship to be considered as a valid qualification it is necessary that all candidates must reach a comparable level of professional development. To validate a Route A training programme it must be approved by the Library Association. This should ensure that despite the possible range in training practices any individual who utilizes the programme available to them should be able to achieve a comparable level of development.

In the past a major complaint of those involved in drawing up a Route A training programme focused upon the lack of formal guidance given by the Library Association.

> To a large extent, all this activity was due
> to the inadequacy of the official information
> available from Ridgmount Street. Criticism of
> previous editions of *Routes...* was loud and
> generally justified, they were basically rules
> and regulations with a bare minimum of practical
> help.[21]

However, in the latest edition of *Routes to Associateship*[22] this problem has been addressed and clear guidelines have been made, identifying seven basic components which should be satisfied by a training programme. Furthermore, the specific aims of each area have been identified. Not only does this provide invaluable help to those involved in the formulation of a training programme but enables the candidate to ensure that he is meeting these objectives as his training proceeds, to further evaluate the programme of

training and ultimately to guide in the writing of a Professional Development Report.

Moreover from 1992 individuals involved in supervision of registration candidates have been able to make use of a supervisors' support group set up by the Library Association's Personnel Training and Education Group (PTEG). Whose aims are...

> To provide support and advice to new supervisors.
> To run regular regional training programmes for supervisors.
> To organise exchange of experience sessions for supervisors.
> To provide a forum through which enhancements to the existing Route A scheme can be aired and feedback given.
> To identify training and development needs of supervisors.[23]

It is hoped that eventually each area of the country will have one or more Supervisors' Liason Officer (SLO) to provide a network of help and advice, arrange courses and generally to put supervisors in touch with each other.[24] Not only can this support group, and the resultant increased level of contact between supervisors, be useful in clarifying the areas to be covered in designing a training programme but also in guiding supervisors through the entire training year. Detailed specific problems that it is not possible to cover in the general publication - *Routes to Associateship* may be answered through this network.

2.4 Anatomy of a training programme.

The Library Association specifies seven broad categories to be covered by a training programme for a Route A candidate.[25]

1. Introduction.

2. Professional Skills.

3. Management Skills.

4. Analysis & Evaluation.

5. Communication Skills.

6. Training.

7. Professional Involvement & Awareness.

Each aspect of the training schedule has specific aims and expected learning outcomes for the candidate.

Introduction: This section introduces the candidate to the particular nature of the service in which they work. Emphasis is placed on evaluating the needs of the community or host organisation served and how the information service aims to fill these. Developing an understanding of the objectives of the service should enable the candidate to assess its effectiveness in greater depth. At the same time the candidate should develop an understanding of their own particular role within the service, leading to self evaluation from the perspective of the information service

provided and their role within the host organisation and community as a whole.

Assessment and evaluation of the individual's own duties and of the overall service provided are the intended major learning outcomes of this section. However, the introduction should also cover the general nature and aims of the training programme the candidate will cover. Thus it is hoped to provide a broad level of understanding of the input the candidate must make into the programme to achieve an acceptable level of professional development.

Professional Skills: Through this section of the training programme the candidate should be able to apply some of the theoretical knowledge gained both prior to and during the structured training. The specific technical skills a candidate can hope to develop are very much dependent on the work situation but it should be aimed to include... Selection of relevant materials according to the organisation's objectives, the maintenance of stock, both physically and in terms of currency, the organisation of a collection to maximize retrieval, the use of the collection and external resources to provide information to users, use of computers for housekeeping and information retrieval, and general administrative procedures.

At first glance it may appear difficult to gain experience in all of these practices within a year, particularly as many first posts are highly specialised to one aspect of information work. However, job rotation or visits to other libraries / departments are suggested methods of allowing the candidate to widen the range of theoretical professional skills seen implemented. Throughout the process the candidate should evaluate the procedures used, again aided by visits to other information units where a range of different methods are used, with not only specific practical

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skills being learnt but also the ability to evaluate their worth.

Management Skills: Generally as progression into a career occurs so the amount of responsibility increases. It is therefore important that a training programme leading to a professional qualification should encompass managerial skills. Aspects including the financial and political context in which the information service operates, an understanding of how to set priorities, solve problems and make decisions effectively are all important areas for study. Ideally areas involved in staff management should be covered. However, few candidates will have experience of this in their first positions. As an alternative to first hand experience in staff management it is possible to learn useful lessons through consideration of theoretical issues and observation of more senior members of staff. By such exposure to managerial issues the candidate should develop an awareness vital to professional development and also recognize areas in which future personal training is required.

Analysis & Evaluation: Emphasis within a completed Professional Development Report should be placed on producing an evaluative account of the candidate's experience. The services offered by the information service, the managerial practices and the general policies should all be analysed in an evaluative manner. Discussion of policy matters and management strategies, report writing and project work are all good methods of developing an individual's ability to analyse and evaluate. The skill of evaluating a situation and then acting accordingly is a fundamental tool to a professional of any sort. Consequently there is particular emphasis on the importance of evaluation in the suggested outline of how to design a Route A

programme[27] and also in outlines of how to write a successful Professional Development Report.[28]

Communication Skills: The development of effective communication skills are another vital part of professional practice. If possible the candidate should be given the opportunity to develop skills in team work, supervising staff, communicating with users, publicity and promotions, written communication and committee work. Good routes of communication[29] are vital to the functioning of any organisation and it is important that the developing professional recognizes their importance and improves their skill in all communication areas possible.

Training: Continued training throughout a professional career allows development of an individual's potential, hence improving the effectiveness of the service they can provide. This aspect of the training programme should reiterate the value and purpose of training for both staff and users and expose the candidate to a range of different training techniques in order to obtain practical experience of their effectiveness in given circumstances. Ultimately the candidate should be able to assess their own future training needs to ensure that professional development continues beyond the end of their Professional Development Report. Production of evaluative written work, attendance on short courses, day to day training and monitoring, regular discussion of training received and future developments are all methods of raising the candidates awareness of training.

Professional Involvement / Awareness: As a developing professional it is important for the candidate to become aquainted with the wider professional community of information work. Conferences, professional courses, meetings and visits are all excellent ways of achieving this and time should be set aside for these activities if

possible within the training programme. Professional reading should also be encouraged to increase and build upon the candidate's knowledge of professional issues. A general awareness of the wider professional world can lead not only to advantages for the individual and the employer but to the profession as a whole, always in need of new input. Comparison with other services can lead to further development of professional judgement.

In addition to these basic areas information concerning such factors as training budget, time allowed for training activities, the frequency and arrangement of counselling sessions and a rough indication of the training methods to be employed through each section should be included in the training programme.

The Library Association has endevoured to simplify the process of submitting a training programme by including a Route A training programme pro forma, outlining the sections detailed above, in *Routes to Associateship*. This is relatively clear in its layout and simply requires details of each aspect of training to be added to the appropriate spaces on the form.

2.5 Types of training programme.

Training programmes can take two forms, standard or individual.

A **standard** programme is not specific to one individual or to one post. Typically such a programme is submitted by an employer who will regularly employ one or more newly graduated information professionals. A Chartered member with overall responsibility will submit the programme but day to

day supervision of trainees may be carried out by line managers or contracted out to consultants. A training programme of this sort will be approved for a maximum of three years.

Individual training programmes are designed for a named individual in a specific post and may not be used for another candidate without re-submission. It is generally possible to be more specific about the training given in such a programme as the particular nature of the post and the needs of the individual can be considered.

Ideally the training programme should be approved by the Library Association prior to the candidate commencing the period of training. If this is not possible the programme must be submitted within the first four weeks of training. The programmes are passed to the Registration Board of the Library Association for assessment on submission. It is aimed that supervisors will receive comments on the programme within twenty-one days of submission so that any gaps or deficiences can be identified and rectified. The board has a responsibility to ensure that the training of all Route A candidates is of a comparable level whatever the circumstances of their employment so approval of a training programme takes serious consideration and it is not unusual for the board to ask for clarification or further details concerning the programme.

Despite the broad guidelines explaining what is expected of a Route A training programme the Library Association recognises that...

> The diverse nature of professional library and
> information work is such that the structure of
> professional training programmes, their content
> and the methods of training used will vary
> according to the nature of the organisation in
> which the candidate is employed.[30]

Ultimately the result of following any approved training programme should be to produce individuals with a comparable level of professional maturity. The candidate's professional development is assessed through the Professional Development Report they submit rather than assessment of the training programme they followed. However, it is important to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged by following a low standard of training programme, hence the assessment of training programmes by the Library Association's Registration Board.

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3. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ROUTE A TRAINING PROGRAMMES.

