

**Department of Information Science  
Graduate School of Education  
University at Buffalo**

**Employer Survey**

**Administered November/December 2019  
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## **Employers Survey: Fall 2019 Executive Summary**

The survey was sent out on November 21, 2019 via a link included in an email (see Appendix for a copy of the email) either directly or via listserv to potential employers of graduates of the University at Buffalo Department of Library and Information Studies programs. The survey comprised 14 questions, many of which were multiple-choice or open ended when appropriate, asking for the respondents' feedback on certain issues. The survey closed on December 6, 2019.

Of these potential respondents, 115 people at least opened the survey. Although several emails were sent directly to employers, some invitations were sent out via listservs. The number of respondents who answered the first question was 72, but only 25% (18) of these respondents had hired a program graduate in the past three years. The remaining 75% were immediately presented with a closing screen thanking them for their participation. Those who had hired a graduate within the specified time frame were presented with 13 questions. Of those questions, the maximum of 18 was reached for one question, with the rest of the questions receiving answers from fewer than this number as indicated in the detailed information included below. This report includes the number of different responses to all of the questions, shown in pie charts, tables or lists of comments as appropriate. Following is a brief summary of the major findings:

Questions 2 through 4 sought information about the employers themselves. Of the 18 respondents, twelve provided details about the institutions/organizations where they work: half work in either public libraries (or academic libraries (both with 25% or 4 respondents), with the balance in school libraries, health sciences libraries, or other organizations.

Questions 5 through 13 asked about the UB DLIS students hired by the employer with the last question (Q14) providing an opportunity for additional comments. Responses were lower for these questions, especially for those open-ended questions that asked about the graduates' skill sets (Q7, Q10, Q11, Q13) with the average response rate in the mid-twenties. Of 18 positions for which respondents had hired UB IS graduates, eight (44%) were for entry-level, 28% (5) at mid-level, 11% (2) for a senior position and 11% (2) chose "other", specifying that in two cases the graduates were hired for 10 months as a school librarian, and the other was hired as in an administrative position. When asked if the employees had the knowledge and skills to perform successfully in the positions for which they were hired, ten of eleven respondents (91%) were in the affirmative and only one (9%) in the negative. When asked to provide comments, ten responded, specifically praising technological skills and professional preparation, although some mentioned the necessity of specialized training on the job. Two of eleven respondents had hired UB IS graduates into non-professional positions (into administrative and temporary positions).

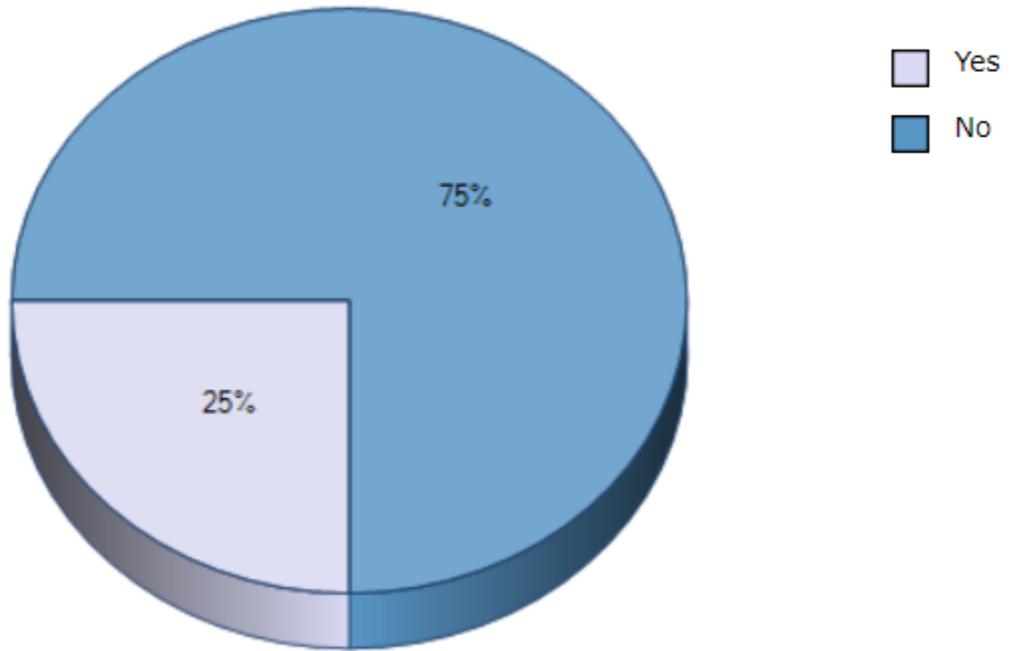
Question 9 asked respondents to rate via a Likert scale qualities related to the Program's fourth goal (although the goal itself was not explicitly mentioned) such as communication,

