

# Introduction

## **Purpose of the book**

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) introduced its new Framework of Qualifications in April 2005. There are four elements in the scheme: Certification, Chartered Membership, Fellowship and Revalidation for Chartered Members and Fellows. The assessment of each level of qualification is by submission of a portfolio. This book has been written to support any Member of CILIP who wishes to apply for a professional qualification. For many of us working in the library and information profession the production of a portfolio is a new experience. CILIP received many queries about application by portfolio and there has been some discussion on internet lists about the nature of the portfolio. This book is designed to answer some of those questions, with hints and tips on building your portfolio and to share some experience of putting the portfolio together from colleagues who have successfully gained their qualifications.

Each chapter deals with a specific aspect of the portfolio, giving examples from each level as appropriate. The book can be either read straight through by potential candidates or used to support applicants who may be having difficulty with a particular element in the portfolio. Alan Brine, in the Foreword, gives an overview of how portfolios can be used in all aspects of your career and how important reflection is for the information professional. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, which looks at the purpose of the book, briefly outlines CILIP's Framework of

Qualifications, and the reasons for adopting a portfolio approach. It also discusses the support available to members as they put together their portfolios, especially the CILIP Mentor Scheme. There are two very important aspects to the Framework: all portfolios must meet specified assessment criteria and applicants must demonstrate an appropriate level of reflective writing within their portfolios. Chapter 2 discusses the assessment criteria and attempts to show how you can build your portfolio to ensure it meets those criteria; Keith Wilson, Chair of the Chartership Board, gives the views of an assessor and moderator. In Chapter 3 we look at reflective writing and how you can begin the habit of reflection and learn to be more evaluative; Keith Trickey talks about his life experience as a reflective writer.

Chapters 4 to 7 consider each element of the portfolio in more detail: the CV, the development plan, the personal statement, and supporting evidence; each chapter gives hints and tips about that element for you to follow. There are personal stories, from ACLIPs, MCLIPs, FCLIPs and from members who have revalidated, which explain how they set about building their portfolios, with specific focus on each element in the portfolio. In the final chapter presentation and submission are outlined and some thought is given to what happens next.

The chapters refer back to CILIP's website and the information and supporting documentation that can be found there. It is recommended that you check there for the most up-to-date information and formal documentation.

Remember, you are not alone in going through this process; we can learn so much from other people's experience.

### **CILIP's Framework of Qualifications**

CILIP's professional qualifications are only available to members of the Institute. They are the only professional qualifications in library and information work in the UK and are recognized globally.

## Certification scheme

‘Certification is the recognition of the contribution made in library and information work by para-professionals’ (CILIP ‘Qualifications’ website). The post-nominals ACLIP are awarded to successful candidates. Currently there are two categories: one for experienced paraprofessionals and one for newer information workers. The first category was established to enable the many highly experienced associate members of CILIP to fast-track to their ACLIP, and the portfolio is based on reflection on their work experience. Applicants in the second category focus more on their training and development. Advice on the category appropriate to applicants is given by the Qualifications and Professional Development (QPD) team at CILIP. The last date for applications for Certification under Category 1 will be 31 December 2008. After this date there will be a single category for Certification applications and the portfolio then will focus on reflections on work and training.

## Chartered Membership

‘Chartered Membership is the second level of professional qualification awarded by CILIP and is considered the “gold standard” for library and information professionals’ (CILIP website). There are various pathways to Chartered Membership, but all members must submit a portfolio to meet the same assessment criteria. Advice on the most appropriate pathway is available from QPD at CILIP.

## Fellowship

‘Fellowship is the highest level of professional qualification awarded by CILIP and recognizes a high level of personal commitment and achievement’ (CILIP Website). Fellowship is normally awarded only to members who have been on the Register for at least six years, although exceptions may be made in some cases. The new Framework of Qualifications introduces a new category of eligibility for Fellowship for Chartered Members who have successfully completed two cycles of revalidation (see CILIP website).