3.1 Objectives of this study.

For this study it was decided to conduct a comparative survey of a small selection of Library Association approved training programmes. Using a selection of both individual and standard training programmes from across several different sectors of information work it was aimed to:

1. Ascertain those components common to all training programmes and those specific to different employment sectors.

2. Discover the differences and similarities in the structure of individual and standard training programmes.

3. Gain specific insights into the implementation of these training programmes.

3.2 Method.

To conduct such a comparative study it was necessary to collect a sample of training programmes, both standard and individual, from a selection of employment sectors. Copies of all training programmes are retained by the Library Association over the period of the candidate's training. However, they are maintained as part of the confidential records of candidates and are not available for general inspection.[1] However, the Library Association agreed to contact a small number of employers who maintain a standard training programme.

This approach resulted in the collection of three standard training programmes from different sectors of information provision.

A. A large polytechnic library.
B. A County public library service.
C. An information unit based in a firm of accountants.

To collect individual training programmes individuals were approached who were known to be supervising or to have supervised such training. This resulted in the collection of three individual training programmes from a variety of information sectors.

1. A small medical information unit.
2. A school library.
3. A small college library.

Permission to use these training programmes in the comparative study was granted upon the condition that the names of the individuals and organisations involved remained confidential.

To complement the training programmes studied it was decided to conduct follow up interviews with the individuals primarily responsible for their design and implementation. Thus providing an opportunity to comment upon the design process and, where appropriate, the supervision of the programme.

However, the primary aim of conducting follow up interviews was to clarify the points made in the written form of the training programmes and to allow elaboration on a variety of aspects of the training across different sectors of information work. The study was not intended to provide data for statistical analysis regarding general trends and

patterns in design and implementation of training programmes. Instead it was envisaged that each interview would provide information specific to the particular training programme and the work environment in question, building upon the information gathered from the written programmes.

The large sizes of the organisations from which the standard training programmes were gathered allowed a number of individuals to contribute to their design. The programmes were found to have been developed over several years with numerous parties adding to them at different stages in their development. This complicated attempts to find an individual who felt qualified to discuss the design of the programme. Similarly, although a single individual was generally named as programme supervisor, in practice different aspects of training were found to be covered by different members of staff. Hence it would be necessary to interview a number of staff to achieve an overall picture of the implementation of the programme. In addition to these factors the geographic positioning of the three organisations who provided standard training programmes for the study resulted in a final decision to conduct the follow up interviews using only the individuals responsible for design and implementation of the individual training programmes.

Consequently, four individuals were questioned. Two had designed the programme with some input from the candidate and then acted as supervisors for the training year, with a high level of personal responsibility for implementing the programme. In one such case the candidate was also interviewed. The fourth individual was a candidate who designed their own programme whilst working as the only member of staff in an information unit. This individual had an external supervisor with whom regular meetings were made

to discuss progress but the bulk of responsibility for programme implementation was their own.

The very small sample size over which the study was conducted coupled with the variety in the information sectors covered by the organisations involved did not favour a method of questioning resulting in responses upon which numeric analysis could be conducted. It was decided that the most productive method of gathering information would be to conduct face-to-face loosely structured interviews with each of the individuals. A number of identical basic questions were asked (outlined in appendix I) and from the responses given it was possible to focus more deeply upon the issues considered to be of most importance by the interviewees and to document opinions and comments.

Notes were taken throughout the interviews, which lasted between 15 and 35 minutes, and fully transcribed within 24 hours so that points not adequately recorded at the time would be remembered.

The interview schedule was divided into three broad sections:

Part 1. Clarification of the written programme.

As a result of studying the individual training programmes in written form a number of questions arose, primarily due to the brevity of the description given. This section varied between interviews, dependent upon the training programme in question.

It provided an opportunity to clarify and expand upon aspects of the training given and in some cases it led into descriptions of the aims of particular sections of the programme. The nature of this section prevented formulation of a structured list of questions, lines of enquiry were based upon specific queries arising after study of each written programme.

These questions allowed a deeper understanding of the training programme to be achieved than could be gained from study of the written structure. The expected learning outcomes and aims of each section were discussed to a depth not present in the written form.

Part 2. Development of the written programme.

Here questions were asked concerning the method by which the programme was developed. A number of questions were asked in each of the interviews (appendix I) relating to specific aspects of the programme's development. These focused primarily upon the sources used in drawing up the programme, the nature of the help available in this process and the interviewee's previous experience in design of training programmes. It was hoped that interviewees would further expand upon these areas when asked to give further comment upon their general experiences of training programme design, both positive and negative.

Part 3. Training in relation to Associateship.

Interviewees were asked for their opinions on Associateship in relation to the training presented by the programme with which they were involved. Again a number of specific questions were asked (appendix I). These focused on the benefits and disadvantages of the specific programme offered

leading into a discussion of the more general positive and negative aspects of training and Associateship.

The questions outlined in appendix I were asked in sequential order and formed the basis of the interview but emphasis was placed on allowing interviewees to answer questions at length and digress if this was considered to bring further points to light.

3.3 Results..
3.3.1 Written Training Programmes.

The written training programmes collected took on a variety of forms. The briefest consisted of three sides of A4 paper whilst the longest was included in a booklet of over twenty sides, encompassing all levels of staff training. In this case details of Route A training were combined within the service's general training policies.

Four of the six programmes were designed prior to the publication of the most recent edition of *Routes to Associateship* in September 1991. Of the two published after this date one adhered very closely to the guidelines given in this publication, using the headings and structure of the pro forma. The second, as mentioned earlier, combined parts of its training programme for Route A with training given to all staff members. Hence it did not adhere so closely to the specific layout of a programme as described by the Library Association. Those produced prior to September 1991 were more varied in their structure.

With regard to content all of the programmes identified the need to cover the seven broad categories mentioned earlier. It must be remembered that all programmes studied have been

approved by the Library Association and hence would be expected to meet the criteria outlined in *Routes to Associateship*. However, major differences in the depth and level of explanation for each category were very apparent across the programmes.

Of the six programmes studied only the two produced after September 1991 specifically clarified the learning objectives of each training area. These also identified each training category clearly and detailed the methods employed to provide the training. One further programme clearly outlined the elements to be covered by the training and went on to specifically mention the training methods employed in each. The remaining three programmes explained that training would cover the seven basic categories but failed to give any detailed, structured indication of learning objectives to be achieved from each or to consistantly give details of the methods employed in the training process.

To clarify these distinctions consider the following examples.

The section covering the candidate's relationship with users has been quoted from each programme. Each represents the general style of the written training outline.

PROGRAMME 1.- County Library Service.

Objective: To provide an understanding of the needs of the user.

Methods: Role play.

   Case studies.

   'Communication games'.

   Attitude tests.

   Observation.

   Discussion with users inside/outside the library.

   Internal course.

Objective: To help communicate with and receive users effectively.

Methods: Role play.

   Video.

   Observation.

   On the spot discussion.

   Internal course.

Objective: To help to deal with anti-social behaviour /emergencies.

Methods: Written instruction.

   Case studies.

   Role play.

   Observation.

   On the spot discussion.

   Internal course.

Objective: To enable staff to know groups in the community.
Methods: Visits.

   Talks.

   Investigation methods.

   Written evidence.

PROGRAMME 2.- College Library.

Learning aims: The development of abilities in interpersonal skills and communications.

Communicating with users - Issue and enquiry desk work.

   Delivery of user education.

   Discussion and observation with other staff members.

PROGRAMME 3. - Polytechnic Library.

Interpersonal skills - relations with users.
Methods: Experience in counter work and enquiry work.

   Face to face contact with users.

   Discussion of skills required.

   User education.

PROGRAMME 4. - Medical Information Unit.

Reader services form a major part of the work. Great importance is attached to the quality of interpersonal relations between users and staff. Training will be given in the techniques involved in diagnosing student information problems and seeking to solve them in a sympathetic and effective manner.

PROGRAMME 5. - Accountancy Information Unit.

Introduction of the newcomer to the professional working environment...
Training in dealing with clients and the various library users, noting the particular importance of confidentiality.

PROGRAMME 6. - School Library Service.

Experience will be gained in dealing with students and solving their information needs.

The first and second programmes clearly state the learning aims of each training section and the methods used to achieve these. Programme 3 explains clearly the methods used in the training but fails to clarify the specific objectives of the training offered. The fourth programme presents the objectives of only limited sections of the programme, in a very discursive manner. It also fails to discuss the specific training methods behind the training given. Programmes 5 and 6 indicate that training will occur but fails to explain the aims or the specific methods behind it. However, both do list a general collection of training methods although not specifying which sections of the training these relate to.

There appears to be little difference in the areas in which training is given across the sectors of information work studied, although the methods of providing training do appear to differ.

Programmes 1 and 3 are standard training programmes. They are both comprehensive in detailing the training to be given with particular emphasis on the methods employed.

The training methods used cover the following basic areas.

1. Individual discussion.
2. On the job training.
3. Roleplay, practical exercises, case studies and video.
4. Job rotation, visits to other information units.
5. Seminars-candidates prepare and lead group discussion.
6. Observation.
7. Meetings and courses - internal and external.
8. Literature study.
9. Special project work.

