



Foundation knowledge, skills and attributes for information professionals working in archives, libraries and records management

Adopted 2014. Amended 2015, Reviewed 2020, Revised 2025.

Preamble

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Australian Society of Archivists (ASA), and Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance Global (RIMPA Global) have collaborated on the development of the Foundation Knowledge, Skills and Attributes for Information Professionals working in Archives, Libraries and Records Management. This latest version has been developed to ensure that graduate information professionals have the requisite skills, knowledge, professionalism and ethics to effectively navigate the rapid changes in our libraries, archives and records management workplaces.

- **Section A** of the document covers three core areas that underpin the foundation knowledge, skills and ethics.
- **Section B** centers on three major areas of professional knowledge and skills.
- **Section C** focuses on active professionalism that connects all areas through a professional mindset and behavioural skills.

Section A: Core areas

1. Current knowledge and understanding of the broad context of the information environment

Information professionals must have an understanding of the historical background and evolving landscape of the information and knowledge environments, including:

- contexts in which information is created, originated, captured, described, stored, organised, preserved, retrieved, modified and used in general, and in the particular areas of practice
- wider political, economic, social, cultural, educational and environmental factors and events, together with emerging technology trends and tools that may impact on the information profession.
- legal and regulatory frameworks which may apply to professional practice, encompassing intellectual property rights (including copyright), privacy and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP)
- policies and standards that may apply to professional practice, including appraisal, selection, retention, disposal and preservation policies, as well as technical standards
- terminologies and vocabularies as used in different professional and technical contexts, and by those employed in the specific professional or technical areas of practice
- current and prevailing issues impacting the wider information landscape including, but not limited to an understanding of:
 - open access principles, including open science and open data
 - Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP)
 - artificial intelligence (AI), including, but not limited to automated decision making, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI/GAI) and machine learning.

2. Respect and recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country

This applies to all information professionals in Australia, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, embedding a recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in practice, acknowledging that we are all living and working on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country, together with a commitment to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It includes an understanding of:

- the significance and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their worldviews, cultural practices and knowledge systems as they relate to the information sector
- the provision of services addressing unique information needs of Indigenous people and communities
- the impact of colonisation and the relationship with information organisations and information systems
- protocols around Indigenous collections and access
- the importance of First Nations' voices and representation in professional practice, especially in work or collections about or for First Nations peoples
- cultural competencies required to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues' wellbeing within the workplace.

3. *Ethics and Values*

While each association has its own Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct, we recognise that shared ethics and values unite all those working in the information sector. These principles build the trust placed in us by those who rely on our services and guide the way we deliver them.

Professionals in information services are committed to acting with integrity, ethics, trust, expertise, and a focus on serving and promoting the public good. This includes upholding core ethical principles such as:

- access to information
- privacy and transparency
- respect, integrity and active professionalism
- continuing professional development
- literacies including information, digital and media literacy
- sustainability.

Section B: Major professional knowledge areas

1. *The purposes and characteristics of information architecture, organisation and access*

Information professionals should understand the underpinning theory and the interconnected stages of managing physical and digital information resources and collections, including having the ability to:

- source, capture and facilitate ongoing management of records and collections, to create an information management environment that has integrity and is accessible, reliable, compliant and comprehensive
- apply priorities for ongoing information management, including use, disposal, retention and preservation, business continuity and disaster risk management
- understand the importance of information architecture to determine the structure, design and flows of data and information, and ongoing management of information resources
- analyse information flow and user needs to develop systems and interfaces that adhere to recognised usability and accessibility guidelines
- restructure, manipulate, transform and present data and records
- work collaboratively with information technology service providers.

2. Processes and practices relating to information management

Information professionals should have the knowledge and skills to:

- assess and appraise the significance of information resources and collections to guide selection and to establish priorities for ongoing management, including metadata, use, disposal, retention and preservation
- acquire and negotiate with providers of information and resources in a range of media and formats, facilitate licensing and monitoring trends
- create accurate and user-centred metadata, and implement classification and interoperability, applying information standards and schema for enhanced and persistent access to information resources
- document the context within which information lies, encompassing ownership and governance, including but not limited to:
 - cultural perspectives, including protection of Indigenous data and knowledges, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)
 - legislative and regulatory mandates and licensing, including intellectual property rights, privacy and Creative Commons
- implement data and collection analysis, evaluation, curation and management
- preserve and implement ongoing risk management of digital and physical collections and information resources in accordance with priorities and preservation principles, policies, standards and strategies, including digitisation, storage and migration.

3. *Information sources services and products*

Information professionals should have the knowledge and skills to:

- identify and investigate information needs and information behaviours of individuals, communities, organisations and businesses
- identify user requirements and the processes that will meet them, including designing, implementing and evaluating systems and tools, introducing enabling technologies, developing and applying metadata
- understand and explore how information is effectively sought and utilised
- apply current knowledge and understanding of the delivery of data, information and knowledge services that enable and connect users with the resources they need at the right time and place
- understand user experience and provide services to support accessibility
- assess the value and effectiveness of methodologies, facilities, products and services
- identify and evaluate information sources, services and products to determine their relevance to the needs of users
- design and deliver customised information resources, services and products tailored to target client groups
- apply interview and research skills to provide appropriate information to users
- apply awareness of Indigenous approaches in providing information services that support the care and protection of Indigenous data and knowledges
- apply the principles and application of identity management, authentication, privacy and cybersecurity
- understand the need for information skills in the population, facilitate the development of information, digital and media literacy and the ability to deliver and critically evaluate education in appropriate literacies for users
- market information services and products.

Section C: Active professionalism

Active professionalism connects all areas through a professional mindset and behavioural skills.

1. *Active professionalism*

It is expected that people engaged in information services in Australia maintain currency of professional knowledge and practice and uphold professional standards and values. While specific requirements vary, all three associations encourage members to undertake continuous professional development to ensure that their skills and knowledge remain current through:

- understanding and application of moral, cultural, ethical principles and legal responsibilities involved in the provision of information services to individuals and communities
- advocacy for the information professions that promotes their value and impact and supports access to knowledge, preservation of cultural heritage, and transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making
- membership of and participation in relevant professional associations as appropriate to the individual's specialisation
- commitment to undertaking formal and informal continuing professional development activities to build knowledge and skills
- professional recognition and/or certification as available through the individual associations
- mentoring and coaching activities
- research and publication in the professional literature.

2. Behavioural and interpersonal skills

People working in information services in Australia are encouraged to develop and demonstrate strong behavioural and interpersonal skills that foster positive relationships, effective collaboration and a supportive, respectful workplace including:

- communication skills
- interpersonal skills
- empathy
- resilience
- self-awareness and self-management
- intellectual curiosity, flexibility, innovation and adaptability
- critical reflective practice
- creative and positive thinking
- critical thinking and problem solving
- enthusiasm for lifelong learning and new roles
- leadership
- relationship building
- collaboration
- conflict resolution