leadership, and professional skills. Of the 11 responses, the results were generally positive. The vast majority indicated for “*always demonstrated this quality*” or “*sometimes demonstrated this quality*”. We do note that respondents noted that for the quality of leadership, 20% (2) graduates “*did not demonstrate this quality.*”

For Question 12, a question emphasizing the importance of providing students with the opportunity to gain practical experience during their program of study, we note that seven out of eight respondents felt that IS graduates had as sufficient amount of professional preparation through practica and work experience for the positions into which they were hired.

Questions 7, 10, 11, 13, and 14 were all open-ended with varying responses so are not summarized here. Please see the full report for the response rate and full responses.

1. Have you hired a graduate of the UB Information Science (IS) programs in the past three years?\*



**Total Respondents 72**



**2. Role/Position/Title of person completing survey:**

**Total Respondents: 12**

<b>Role Responses (Normalized)</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
Library Director	3
Manager of Information Services	1
College Librarian/Instruction	1
Director	1
Director of Library Services	1
Executive Director	1
Librarian	1
Library Manager	1
School Library System Director	1
Vice Provost	1

**3. You may provide your name, company or organization name, and contact information below. (This response is optional)**

Name

Company / Organization

Address: [Street, City, State, Zip Code, Country, Email address, Phone number]

**Total Respondents: 7**

<b>Q3. Affiliation provided by Contact</b>	
<b>Institution Type</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
University	3
Public	2
School	1
Consortium	1

**4. What type of organization do you work in? Please select the option that best fits your organization**

**Total Respondents: 11**

Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Academic Library	4	33%
Health Sciences or Medical Library	1	8%
Public Library	4	33%
School Library	1	8%
Other (please specify): Multi-type Library consortia/system (1), School Library System (1)	2	17%

**Other Options (not chosen)**

- Archives
- Computer industry
- Corporate library / information center
- Law library
- Information industry (e.g., information processing)
- Library or information vendor
- Museum library
- Non-profit organization
- Technology company

**5. At what position levels were the UB IS graduates hired? (Check all that apply)**

**Total Positions: 17**

Position Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Entry	8	47%
Middle	5	29%
Senior	2	12%
Other (please specify) Administrative 10 month teachers	2	12%

**6. Did the recent UB IS graduates you hired have the knowledge and skills to perform successfully in the positions for which they were hired?**

**Total Respondents: 11**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	10	91%
<b>No</b>	1	9%

**7. Comments on knowledge and skills**

**Total Respondents: 11**

<b>Comment</b>	
1	No familiarity with health sciences
2	I've hired 3 grads and one current student. One has resigned for a job at UB Libraries, one was promoted to full time by us. One is struggling with us in a PT position and the current student is brand new but appears to be working out very well.
3	Yes. I was hired as the Director of the Library. I was the Interim Director and needed my MS to become the full Director. My Board of Trustees asked me if I would be willing to get that degree. I completed the MS Program online. Loved it and felt that I received a great education. The staff was knowledgeable. Loved my experience and have referred many people to the program.
4	To a certain extent the person was prepared because he was already working in a library setting but in tech instead of children's services. Open-mindedness and motivation also played a role in being prepared for the role.
5	Due to her several years experience, first as a public library page, and then as a reference and programming librarian at public libraries and academic libraries, the employee came in experienced with a broad understanding of libraries and their role in communities.
6	They understood the importance of the library media specialist in the role as educator, collaborator, and leader within their buildings.
7	I have hired a wonderfully skilled archivist, a phenomenal Research and Instruction Librarian and a skilled Digital Services Librarian.
8	Basic knowledge was there and we were able to train to our needs. More could be done with integrating library resources into programming for the public. We have to do a lot of training once hired in how to use the Library to fill the needs of the community.
9	All had library skills. If they didn't know our ILS, policies, etc., they learned quickly.
10	Yes, she was extremely prepared for the field of academic librarianship. She has a strong sense of professionalism and is well-versed in new emerging technologies.