Programme number 6 also corresponds to a standard training programme but represents an organisation with a much smaller number of staff than the previous two. Although no specific details of the training methods to be employed throughout each section are given the closing paragraph explains that throughout the programme training will be as follows.

1. Introduction and description followed by practical test of understanding.
2. More detailed explanation together with a review of previous training followed by practical application under supervision.
3. In depth explanation and a resume of previous training.
4. Trainee dealing with 'live enquiries' and going 'solo' in other areas as able.

Both internal and external courses are also mentioned as methods by which the candidate will be able to improve their technical skills and further their professional development.

The methods employed in the individual training programmes can be summarised as follows.

1. On the job training.

2. Individual discussion.

3. Observation.

4. Literature study.

5. Meetings and courses - internal and external.

Only one of the individual training programmes (programme 2) links each section to be studied with the particular methods of training used. However, closing and interspersed comments from the other programmes indicate that these methods will form the body of the available training. The similarity between methods employed on each individual training programme was further substantiated during the interviews.

3.3.2 Interviews.

Interview 1. - Medical Information Unit (Training programme 4.)

Programme 4 was accepted as a suitable individual training programme by the Library Association in 1988. An interview was conducted with the individual responsible for its design. The same individual was also responsible for the supervision of the candidate over the training year.

The basis of the programme was designed prior to the candidate taking up the post. As a result the bulk of the programme was designed without consultation with the candidate. The candidate had the opportunity to discuss the programme before it was passed to the Library Association for approval. However, no changes were suggested or made as a result of this.

This programme was the first formal training programme designed by the individual questioned, although training of

junior members of staff not following written training programmes had been part of the interviewee's responsibilities in previous employment. Whilst designing the programme the interviewee drew upon the experience of former colleagues and other professional aquaintances. As the only professional librarian working in the medicaal information unit it was impossible to discuss the programme with others having first hand experience of the work conducted there. Numerous books and articles covering the subject of staff training were consulted in addition to the edition of *Routes to Associateship* available at the time[2]. The former presented some useful material for consideration, although much assumed a larger staff figure and more resources than were available in this case. The interviewee found that *Routes to Associateship* failed to provide sufficient help on the structure the programme should take and the level of depth to enter. However, the programme was accepted on its first submission.

In reterospect the interviewee judged the design of the programme to be relatively poor, classing it now as far too discursive. She commented that the most recent edition of *Routes to Associateship* makes it much easier to appreciate the Library Associations expectations of a training programme. In the opinion of the interviewee dividing the components of a training programme into sections corresponding to aims, objectives and training methods serves as an excellent means of focusing both the mind of the candidate and that of the supervisor onto the achievements expected of the training.

The interviewee now realises that there is another fault in the programme she designed related to the fact that the programme was virtually complete before the candidate took up the post. Although once in position the particular needs of the candidate could be reassessed and the training

adjusted to match these within the original framework of the programme the interviewee felt that a better programme would have resulted from closer consultation with the candidate. Allowing the programmme to be structured in such a way as to focus on the particular needs and interests of the candidate and having the added advantage of involving the candidate in the training programme from its initial stages. Thus the candidate could evaluate his own training needs, how to meet these within the limitations set by the employer and as a consequence give clarity to the objectives of the Associateship system.

When asked if the training programme successfully produced a "professional" the interviewee questioned the ability of any programme to do this. The interviewee pointed out that an individual who merely follows each of the tasks outlined in a training programme in a step by step manner will not achieve the maximum benefit of the training. The candidate's attitude towards training is of vital importance. In her opinion the ability to evaluate and to question are of major importance. However, she pointed out that this is a very difficult aspect to teach a candidate, with much depends upon the individual's personality. In the interviewee's opinion some candidates pass through the training process in a passive manner gaining very little other than a few extra technical skills, primarily because they are unwilling to evaluate or fail to realise the necessity to question. This should be seen in the Professional Development Report submitted by the candidate but it is equally important that the supervisor should emphasise the necessity of evaluation and self-motivation before agreeing to supervise a candidate.

The candidate who followed this particular training programme failed to submit a Professional Development Report and has remained unchartered. The interviewee pointed out

the demoralising effect of this for the supervisor and the organisation as a whole when effort, money and time are spent on a candidate who fails to be motivated by the programme, noting again the importance of judging the candidate's motivation towards Chartership before embarking on a training programme.

The interviewee pointed out that an individual's motivation to achieve Chartered status can be diminished by the general lack of respect for this qualification and the low level of advantages it generally confers. Raising the profile of Chartership both within and outside the profession should be a primary objective of the Library Association and its members, in the interviewee's opinion. The interviewee acknowledged that recent advances have been made, but still believed that there is much work to do to raise awareness of Associateship.

Interview 2. - School Library (Programme 6.)

Programme 6 was developed in 1990 by the candidate. The candidate is the only member of staff employed in the library and as such had both to design and implement the programme. However, her external supervisor was readily available for discussion when needed. On completion of the training programme and submission of a Professional Development Report the candidate successfully achieved Chartered status. The interview was conducted with the candidate only, the external supervisor was unavailable for comment.

The bulk of the responsibility for the design of the training programme fell upon the candidate. It was passed to the external supervisor who made some minor structural alterations but the content remained as devised by the

candidate. The interviewee initially had some difficulty in designing the programme as she was filling a newly created post and was unclear about the range of experience the work would present. However, her employers had definite plans for the development of the library service which enabled her to base the training programme around these. The external supervisor already had a great deal of experience in staff training and was able to point out the main areas to be included in the programme. However, the interviewee had to contend with certain aspects of training specific to her position over which her supervisor could only offer limited help, primarily the lack of resources available to devote to training.

Other than the guidance provided by her supervisor the interviewee found that she had little help in either the design or implementation of her training. In her opinion the help offered by the Library Association, particularly in their publication *Routes to Associateship*, was too limited. However, she acknowledges the vast improvements in the latest edition of this publication. The interviewee commented that it would have been useful to see some other examples of training programmes for inspiration whilst designing her own. She did make use of a publication containing examples of polytechnic library training programmes[3] but found that these were basically designed for training involving large numbers of staff and resources. She found examples of training programmes designed for information units of the size in which she was working sadly lacking.

The interviewee commented that designing her own training programme proved to be a useful exercise, clarifying the expectations of training and the direction her work should follow. Finally bringing together all of her experiences into a Professional Development Report was viewed as a

challenge with the interviewee firmly believing that she had developed as a professional as a result, surprising herself with her ability to evaluate her work.

The interviewee commented that the major faults that she found with the system were related to the lack of readily available help. In her experience contact with the Library Association Education Office was often slow, courses concerned with writing Professional Development Reports were scheduled for times and destinations that as the only staff member she could not attend and that written help was limited.

Interview 3. - College Library (Programme 2.)

Designed in 1991 this programme made heavy use of the guidelines given in the most recent edition of *Routes to Associateship*. The design of the programme was a combined effort between the supervisor and the candidate. Supervisor and candidate were interviewed together.

Both individuals admitted that they had found the guidelines issued by the Library Association very clear and had managed to design a programme which was approved with no difficulty. The supervisor had previously supervised another candidate and felt confident in her knowledge of the Library Association's expectations of a training year. She admitted that the pro forma now produced by the Library Association made it easier to design a programme than was previously possible. The supervisor mentioned the benefit gained from being able to show the pro forma to the candidate and work through it together discussing the objectives of each section and the best methods of achieving them within the limitations of the specific working environment.

The interviewed candidate commented that the process of drawing up the training programme was a learning experience in itself. She admitted that initially she had not been clear as to what a training programme would involve but that considering each section in turn and discussing the aims and methods in detail had been a great help. It was also mentioned that this process provided a formal structure to the meetings held to discuss progress with the supervisor, making it possible to review the objectives, measure the candidate's performance with reference to these and giving a focus to the discussions.

Both the candidate and the supervisor saw the training as a good way of setting a sound foundation within the profession but questioned the status and profile of the qualification. The candidate thought it significant that over her previous year of study for a Diploma in Librarianship no mention had been made of the process of Associateship. Whilst the supervisor commented that the qualification is seen by too many as yet another hurdle to cross if one wants to apply for certain jobs rather than a period of educational value to the individual.

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4. CANDIDATES' EXPERIENCES OF CHARTERSHIP.

4.1 The objectives of studying candidates' opinions.

The candidate's role is central to the award of Associateship. Assessment of an individual's suitability for admission to the Charter is based primarily upon the contents of the Professional Development Report submitted. The report must be the unaided work of the candidate. Guidance may be sought from the individual's supervisor (or elsewhere) but this is not compulsory. The report is expected to reflect the individual's opinions and assessment of the experiences gathered over the training year rather than serve as a catalogue of events.

Emphasising the candidate orientated nature of Associateship the Library Association states...

