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Research, development of the discipline and a changing profession

Central issues for schools of library and information studies in Sweden

During the last ten years Swedish education in librarianship has changed dramatically. This account aims to describe the background of these changes. The account will emphasize developments in the Swedish School of Library and Information Studies (SSLIS) in Borås, where even in the future the most comprehensive activities will take place. What characterizes the development is the shift from a vocational to a more general theoretical education. With four Master programmes in LIS, professors appointed to the development of LIS research and postgraduate education will reach new levels in Sweden. The shift from a vocational training is also having an effect on the labour market for librarians. As a consequence of the development SSLIS is once more changing its educational programme.

Forschung, Entwicklung des Studienganges und ein sich wandelnder Beruf – zentrale Aspekte für Ausbildungsstätten des Bibliotheks- und Informationswesens in Schweden


Recherche, développement d’un cours d’études et une profession en mutation – aspects centraux pour les lieux de formation pour les bibliothécaires et l’information en Suède

La formation des bibliothécaires en Suède a changé pendant les dix dernières années de façon dramatique. Cette contribution se propose de décrire l’arrière-fonds de ce changement et de présenter surtout les développements à l’école suédoise d’études bibliothécaires et d’information (Swedish School of Library and Information Studies – SSLIS) à Borås où auront lieu à l’avenir, les plus amples activités. C’est ce changement d’une formation professionnelle vers une formation plus théorique qui caractérise le développement. Les professeurs appelés au développement des études des bibliothèques et de l’information (LIS) et à la formation des "postgraduates" atteindront un nouveau degré en Suède avec quatre programmes principaux. Le changement d’une formation professionnelle a en outre des conséquences sur le marché de travail pour les bibliothécaires. Pour conséquence de ce développement la SSLIS va changer de nouveau ces programmes de formation.

The SSLIS was established 1972 as a unit of it own in Borås, a middle-sized town in south-west Sweden. During the period 1972-1993 Swedish education in librarianship was synonymous with this school. A political programme with the aim of moving some of the central authorities out of Stockholm was launched during the beginning of the 1970s. The idea of decentralisation caught up with higher education in a broader sense in 1977, when a number of regional university colleges (in Swedish, högskolor) were established. This meant two levels of higher education: the universities with professors, graduate education and centrally granted funding for research formed the one level; small and middle-sized university colleges without professors and graduate-level studies constituted the other.

One of these schools was the University College of Borås. Since then SSLIS is one of six departments within the school. The library studies programme was to a great extent a vocational training and SSLIS had, as the sole department, the task of educating librarians for all kinds of libraries in the entire country. Occasionally there was heated discussion about the course. Some considered the programme to be far too adjusted to the routines of the procedures of the public libraries. Others considered it to be too “academic” in a negative sense. In 1991 the government appointed an inquiry with the aim of drawing up a proposition for future education within the field. (Gruppen för översyn …) The inquiry was a direct response to an address from Swedish county-librarians demanding an education with a strong orientation towards the needs of the public libraries. Instead the inquiry produced a proposition that required a more theoretical and research based education. The group, appointed by the social democratic government, assumed that the existing system of financing higher education would continue. This entailed central decisions and funds concerning which programmes should be given at a which educational institution. If the proposition had
been realised it would have reduced the activities at SSLIS by half. The universities at Umeå and Lund would have, with 25 percent each, received the rest of the resources. The groups’ proposition would have reduced the position of library education to 2-4 very small units. They would perhaps have belonged to universities but been granted very small budgets. Before the realisation of the proposal there were elections for parliament which gave a new political majority. The conservative coalition that took over had other ideas about higher education. The new government decided to grant a higher degree of independence to the universities and the university colleges. This decision made a great impact on the development of future education in LIS.

1 Four schools – co-operation and competition

Higher education in Sweden was transformed by a new ordinance in 1993. Academic studies had been geared towards professional degrees i.e. librarian. The majority of these degrees were abolished and replaced with Bachelor or Master degrees within each subject of studies i.e. library and information studies. This difference is not purely rhetorical. It meant that studies at SSLIS could be based on central questions within the field and not as earlier orientated towards a certain institution. On the local level the new system meant stronger representation for staff and students on the boards. The change gave SSLIS and other schools new opportunities to reconstruct on their own conditions.

Research, graduate education and the need for academic staff

In Borås the board of the University College decided that the economic resources of the department should remain unaltered. A new plan of studies was developed and enforced. The syllabus in librarianship, constructed as an additional program requiring 80 credits for admission, was succeeded by a Master’s programme in LIS. A Swedish Master’s degree consists of at least 160 credits, of which 80 should be in the main subject and of these 20 should be a thesis. 20 credits are one term in a two year of studies. Some discussion arose on the issue of field practise. Within the economics and time limits of the new curriculum there was not enough room for such a course. The department divided the subject into four basic courses. The teaching staff was organized in four teams responsible for running courses and seminars with the following perspectives:

- Libraries and society: the role of libraries and information in society; the role and importance of cultural and information policy; the development of libraries and the place of information in society in a historical perspective
- Organization of knowledge: the description, storage and retrieval of different kinds of documents
- Man’s interaction with library and information institutions: the sociology of knowledge; theories of education; theories of cultural science
- Libraries and information centres viewed in the context of organizational and leadership theories: collection management; marketing and evaluation

(A detailed description of this programme of studies can be found in the SSLIS Handbook: Library and Information Science 98/99, available in English)

The overreaching goals of SSLIS can be summarised as developing a more academic curriculum based on research. Research and staff development, particularly in the form of postgraduate studies, were areas of priority for reaching this goal. One of the problems at the time was that the number of teachers with a doctoral degree was very few. The majority of the staff had been recruited as skilled librarians. Another problem was the relatively high age structure of the staff. Few teachers were under 40 and some were on their way to retirement. A third problem was that university colleges like Borås had to apply to central authorities to acquire the right to run Master’s programmes. After external evaluation the University College of Borås received the rights to issue Master’s degrees in LIS. However, funds for professorships could not, at the time, be granted to regional university colleges but well to universities in the same region.