## Revalidation

‘Revalidation is open to all Chartered Members, including Fellows, who wish to gain evidence and recognition of their commitment to personal professional development’ (CILIP website). Normally members complete three years of revalidation and each year is recognized by CILIP; for some members who have undergone several years of CPD after Chartership or Fellowship, the submission can be made immediately. A certificate is awarded on successful completion of each three-year cycle of Revalidation (see CILIP website). Currently Revalidation is voluntary, but many other professional associations have introduced compulsory revalidation schemes.

## The portfolio approach

Building a portfolio to demonstrate your best work is not a new concept. Artists, photographers and architects have always used this approach and recently more professions, such as the teaching profession, have adopted the portfolio concept. Your portfolio is an evaluative review of professional development and should present evidence to demonstrate that you meet the criteria of assessment for the award of a CILIP professional qualification. CILIP sets the criteria (see Chapter 2) and each individual applicant selects their own evidence to meet those criteria. CILIP chose the portfolio approach based on the experience of Chartership Board, CILIP’s equivalent of an examination board, over many years and on the increasing need of information professionals to evaluate, articulate and demonstrate their own effectiveness and value. If we learn early in our careers to analyse, record and evaluate our professional development then it is easier to plan and implement continuous professional development. (Chapter 3 discusses reflective writing in more detail.)

The portfolio approach allows individuals to present information that they have selected to meet the criteria. The evidence should reflect on all professional activities undertaken and give a rounded picture of each applicant. The emphasis is clearly focused on the individual and their learning; output rather than input. The heart of the portfolio is not the posts you have held or the courses you have undertaken but the outcome of those

activities. The focus is on you and how you have developed professionally, and personally, to meet the challenges of a demanding and ever-changing information environment. The portfolio covers past achievement, present experience and proposed development.

## **Support for portfolio building**

For many of us compiling a portfolio is a new experience so, as well as the handbooks and regulations for each award, there is other support for candidates. CILIP's Career Development Group (CDG) organizes events specifically for candidates and has regional Candidate Support Officers. Much of the support is aimed at Certification and Chartership candidates, but CDG also organizes some events for Revalidation candidates. Information on these events is available on the CDG website: [www.careerdevelopmentgroup.org.uk/impact/dates2007.htm](http://www.careerdevelopmentgroup.org.uk/impact/dates2007.htm).

CILIP's Personnel, Training and Education Group (PTEG) organizes Mentor Training and Fellowship Training courses ([www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/pteg/events](http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/pteg/events)).

The Qualifications and Professional Development (QPD) Department at CILIP helps with individual queries. It also advises overseas candidates on all aspects of their applications.

There are also discussion lists for each qualification, except Fellowship:

Certification: LIS-CILIP-ACLIP

Chartership: LIS-CILIP-REG

Revalidation: LIS-CILIP-REVAL.

To join any of these discussions lists go to [www.jiscmail.ac.uk](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk). These lists allow for frank and down-to-earth discussion between candidates.

Another invaluable means of support is the CILIP Mentor Scheme: [www.cilip.org.uk/qualificationschartership/FrameworkofQualifications/mentor](http://www.cilip.org.uk/qualificationschartership/FrameworkofQualifications/mentor).

It is compulsory for all Chartership candidates to have a mentor. At present it is strongly recommended that all Certification candidates also find a mentor and from 2008 this will probably become compulsory. Mentors

can operate face to face or in a virtual relationship. Mentor support is crucial for overseas members. Candidates for Fellowship and Revalidation find it useful to work with a 'buddy' or in a small support group. You can discuss the various elements of your portfolio and use your 'buddy' or support group to check that you have provided relevant and appropriate evidence. A mentor who is registered on the CILIP Mentor Scheme will have undertaken mentor training and will be familiar with the process of building a portfolio. The mentor is not a supervisor but is there to help and support you to select evidence and to build the most effective portfolio.

There are also examples of portfolios on the CILIP website and with the Candidate Support Officers in the regions and home nations; but remember, your portfolio is unique – it is about you and how you meet the assessment criteria. There is no perfect model portfolio, just an effective portfolio demonstrating your development.