> The report is about the candidate's personal
> professional development, not about the post
> occupied or the training programme. '

Consequently the ideas and opinions of candidates were considered as vital to a study of Route A training.

It was hoped that by studying Associateship from the candidate's point of view it would be possible to gain insights into:

1. Motivation of candidates to pursue Chartered status.

2. The nature of training programmes followed.

3. The benefits of following a structured programme.

4. The faults in the training experienced.

4.2 Method.

The Association of Assistant Librarians (AAL) regularly
arranges meetings giving guidance on the writing of
Professional Development Reports. Such meetings are open to
anyone going through the process of writing a report, or to
anyone likely to go through this process in the future. As a
result gatherings of this nature were recognized as a
potentially rich source of individuals qualified to
contribute to this study.

However, it was realized that limiting the individuals
questioned to such meetings would have a number of effects.
Primarily it would impose geographic limitations on the
study. Candidates seen would be limited to those in the
immediate surrounding area of the meeting. Secondly only
those candidates following a programme allowing time for
external course attendance would be included. In an attempt
to counteract this bias and to attract a wider study sample
details of this work were published in the *Assistant
Librarian*[2], appealing for individuals willing to comment on
Associateship. It was again realized that this would not
result in a random sample, with individuals holding the
strongest views being most likely to respond.

To enable comparisons to be drawn between the opinions of
the individuals questioned it was decided to produce a
questionnaire (appendix II). Copies were distributed to
candidates at two AAL meetings in May 1992. The survey was
restricted to those following Route A to Associateship.

In an attempt to maximize the response rate it was aimed to
distribute questionnaires during the meeting with a brief
explanation of the purpose of the study and then to collect
them before the candidates dispersed. It was hence important

to ensure the questionnaire was relatively short and simple
to complete so minimizing the delay caused to candidates at
the close of the meeting.

A meeting organised by the West Midlands Division of the AAL
resulted in the collection of 13 completed questionnaires
whilst 12 were collected from one held by the North West
Division. This was a 100% response rate, with a completed
form received from each individual following Route A present
at these meetings.

Seven responses were received as a result of the request
published in the *Assistant Librarian*. However, a number of
these were from individuals who were not currently following
Route A. As a result of questionnaires sent to four of the
individuals three were returned completed.

Consequently the results of this section of the study are
based on 28 completed questionnaires.

The use of structured questions allowed for comparisons to
be made between respondents, and for some limited numeric
analysis to be done. However, the sample size was too small
to allow statistically significant results to emerge.
Instead a broad picture of opinions could be built up.

In addition to the information gathered by use of the
questionnaire candidates were very willing to talk about
their experiences informally. As they returned completed
forms many individuals were eager to verbally share their
experiences. A diverse background of information relating to
Associateship was thus collected. Similarly the majority of
the individuals replying to the request printed in the
Assistant Librarian produced long narratives concerning many
aspects of Associateship. Although such information was not

collected or recorded in a manner allowing formal analysis
it did provide a great deal of background information.

4.3 Results.

Figures from the questionnaires are displayed primarily in
tabular form. The responses given to some questions were
very discursive. These have been separated into general
basic categories to allow comparison. Although the results
correspond to information gathered from a sample size of 28
many individuals gave responses involving several
components, each different component mentioned has been
scored seperately after interpretation of the often lengthy
answers given. If a respondent was considered to raise the
same point more than once in answer to a single question
this was only scored once.

Question one concerned the issue of the candidate's
motivation in pursuing Associateship. Questions two to nine
aimed to collect details concerning the practicalities of
the training programme followed. Questions ten to 11
recorded the candidate's general opinion of the successes
and failures of the training offered to them.

It was felt that candidates may be more willing to produce
honest responses if confidentiality was maintained. As a
result no details of the candidates' names or places of work
were taken. However, several individuals felt it necessary
to clarify their answers by indicating the sector in which
they were employed.

The majority of candidates questioned (86%) indicated that
they were hoping to become Chartered members of the Library
Association because of the improved job prospects this

offered. 46% of these respondents simply indicated the hope for "improved" job prospects, not specifying the manner of improvement sought. However, 29% stated that they were motivated by the thought of resulting better paid employment, 17% by a more challenging position and 8% by the promise of an increase in salary in their present position. All those individuals who specified their definition of "improved" in one of the three ways mentioned used only one definition - ie. no responses were made stating that the individual wanted a more challenging job with more money.

The professional development aspect of Associateship was suggested less frequently as the motivation behind striving for Chartered status. Of the respondents 29% felt the qualification was necessary to become part of the library profession, whilst 29% were motivated by the opportunity to learn and develop new professional skills. Four individuals who gave these responses raised both points - 33% of respondents mentioning professional issues wanted to become part of the profession and to improve their professional skills.

Of the candidates 18% felt that they were under obligation to their employer to Charter, sadly two of the individuals giving this response gave no other motivation behind their actions. Of the others giving this answer all also admitted to being motivated by better employment prospects.

7% of individuals were motivated into applying for Chartership after discussion with other professionally qualified individuals. They also mentioned at least one of the 'professionally related' motivations as being behind their choice to proceed with the qualification.

The general findings of question one are detailed in table 2a. Table 2b. breaks down the responses involving job

prospects into the definitions of 'improved' given by the respondents.

Table 2a: Motivation to pursue Associateship. (Sample size 28.)

Motivation	No. giving response.
Improved job prospects.	24 (86%)
To become part of the profession.	8 (29%)
To help in development of professional skills.	8 (29%)
Under obligation to employers.	5 (18%)
Suggested by other professionals as a good move.	2 (7%)

Table 2b: Breakdown of candidates' definition of "improved job prospects." (Sample size 24.)

Improvement given	No. giving response.
Improvement not specified.	11 (46%)
Job with more money.	7 (29%)
More challenging job.	4 (17%)
Increase in salary in present job.	2 (8%)

Fifteen of the respondents (54%) were following an individual training programme and the remaining 13 (46%) a standard one. Each candidate following an individual programme was given the opportunity to make input into the design of their training. However, only one candidate following standard training felt that she had been able to contribute to the design of the programme, leaving 12 individuals who believed that they had not been presented with this opportunity.

The 16 candidates who felt that they had been given the opportunity to make some input into their training were questioned more deeply as to the form this took. The results are displayed in table 3.

Table 3: Nature of candidates' input into training programme. (Sample size 16.)

Input made.	No. of responses.
Supervisor designed programme and then discussed changes with the candidate.	8 (50%)
Supervisor and candidate drew up the programme together.	4 (25%)
Candidate designed the programme and then discussed the changes.	3 (19%)
Supervisor designed the bulk of the programme, the candidate had responsibility for certain sections.	1 (6%)

The only candidate making input to their programme whilst following a standard programme was the individual in the fourth category.

The 12 candidates who felt that they did not have the opportunity to make an input into their training programme were asked if they were unhappy with this situation. Nine commented that they would have liked to make some form of input whilst three preferred not to have done so. The individuals who regretted this lack of opportunity were asked which aspects of their programme they would have liked to contribute to. The responses are summarised in table 4.

Table 4: Aspects of training candidates would have welcomed the opportunity to make some input to. (Sample size 9.)

Aspect of training.   No. of responses.

Negotiate for study time/ time off
work for meetings.   7   (78%)

Increase the focus on personal
needs/interests.   5   (55%)

Viden to cover more than just the
job description.   2   (22%)

Negotiate time spent on each aspect
of training.   1   (11%)

The questionnaire then moved on, questioning the candidates about their supervisors. Twenty four individuals (86%) had internal supervisors, three (11%) external and one candidate (4%) had both an internal and an external supervisor.

Great variation in the regularity of the meetings to discuss progress between candidates and supervisors occured as indicated in table 5.

Table 5: Regularity of contact to discuss progress with supervisor. (Sample size 28.)

Regularity of meetings	No. of responses.
Monthly	10 (36%)
Whenever a problem arises	4 (14%)
Every six weeks	3 (11%)
Daily	2 (7%)
Rarely	2 (7%)
2-3 months	2 (7%)
Weekly	2 (7%)
Irregularly	1 (4%)
Fortnightly	1 (4%)
Twice in the last year	1 (4%)

Those candidates with external supervisors had regular meetings set aside, two such individuals saw their supervisor monthly and the other every six weeks. Twenty four of the candidates (86%) found the amount of contact with their supervisor suitable to their needs. Four individuals (14%) felt that the amount of contact experienced was too little. These answered rarely, irregularly and twice in the last year. Each of these individuals was following a standard training programme and

none had been given the opportunity to make input into its design.

Seven individuals (25%) were given study time for professional matters during working hours and all found the amount given suitable to their needs. Of the 21 who were not granted study time 18 (86%) felt that it would be a useful addition whilst three (14%) felt that it would be of little use to them.

Of the seven granted study time professional literature was available for them at work, either at a level suiting their needs (six respondents) at at a level exceeding their needs (one respondent). The general findings on the level of professional literature available to the candidates is illustrated in table 6.