**8. Have UB IS graduates been hired into non-professional positions at your company or organization?**

**Total Respondents: 11**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	3	27%
<b>No</b>	8	73%

**By Organization Type**

<b>Organization Type</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Academic Library	3	1
Health Sciences Library	1	0
Public Library	2	2
School Library	1	0
Other	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

**9. Our objective is to foster the development of professionals with professional and personal qualities conducive to success. Please assess how UB IS graduates have demonstrated in their roles in your company/organization an understanding of the importance of the qualities listed below.**

	<b>Always Demonstrated This Quality</b>	<b>Sometimes Demonstrated This Quality</b>	<b>Did Not Demonstrate This Quality</b>	<b>Not Applicable to Position</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Ability to apply domain knowledge and skills required for the position</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	7 64%	4 36%			11 100%
<b>Leadership</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	2 18%	6 54%	2 18%	1 9%	11 100%
<b>Critical Thinking</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	6 55%	5 35%			11 100%
<b>Inquiry/Intellectual Curiosity</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	8 73%	3 27%			11 100%

<b>Communication Skills</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>3</b> <b>30%</b>	<b>7</b> <b>70%</b>			<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Willing to Collaborate – Team Player</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>8</b> <b>73%</b>	<b>2</b> <b>18%</b>	<b>1</b> <b>9%</b>		<b>11</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Engages in Reflective Practice</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>4</b> <b>40%</b>	<b>6</b> <b>60%</b>			<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Adheres to Ethical Practice</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>9</b> <b>82%</b>	<b>2</b> <b>18%</b>			<b>11</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Assumes Responsibility</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>7</b> <b>64%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>36%</b>			<b>11</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Models Professional Values &amp; Behaviors</b> <b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>7</b> <b>64%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>36%</b>			<b>11</b> <b>100%</b>

**10. What did you feel were the most relevant skills/theory/knowledge that UB IS graduates brought to your company/organization?**

**Total Respondents: 7**

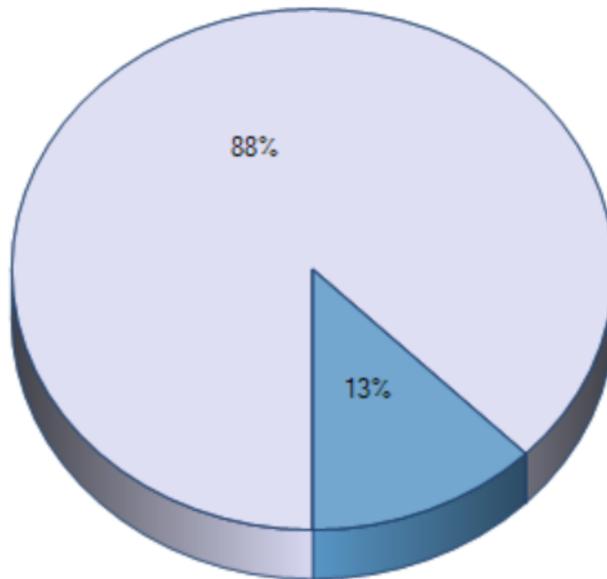
1	Critical thinking, willingness to develop new initiatives, and ability to accept and appreciate change
2	Good instruction knowledge and skills and good technology/systems skills.
3	They were well rounded with current theory and knew relevant issues concerning Librarianship. This makes them easy to train within a larger system.
4	Reference skills and a variety of technical skills depending on the position. All came with the capability to grow with the profession.
5	The level of understanding the importance of teaching information and media skills to students.
6	New ideas that they were able to create and execute from beginning to end.
7	Their degree and ultimate professional certificate. The rest can be learned.