Table 6: Level of professional literature available to candidates whilst at work. (Sample size 28.)

Level of available professional literature.	No. of responses.
Exceeding needs	2 (7%)
Suiting needs	16 (57%)
Beneath needs	7 (25%)
Not at all	3 (11%)

Respondents were asked if they were in regular contact with other registration candidates, either in their place of work or elsewhere. The responses are indicated in table 7.

Table 7a: Regular contact with other candidates. (Sample size 28).

At place of work

                    YES - 11 (39%)
                    NO - 17 (61%)

Elsewhere

                    YES - 13 (46%)
                    NO - 15 (54%)

Table 7b: Further breakdown of level of regular contact with other candidates. (Sample size 28.)

		WORK	
E		Yes	No
L			
S			
E	Yes	4 (14%)	9 (32%)
W			
H			
E	No	7 (25%)	8 (29%)
R			
E			

The respondents were then asked to comment on the major benefits to them of following their training programme. The responses are detailed in table 8.

Table 8: Benefits of following training programme. (Sample size 28.)

Benefits.	No. of responses.
Provides overview of systems/ organisation	11 (39%)
Allows discussion of professional issues	9 (32%)
Gives clarification and structure to aims and objectives	7 (25%)
Encourages evaluation of work done and personal skills	6 (21%)
Visits - broaden knowledge of different systems/libraries	6 (21%)
None	2 (7%)
Shows employers commitment to you	1 (4%)

The responses to the final question asking for the candidates opinions of the faults in their training programme were equally as varied and are displayed in table 9.

Table 9: Faults in training programme followed. (Sample size 28.)

Faults.	No. of responses.	
Not enough time scheduled away from routine work	11	(39%)
Feeling of isolation	9	(32%)
Training not broad enough	6	(21%)
None	3	(11%)
Unnecessary repeat of material already covered at library school	3	(11%)
Not geared to the needs of my job	2	(7%)
Training too general	2	(7%)
Poor supervision	2	(7%)
Too easy to pass through programme in a passive manner	1	(4%)

The majority of candidates (93%) recognized that following a training programme had been of some benefit to them. However, two of the candidates mentioned that they had encountered no benefit from following the programme. The other answers these individuals gave were considered in an attempt to judge why the programme appeared to be failing for them.

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The two cases were quite different:

Individual A was following an individual training programme. This had been designed primarily by the candidate with discussion of the changes to be made with her internal supervisor at a later stage. The motivation behind this candidate's attempt to attain Chartered status was "to improve job prospects" - with no definition of the desired improvement given. Meetings with the candidate's supervisor to discuss progress could be arranged "whenever a problem arises", an amount suiting the candidates needs. No time for study is given to the candidate during working hours, but would be a useful addition in the candidate's eyes. Professional literature was not present in the place of work and no regular contact was maintained with other candidates. Although stating that the programme had no benefits the candidate also stated that there were no faults either.

Individual B, who also failed to recognise any benefits gained, was following a standard training programme and had not been given the opportunity to make input into its design. She regretted this as she would have liked to "widen the programme to cover more than just my job description." Her supervisor was seen daily but was rarely available for discussion of problems concerning the programme. The candidate considered this level beneath her needs. Study time was not an option available during working hours and was viewed as something that the candidate would have liked to see introduced. Professioinal literature was available at a level suiting her needs. She was in no form of regular contact with other candidates. The main criticisms levelled at the programme followed were "not enough time is scheduled away from routine work" and that "supervision is very poor."

References.

1. THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. *Routes to Associateship - regulations and notes of guidance.* London: The Library Association, 1991, p.67.

2. WILSON, L.S. Help! *Assistant Librarian,* 1992, 85(5), 66.

5. DISCUSSION.

This discussion will examine some of the criticisms and limitations of the study. It will then discuss issues which have arisen from the findings gathered. Initially the results arising from the comparison of written training programmes will be considered. Examination of the findings of the questionnaire will follow, preceding a discussion of points raised from both sources.

5.1 Criticisms and limitatations.

Although trying to compare training across different sectors of information work the study was limited by the small sample of programmes used. It was recognised that the total diversity of information work could not be covered within the six sectors studied. However, the chosen sectors were felt to encompass the major employment areas for information workers.

One programme was used from each sector and was not necessarily representative of the area in question. Ideally several programmes should have been collected from each to allow comparative generalisations within specific fields of information work to be drawn. However, difficulties in finding suitable sources able to donate written training programmes coupled with the time limitations placed on this study prevented this. Fortunately the study indicates a high level of similarity in programmes across information sectors. The small sample size is hence of less consequence with no sector specific generalisations to justify.

Comparison of standard and individual programmes was also hindered by the small size of the sample. The individual programmes were all from relatively small information units

with five or less members of staff in each case. Two of the standard programmes were from organisations employing much larger numbers of workers, a County public library service and a large polytechnic library. A fairer comparison of standard and individual programmes could have been conducted had at least one of each being collected from each sector. However, organistions employing large numbers of staff are unlikely to duplicate the effort necessary for the preparation of multiple individual programmes when all of their trainees can be covered by a single standard design. Similarly highly specialised information units employing a small number of staff are unlikely to prepare standard training programmes. Consequently the size of the information service had to be considered in addition to the programme type when any comparisons were made.

The selection of programmes for the study also had failings. Half of the programmes were collected from sources suggested by the Library Association. This may have resulted in a biased sample with recomendation of only high quality programmes. In an attempt to reduce this effect the remaining programmes were collected from sources not found through the Library Association. This collection however, was also limited. Geographical considerations and collection from known personal contacts resulted in another unrepresentative sample. No major differences in the quality of programmes collected through the differing methods were seen suggesting the effects of the collection method to be minimal.

Ideally individuals involved with each of the programmes should have been contacted for interview but geographic constraints resulted in only those involved in the design of individual programmes being questioned. The small sample size used resulted in this section of the study being

considered as three individual case studies rather than findings on which numeric analysis could be conducted.

Geographic limitations also featured in the majority of cases where a questionnaire was completed. The meetings at which the bulk of the questionnaires were distributed were held in major cities. Those attending worked primarily in the immediate surrounding area of the meeting, thus limiting the majority of those questioned to individuals working in a large conurbation. Very few individuals isolated from AAL meetings by their geographic location were questioned. Similarly the meetings were held within the normal working hours of the majority of those present, between 2.00 and 4.00pm. This suggests that the individuals questioned were all relatively well supported by their employers with time allowed in working hours for attendence of relevant meetings.

To counteract this bias it was attempted to collect a further sample group through a request published in the *Assistant Librarian*. It was hoped that this would widen the geographic range of the candidates questioned and include individuals unable to attend AAL organised meetings for any reason. This however, again did not produce a representative sample group. Only those individuals familiar with this publication were able to reply, so showing some exposure to professional literature. Furthermore only those individuals with particularly strong opinions were likely to respond.

In reterospect the wording of the request was poorly constructed. It failed to ask a specific question or to suggest the presence of a questionnaire, instead asking for general information concerning Associateship. As a result the responses received came from individuals with very strong views covering a wide variety of aspects of

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Associateship. Much of the information collected was beyond the scope of the study, with several individuals focusing on the process of Professional Development Report assessment after referral to scrutineers.

The final number of completed questionnaires collected through contacts made in this way was disappointingly low, three. Although the aim of this method of collection was to counteract some of the bias set up by the collection from AAL meetings the small sample size prevented this. As a result the data collected shows bias towards individuals working within or close to large cities and with employer support.

The questionnaire proved an efficient method of collecting information with few problems arising in its completion. However, in attempting to keep its length to a minimum and ensure the questions were straight forward some material which could have added depth to this study was not collected. Questions concerning the sector employing the candidate, the size of the employing information unit and the budget allocated to training could all have aided interpretation of the other responses given.

The wording of question nine caused some difficulty. This question related to the occurance of regular contact between the respondent and other candidates. It was possible to interpret the question in a number of different ways.

Some individuals viewed their attendance at the meeting from which the questionnaire was collected as positive contact with candidates from elsewhere. They indicated a positive response to this question whilst adding that the meeting was the first opportunity they had had to meet other candidates and probably wouldn't do so again before submitting their Professional Development Report. Others however, were

obviously present at the meeting and talking to other candidates but gave a negative response to the question, viewing the 'regularly' as significant. A question asking the respondent to outline the extent of their contact with other candidates could have produced more informative answers. It would also have been of use to follow this with a question relating to the respondent's opinion as to the value of such contact to allow more detailed conclusions about this aspect of training to be drawn.

Such problems would probably have been noted if a pilot study of the questionnaire had been conducted. However, due to the difficulty in finding current registration candidates to question this was not done.

Another problem was the tendency of interviewees, candidates completing questionnaires and those responding to the request in the *Assistant Librarian* to produce long narratives discussing many aspects of Associateship. Although being very interesting, providing a background to the process and the experiences of individuals, the material was very difficult to analyse. Similarly much was contradictory. Some individuals produced very negative pieces condemning the Library Association for the time taken in handling queries and processing information, others commended the Library Association for their support and excellent service. Some complained that supervisors showed no commitment to their candidate. Equally some supervisors complained that their candidates lacked commitment and interest. The small sample size made any judgement as to the prevalent situation regarding these conflicting models difficult.

5.2 Comparison of written training programmes.

Todays information workers fill positions across a wide variety of different employment sectors. As a result it may be expected that the skills required of such individuals may also vary. Obviously there will be many differences between the nature of the work conducted by the lone information specialist working in the business library of a private company and that of a public librarian forming part of a large team of information workers. However, it could also be said that all information workers, regardless of the nature of their work, require a certain level of identical professional skills.

In awarding its first level of professional qualification the Library Association attempts to ensure that the individual has reached a level of professional development comparable with all other Associates. A professional must be able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate and assess aspects of work conducted at several levels - personal, organisational and of the information community as a whole. This ability is independent of the sector in which the individual is employed, these qualities are equally possible in a worker in the private or the public sector of information provision.

Those registration candidates who follow Route A to Associateship follow a training programme approved by the Library Association covering seven broad categories judged as vital in producing a professional - (detailed in chapter 3). In this study comparison of a selection of such programmes showed each to encompass the training areas stipulated by the Library Association, regardless of the sector for which the programme was produced.

The areas of training covered by each programme were seen to be very similar. With the major differences arising in the level of detail given and layout of the programmes. Follow up interviews conducted with a selection of those involved in the design of the programmes illustrated that the majority of differences arose from conflicting ideas on the form a written training programme should take, rather than discrepancies in the programme itself.

The production of the new edition of *Routes to Associateship* has recently served to alleviate the major problems involved in deciding upon the content of a written programme. The individuals questioned about programme design all mentioned the value of this new publication. Of the programmes studied those which lacked the detail called for in the new guidelines, lacking specification of the objectives of each training section and specific assignment of methods to be employed, were all produced prior to this publication.

A number of differences do occur across sectors, obviously the nature of the technical skills taught will differ, as will organisational policies. Similarly the resources available for training also differ. It would seem from the programmes studied that larger organisations employ a wider variety of training methods. Video, candidate led seminars and role play were methods employed solely by the larger organisations. Such methods would be impractical in organisations employing only a few members of staff. Working within a large organisation may allow procedures such as job rotation between different departments to enable the candidate to obtain a wider view of a number of professional practices, this again can be impractical in small information units. However, in smaller units it was found that the candidate's job description generally encompassed a range of tasks broader than would be expected in a large

organisation. In addition it is often easier for such individuals to recognize the overall objectives of procedures conducted and the service provided than for an individual working in a larger establishment with many departments to its information service.

Size of the organisation appeared to have greater significance to the nature of the training methods employed than consideration of whether the programme was individual or standard. The standard programme produced for the small information unit based within a firm of accountants closely resembled the individual programmes.

The wide variety in the layouts of the training programmes presented a difficulty in making comparisons between them. The follow up interviews with the designers of the programmes clearly indicated that although possibly absent in written form each section of training had clear objectives. It was mentioned that similar training methods could be employed for each section of training with final selection dependent upon the candidate's aptitude. Assigning specific methods to each section of training in the written programme was considered by some interviewees as unnecessary repetition.

To some extent separating aspects to be covered by a training programme into seven divisions serves to create unnatural boundaries. All aspects of training require analysis and evaluation, having a separate category covering these two vital skills may undermine their importance throughout the rest of the programme. The dividing line between management skills and communication skills is less significant than the separate categories suggest, both overlap significantly.

This lack of naturally occuring distinctions coupled with the previous low level of guidance in the structure expected of a training programme played a major part in leading to the wide variety in the structure of programmes produced. This could be considered irrelevant as despite their different formats each of the programmes studied included basically the same material. However, it is noted within *Routes to Associateship* that when assessing training programmes...

It is not unusual for the Board to ask for
further details, or for clarification.'

Figures relating to the percentage of training programmes requiring major alterations or additions before approval is given are not available. It would be interesting to note the effect of the inclusion of a pro forma relating to programme design in the latest edition of *Routes to Associateship* on the first time success rate of training programmes submitted. Both of those used in this study which were designed after September 1991 relied heavily on the structure outlined by the Library Association. With this new high level of structural guidance it is difficult to imagine that the structure of programmes submitted will not become more uniform. In addition to aiding those responsible for the design of the programmes it may also have some effect on the ease with which it is possible for the Registration Board to check and approve submitted programmes. The speed with which a written programme can be checked for its content should be increased if the majority of programmes follow the same basic structure and the number of cases where clarification is necessary should fall now that such strong content guidelines exist.

Each training programme studied appeared to provide the candidate with the opportunity to cover basically identical

training areas. Methods of training and the specific technical skills aquired did differ. This was primarily dependent on the size of the organisation involved, the number of staff employed in the information unit and the type of information covered. However, basic grounding in the major areas considered important to professional practice were covered by each. This indicates a success on behalf of the Library Association in ensuring that only programmes of a similar level are approved and hence all registration candidates following Route A should be exposed to comparable levels of training.

However, the results gathered from questionnaires completed by individuals currently following Route A suggest that variations do still occur in certain aspects of the training received.

5.3 Variation in training received.

The questionnaire focused upon several main areas of variation.

1. Level of supervisor / candidate contact.

2. Level of candidate input into training programme design.

3. Study time granted during working hours.

4. Level of contact with other candidates.

Level of supervisor/candidate contact:

The supervisor is generally considered to play a very important role in the candidates training year providing guidance and support.

> Supervisors are expected to act as guides and
> mentors to the candidates, not only training
> them in the duties and responsibilities of
> the posts and services in which they are
> employed, but ensuring that they maintain a broad
> professional perspective.[2]

Wide variety occured in the regularity of meetings between candidates and their supervisors. This is to be expected as different candidates have different needs, individual supervisors have varying perceptions as to the amount of support it is suitable to give and different work situations lead to different levels of supervision being possible. Encouragingly 86% of individuals found that the level of contact they had with their supervisor suited their needs.

These findings indicate that there is no ideal frequency of supervisor / candidate meetings. Some individuals prefer to talk to their supervisor on a daily basis, some whenever a problem arises and others prefer the structured regularity of a meeting every six weeks.

Unfortunately 14% of the individuals questioned felt that their needs were not being met. This indicates that the supervisor does have a role to play in the training year which is not met by very infrequent meetings - "twice in the last year", "irregularly" or "rarely".

These findings suggest that the frequency of meetings should be decided upon at the discression of the candidate and

supervisor whilst highlighting their necessity in a sucessful programme.

Level of candidate input into training programme design:

Variation was seen in the extent of input candidates were able to make into the design of their training programme. Just under half (43%) of the individuals questioned were not given the opportunity to contribute to the design of the training programmme followed. In each case this was a standard training programmme which had been designed with more than a single candidate in mind and as such could not focus so easily on the needs of just one individual. However, 75% of the candidates in this situation saw areas of the programme to which they felt that they could have made some valuable contribution. Over 50% of the suggested contributions focused upon the time assigned to sections of the training. Time away from routine work for study and professional meetings was suggested, as were negotiations on the time spent on particular aspects of the programme. Such alterations could be negotiated within the framework of an already approved programme so tailoring even a standard programme more specifically to the needs of an individual.

Those given the opportunity to give input into the design of their training programme were, with one exception, following individual programmes. The nature of the input ranged from taking full responsibility for the initial design of the programme to adding modifications to a programme designed by the supervisor. In the majority of cases the supervisor took a high level of responsibility in designing the programme, perhaps to be expected as the supervisor generally has more professional experience and a clearer knowledge of what the organisation can offer the candidate over the training year. However, the individuals responsible for designing the programmes used in the first part of this study all raised

in interview the value they placed on giving the candidate
the opportunity to make some input into the design of the
programme, giving the candidate responsibility for part of
their training from the start.

The level of individuals who had ideas regarding the
contributions they could have made to their programmes if
given the opportunity suggests that organisations running
standard training programmes should seriously consider the
possibility of discussing the alternatives possible within
the framework of their approved programme both prior to and
during the training year with the candidate involved.

Study time granted during working hours:

Only 25% of the individuals questioned were given specific
time during working hours for professional study. Of those
individuals not granted such time 86% thought that it would
be a useful addition.

A vital part of any training programme is professional
awareness wider than the immediate working environment. This
can be encouraged through reading and study. Although
recognizing that staffing levels and general organisational
limitations can prevent granting candidates study time its
introduction would prove a welcome introduction for the
majority of candidates and should be considered as an
addition to the time a candidate should spend on this
subject outside of working hours if at all possible. Of the
organisations employing the questioned candidates 64%
maintained a collection of professional literature equal or
above the candidates needs. Eleven of these organisations
however, did not allow the candidates study time in working
hours despite the obvious possibilities of making use of the
collection on site.