**11. Are there particular skills, knowledge, qualities, or attitudes that you expected from UB IS graduates that they apparently lacked, based on their performance at your company/organization?**

**Total Respondents: 8**

1	Budget management, collection development skills and confidence in teaching library instruction.
2	Did not always have realistic career, job knowledge.
3	All three seem incapable of teamwork, of working for a common goal.
4	none
5	Customer service
6	Many, not only UB, graduates do not have basic writing skills. Actually, am looking for a little more than basic writing skills.
7	Would like to see more speakers who can harness what they know and can present dynamically. Sometimes it surprises new staff how much public outreach is involved. When choosing candidates I look at how comfortable they are interacting and how much experience they have had in programming and outreach. I look for individuals who will be ambassadors to the community.

**12. Do you feel that UB IS graduates had sufficient practical experience that may have been gained by a practicum, internship, or other work experience to prepare them for their role in your company/organization?**



**Total Respondents: 8**



**13. Comments: Do you feel that UB IS graduates had sufficient practical experience that may have been gained by a practicum, internship, or other work experience to prepare them for their role in your company/organization?**

**Total Respondents: 8**

1	One had a good deal of relevant experience and is quite capable, but is not a team player. Another lacked paid experience and needed a good deal of hand-holding beyond normal mentoring in the profession.
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2	Those who participated in a practicum were more ready than those who had not spent time at a Library. They interviewed better and when hired jumped into tasks with greater ease. The students who come through Central are given a specific task but I try to let them see all aspects of a Librarianship so they can be ready for the future.
3	Graduates usually are better prepared for the profession when they have at least 1 semester of a completed internship in a library.
4	Library experience is critical. Libraries and library systems do not have the capacity to fully nurture and train new librarians which is unfortunate but true. We need self-starters and those willing to learn on their own but be willing to collaborate as a team member.
5	The program covered many aspects that my position required.
6	I'd like to see more academic library experience and reference experience even though I do not expect librarians to do much reference work. Reference experience gives new librarians an insight into contemporary undergraduate work, research and expectations.
7	Those who I have worked with and talked to about going into the is field were those who had a vested interest in this pathway and what the job expectations were; therefore, I feel they entered with a foundational understanding already.
8	I feel they had sufficient experience because many of them did practicums @ my library.

**14. Please provide any other comments or suggestions that you have about the curriculum of the UB IS programs that may help us better prepare graduates for professional employment at your organization.**

**Total Respondents: 8**

1	If there is a common flaw in these recent graduates it would be they all feel entitled , but did not feel responsible for the good of the organization.
2	With most of the curriculum online how do you prepare students for face to face interaction or manage the nuances of networking required in the field? I see new librarians interview without knowing how much relationships matter or what it takes to create connections.
3	Teaching and customer service are critical of any librarian position. It may be needed in small instances, small groups, or in front of a class. Librarians for the most part, are a public, patron, or client fronting position.
4	The program and its participants could benefit from teaching the student re: the need to get on City and County civil service lists AND how to score well on them (breadth of service).

5	Thank you for all you do to help with my search of candidates. I live in a rural area in north eastern NYS and our candidate pool is slim and luckily enough I am able to find one or two a year to send your way.
6	Help students understand the importance of budgeting, marketing and how politics play a huge role in librarianship.
7	Phenomenal program!
8	Library students need more coursework and experience in library instruction to patrons. They need to expect that instruction will be a part of their career. Less romanticization of reference.

## Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Greetings from the Department of Information Science,

Your feedback is needed! We strive to continually improve our MS curriculum to ensure that our graduates are prepared to begin their careers in the ever changing library and information job market.

The perspectives of the employers of our graduates are critical to inform these improvements, and to assist our accreditation process. Please take 10 minutes to complete the online survey linked below—we value your input! The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, December 6th.

Survey link: <https://gseweb.gse.buffalo.edu/gse-survey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=82LL862K>

My apologies if you have received this survey participation request through other channels. We appreciate your willingness to help us improve our program.

Sincerely,

Dan Albertson  
Professor and Chair, Department of Information Science, University at Buffalo