Level of contact with other candidates:

The majority of those questioned (71%) indicated that they had regular contact with other registration candidates. This included contact with individuals in the same place of work and from elsewhere. It would thus seem that many individuals have the opportunity to discuss the process of Associateship if they so wish with other candidates.

5.4 Problems affecting Associateship.

Some commonly occuring themes surfaced as being the major problems affecting Associateship through the interviews conducted and the information collected through responses to the request published in the *Assistant Librarian*. These were...

1. A poor level of understanding of Associateship.

2. The lack of status attributed to Associateship.

3. A general lack of resources to commit to staff training.

Understanding Associateship:

From the comments gathered it would seem that there is a general lack of awareness about the process of Associateship. This seems especially true in individuals just beginning a career in information work. Examples of candidates considering a Route A training year as an extension of a taught library studies course, believing that training is the responsibility of the supervisor, unwillingness to contribute and the belief that the end of

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the training year marks the end of professional education were cited by individuals responsible for the supervision of candidates.

Some candidates admitted that they had little idea about Associateship until presented with the training programme of their organisation and a copy of *Routes to Associateship*. A small number of individuals pointed out their belief that post graduate courses in library studies fail to cover the general area of career development for information workers, with little emphasis on the functions of the Library Association. Others pointed out that information on this subject is available from the Library Association and that collection of material covering professional training should be self motivated.

The Library Association appears to be making a concerted effort to improve the level of available information on Associateship. *Routes to Associateship* now covers the subject in detail whilst supervisor liason officers are available to provide guidance and support for supervisors. The AAL regularly produce articles of guidance for candidates in their journal, supports the Registration Liason Officer (RLO) Network to offer independent help and advice to registration candidates around the country and organises Professional Development Report writing meetings.

These relatively recent improvements should lead to an increased understanding for those following any of the routes to Associateship or planning to do so.

Lack of status attributed to Associate status:

Despite the increased level of information available on Associateship it still fails to be seen as a necessity for

every professional Librarian. The qualification is not mentioned throughout many post-graduate library courses so that its importance is not instilled in individuals embarking on a career in information. This study considered the motivation behind candidates' decisions to aim for Associate status. Only 29% of those questioned saw it as a necessary step to become part of the profession, a discouraging figure for a professional qualification. The majority of candidates, 86%, saw that Associateship may lead to improved job prospects, indicating that candidates believe employers have a high opinion of professionally qualified information workers, with Associate status required for 'better' jobs. Sadly this is not always the case with many employers not asking for Associate status when advertising professional posts.

Lack of resources:

With ever tightening budgets in the majority of sectors employing information workers training often suffers. Not only are financial restraints a problem but reduced staffing levels can mean that it is impossible to free members of staff from the daily routine of their job to attend courses, follow private study or to visit other departments. The low status of Associateship can add to this with employers unwilling to devote small or even any part of their declining budgets into promoting a qualification which they perceive as having a low value. Similarly employers may be discouraged from devoting resources into training a candidate who on qualification may look for employment elsewhere, 86% of candidates are motivated to qualify by the prospect of being able to find a better job.

The faults in the training programmes as collected from the questionnaires related primarily to a lack of training

resources. Thirty nine percent of individuals complained about a lack of time scheduled away from routine work and 21% wanted a broader training programme. Feelings of isolation whilst following the training programme was another common complaint (32%), with many individuals mentioning the problems of receiving time away from routine work to discuss professional development with colleagues or further afield at conferences or meetings.

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5.5 Conclusions and the way forward:

Flexibility is an important aspect of a qualification structure aimed at information workers. Organisations, individuals and work situations all vary enormously. Any training leading to a professional qualification must be able to deal with this variety. However, a certain level of comparability must also be maintained to ensure that each individual awarded the qualification has reached a similar level of professional development.

This study indicates that the Library Association is stringent in ensuring that each approved Route A training programme reaches comparable standards. The specific areas in which training is deemed vital are listed by the Library Association in their publication *Routes to Associateship*. To gain approval a training programme must indicate that training will occur in each of these areas. However, the nature of the training year is also such that a degree of flexibility can be maintained within the programme to match the candidate's needs. The level of candidate/supervisor contact, length of time spent on each area of training and methods of training to be employed are left to the discression of the individual submitting the programme.

The study indicates that often the possible flexibility available through this training structure is underutilised. Those organisations using a standard training programme often expect each candidate employed to follow identical training, giving no opportunity for input into the design or content of the programme to be made. The majority of candidates questioned in the study offered suggestions as to areas they felt could have been improved within their training had they been consulted. Those who had made some degree of contribution to the design of their training generally made positive comments about this process. The

supervisors interviewed also appreciated the benefits of involving the candidate to the maximum possible extent. This was seen to focus the candidate's ideas concerning training from the earlist stage and to clarify the supervisor's role.

Progression towards greater candidate involvement from the earliest possible point in training seems a likely future development. The increased clarity of the guidelines governing training programme design should enable the majority of candidates to become involved in formulating a programme suiting their situation. Understanding the limitations of the available resources whilst constructing a training programme is a training experience in itself. Even within large organisations, employing several new registration candidates each year, consideration of the needs of an individual is possible within the constraints of a standard training programme.

Although recognizing that difficulties with resources are common, an employer submitting a training programme should recognize the need to guarantee some candidate support. If an organisation promises to deliver a training programme the available resources should be considered. Time should be made available for trainees to attend meetings, have reading time and work away from the confines of their routine work, although it is recognized that the candidate must also use their own time for these purposes. The absence of such employer commitment of resources to the training programme was the fault most commonly raised with the process of Associateship by those questioned.

If Associateship is to progress as a valid professional qualification the problems of lack of understanding, lack of status and lack of resources must be addressed. It would seem that recently much effort has been put into increasing the level of understanding with the production of more

detailed publications and the foundation of networks offering help and advice to candidates and supervisors.

However, comments collected over the study seem to indicate that one of the biggest gaps lies with the candidate's view of his role. A candidate embarking on the path to Associateship must recognise that the training year is not a one way process consisting of instructions and guidance given by the supervisor. A high level of commitment, input and time spent outside of working hours are necessary. This is emphasised throughout the recently published literature. The study indicated that some individuals beginning a career in information work feel that aspects of professional development are inadequately covered during academic courses. It would seem that an ideal opportunity to publicise the value of Chartered status and general professional development is being missed. A survey of the extent of current library school students' knowledge of the paths of professional development open to them on completion of their academic studies and the sources from which this information was gained would be a useful exercise.

The increased level of written guidance and formation of a national supervisor's support group has helped to clarify the role of a supervisor. However, it is generally realised that despite the attempts of the Library Association to inform supervisors of their supporting function candidates do not always receive satisfactory supervision. Throughout the material published advising candidates in such a position the suggestions made always highlight the candidate's role in the process.

> The responsibility for a sucessful training year
> lies as much with you as with the supervisor. It
> is your personal development which is at stake,
> and if your supervisor is not meeting you, or
> arranging training sessions do something about
> it. Be assertive and ask to arrange dates and
> times.[3]

Of the candidates questioned 7% listed poor supervision as a
problem in their training programme. It should be remembered
that the study sample was biased towards individuals with
employer support and as such may reflect a lower level of
dissatisfaction than is the national picture. However, the
system of assessment allows for those individuals who have
been unfortunate with their supervisor or limited by the
resources available to still achieve Associate status if
they are able to indicate dealing with such problems in a
professional manner.

It would seem that the largest problem facing the Library
Association currently with respect to the qualification of
Associateship is the low level of status attributed to it in
general terms. Raising the level of information available
concerning Associateship is a valid method of trying to
raise the general level of consciousness concerning the
qualification and hence increase its status.

However, the issue of status still remains a problem facing
Associateship. Several years ago the following comments were
made in the *Library Association Record* by a newly qualified
Associate.

> Cases differ of course. I believe public
> libraries do offer more money (not a lot) to
> Chartered employees. If you work as I do in a
> university library, there would appear to be
> no advantage (in terms of status or salary) in
> being and Associate of the Library Association.[4]

Unfortunately it would seem that this view has changed little over time. One candidate completing the questionnaire for this study raised similar points.

> I think many people have doubts as to the worth of Chartership anyway. It certainly scores no points in academic libraries where progression is not dependent upon it, but has some effect if you are going into public libraries.[5]

The training year undoubtably has benefits. The majority of individuals questioned felt that they had achieved a selection of benefits from following their training programme. Despite the complaints relating to the process of Associateship the majority of those interviewed agreed that the experience could form a sound foundation for a professional career. The writing of a Professional Development Report was seen by everyone interviewed as a fair method by which to assess a candidate and a valuable learning experience in itself.

The benefits seen by the candidates varied, the most frequently mentioned (39%) relating to gaining an overview of the systems employed and the organisation in general. The majority of the benefits mentioned related to the training objectives as mentioned in *Routes to Associateship*, indicating that the Library Association's hopes for the qualifications value to the individual are being met to some extent for the majority of candidates. Furthermore several of the candidates noted that not only was the process a learning experience but also that it was an enjoyable one.

However, the major dissatisfactions raised involved lack of resources given to the training, lack of time away from routine tasks and training failing to cover a broad area of

information provision. However, resources are not going to be increased in todays economic climate if the resultant qualification of the training is held in low esteme by the employers.

Some individuals believe that the major failing of the system of Associateship resulting in the low status attributed to it is a result of a quality threshold which is too low.

> Over 95% of candidates submitting a report are accepted onto the register. It is very difficult to fail. This low threshold thus demeans the qualification. [6]

Of the Professional Development Reports submitted to the Library Association two thirds are immediately accepted whilst the remainder go into an expensive interview process with scrutineers clarifying points not judged to be adequately covered by the candidate's Professional Development Report. The majority of candidates passing through this referral process are then accepted to the Register, generally on the strength of the additional verbal responses. Some believe this process should be rethought.

> If a librarian who works in communications and who aspires to management, cannot convey their professionalism with the strict guiding available from *Routes*, I do not believe that a librarian should be given a chance to express themselves verbally. Such a change would improve the qualityof the Chartered Register and thus pride in attainment of the ALA.
> It should also save money. [7]

An examination of the assessment process for submitted Professional Development Reports is beyond the scope of this project. However, many individuals prompted to reply to the request for views on Associateship commented upon perceived

injustices and faults within this part of the system. Much is veiled in confidentiality making a study into this aspect of Associateship difficult.

The lack of status given to the qualification could equally be attributed to its history. Formal training programmmes are a relatively recent development, the majority of senior information staff reached Associate status under the previous regulations. Such individuals may fail to recognize the recent improvements in the system and so undervalue the qualification. Again the recent publication of material clarifying the current routes and objectives of Associateship may have improved the situation.

If employers are to be expected to devote resources into a training programme their efforts should be recognized. Mentioning the name of the employing organisation along with the names of individuals granted Associate status in the *Library Association Record* would be a good beginning.

The role of the individual in promoting Chartered status should not be forgotten. Associate members of the Library Association should take an active role in promoting the value of the Charter if it is ever to become recognised as a necessary step to becoming a professional.

Study of a selection of training programmes from across different employment sectors has illustrated that comparable standards are met by approved programmes with stringent checks to ensure that this is the case by the Library Association. Questioning of individuals currently following Chartership programmes indicated that, in the majority of cases, individuals are happy with their training and feel that they benefit from the training received.

The major problems highlighted by the study did not fall specifically upon the training received by candidates but on much wider issues affecting Associateship, which in turn led candidates to experience more specific problems. The status attributed to the qualification appeared as the predominant issue. The status is obviously a problem which needs to be addressed urgently if Associateship is to be considered as a valid professional qualification. It is the responsibility of all members of the Library Association to promote, improve and support the process of Associateship if its status is to improve which could only be to the benefit of all members of the profession.

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1. THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. *Routes to Associateship - regulations and notes of guidance.* London: The Library Association, 1991, p.69.

2. *Ibid.,* p.66.

3. CLEGG, S. Supervising registration candidates. *Assistant Librarian,* 1992, 85(4), 60.

4. FISHER, D. How to survive the Professional Development Report. *Library Association Record,* 1989, 91(3), 162.

5. Anonymous. Questionnaire, 6th May 1992, Birmingham.

6. Mark Lardner, letter to Lindy Wilson, 17 June 1992.

7. *Ibid.*

6. APPENDICES.

6.1 Appendix I: Interview schedule - design of training programmes.

Section two.

Who was responsible for the design of the training programme?

Did this individual have any previous experience in the design of training programmes?
What kind of sources were used in the design of the programme?

Were these useful?

Have you got any positive comments to make regarding designing a training programme?

Have you got any negative comments to make regarding designing a training programme?

Section three.

Do you think that the training programme you offer produces a professional?

Have you got any general comments positive or negative to make about Associateship?

6.2 Appendix II:

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOLLOWING
ROUTE A TO ASSOCIATESHIP OF THE LA

I am conducting research for a Master's dissertation project in Library and Information Studies considering the training received by candidates following Route A to Associateship of The Library Association. I hope to draw from this work the problems and successes of the process and make informed suggestions as to improvements/changes and the future of the system, ultimately providing a useful source of material for ALA candidates requiring an insight into the process of Associateship.

I would be extremely grateful if you could find the time to complete the following questionnaire to provide me with an insight into your experiences of Associateship and return it to me at the end of today's session. The answers will remain confidential. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

> Ms Lindy S Wilson
> Dept. Information & Library Studies
> Loughborough University

1.   Why did you decide to apply for Associateship of The Library Association?

2.   Is the training programme you follow...
        Individual (prepared for a named individual in a
                                                 specific post)
        Standard (prepared without a named individual
                                                 in mind)

3.   Did you have the opportunity to make any input into the design of this programme?   Y / N

        If YES, what (briefly)?

        If NO would you have liked to?   Y / N

        If YES, in what way?

4. Do you have an internal or an external supervisor?

5. How much contact do you have with your supervisor to discuss your progress?...   Daily
                                    Weekly
                                    Monthly
                                    Other (please specify)

6. Is this amount... Too much for your needs?
                    Suitable for your needs?
                    Too little for your needs?

7. Are you given study time for professional matters during working hours? Y / N

        If YES how much?

        Is this amount... Too much for your needs?
                         Suitable for your needs?
                         Too little for your needs?

            If NO do you feel that it would be a useful addition? Y / N

8. Is professional literature available to you at work?...
                    At a level exceeding your needs
                    At a level suiting your needs
                    At a level beneath your needs
                    Not at all

9. Are you in regular contact with any other ALA candidates?...
                                    At your place of work Y / N
                                    Elsewhere   Y / N

10. What are the major benefits you feel that you have achieved by following your training programme?

11. What are the major faults in the programme you follow?

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to add any further comments you may wish to make on the reverse of this sheet.

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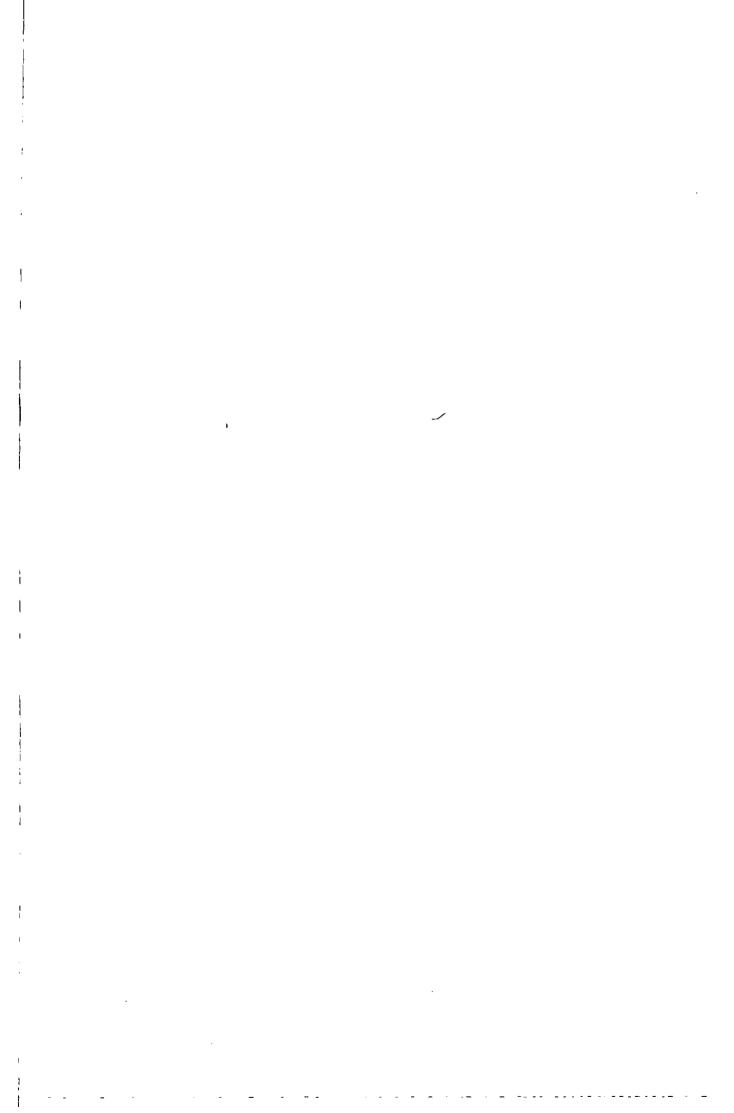
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