The school started off as a completely independent institution. [...] Consequently, by its placement in a non-university city, librarianship fell outside the ambit of graduate and research studies [...].

The situation was made more difficult by the fact that education in library science, in contrast to many other study programmes at small and middle-sized colleges (such as business economics, education and technology), had no established institutional roots as a subject at the large universities. In other words, education in librarianship [...] in Borås stood entirely alone, lacking both the right and the possibility to run any graduate studies or research work or to recruit higher level PhD’s in library and information science from other areas. Education in library science came to be included in the Swedish vocational training system and was thus seen as a purely professional education”. (Enmark 1993, p. 2)

New programmes at the universities of Umeå and Lund

The planning process of library education at the universities of Umeå and Lund was well developed when it was clear that no extra funding from a reduced SSLIS would occur. In both cases a small unit with a director and 30 students was established.

In Umeå the ground had been prepared by two classes relocated from Borås during the end of the 80s. The reason for the relocation was recruiting problems for libraries in the inner parts of northern Sweden. A first intake to the new programme in Umeå was carried out during the autumn of 1993. It became a part of the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Massmedia Research. The programme was characterised by humanistic studies and was organized jointly with Studies of Cultural Administration during the first term.

More information about the programme in Umeå can be found at URL http://www.umu.se/infcult/

Lund University received at the end of the 80s a donation for a professorship in the History of Books and Libraries. The chair became a part of the Faculty of Arts. The library programme at the University of Lund (BIVIL) was constructed independently of this research unit and was organized separately with a board of its own. BIVIL has been very successful creating an image of a pro-
gramme where students with a certain social competence and ability to handle modern tools of information get a degree. The school puts its admissions procedures forward as an explanation. „The Lund LIS programme has developed a special admissions procedure aimed at creating a highly qualified and motivated student body. Therefore, admissions are based on the results of an aptitude test and a personal interview. The aptitude evaluation is based on criteria indicating the applicants’ motivation as well as their communicative and organizational skills.” (URL http://www.kult.lu.se/bivil/)

A discussion on the relation between admissions procedures and resources to run a study programme could be long. As the LIS programme in Lund has very limited resources there is no room for students unable to complete the curriculum on a regular basis. Flexibility is also limited. SSLIS could never adopt these procedures as it is takes too much time and staff resources. SSLIS offered any librarianship courses. Before SSLIS there was a library school run by the national school authorities. The Royal Library and Stockholm’s public library also gave courses of importance to the profession. The curricula of Borås, Umeå and Lund differed in many aspects. Common was the level of degree and the procedure to have Master’s as an additional possibility. One reason was the differences between universities and university colleges in their rights to have Master’s programmes. Once the decisions were taken SSLIS did not limit its admission to students with academic backgrounds. Instead some schools were opened to university freshmen.

Uppsala starts a course of its own

The curricula of Borås, Umeå and Lund differed in many aspects. Common was the level of degree and the choice to build a new academic subject. Since 1972 the Stockholm region, in which Uppsala is located, had not offered any librarianship courses. Before SSLIS there had been a library school run by the national school authorities. The Royal Library and Stockholm’s public library also gave courses of importance to the profession. In the early 90s Stockholm University was not interested in LIS as a new subject but the head of its library was actively engaged in creating an education in the region. At Uppsala University both the library and the Department of Social Literature expressed a willingness to host LIS. Representatives from the public libraries in Uppsala and Stockholm took part in the planning process. The concept of the new curriculum in Uppsala was vocational, as it had been in SSLIS before the change. It differed from the other programmes in two essential aspects. It did not have a status as a subject of its own, meaning it was not possible to take a degree in LIS at Uppsala University. Field practice was an important part of the course and made it dependent on various libraries all over the region. For more information about the programme in Uppsala see URL http://www.bibks.uu.se/. The results of the discussions that culminated towards the end of the 1980s were four courses in LIS and a new academic subject. A number of difficult problems remained to be resolved. SSLIS had its own problems regarding competence and reconstruction but, compared to the others, it had an economy that allowed development and change. The staff in Umeå, Uppsala and Lund consisted of one director, forced to play a variety of roles, some part time teachers and possibly, a secretary. Guests from other institutions shouldered large parts of the teaching. The new programmes were totally dependent on directors doing the impossible with minimal resources.

2 Research-professorships

The inquiry that preceded SSLIS 1972 had probably mentioned something about library research if it had been permitted to do so. The Minister of Education at that time was against the question being raised. At the same time as there were positive reactions to Nordic libraries it can be pointed out that investments in research within the field had been on a low level and that the recognition of LIS as an area of research was belated. Denmark, Sweden and Norway, in that order, have had very large library schools with a national mission. However, library research has in these three countries had low priority and has only partly been pursued at the library schools. They have raised demands for financial resources for research and the formal rights to appoint professors several times during the years. In Sweden several attempts to pursue research within the area were carried out i.e. at the universities of Umeå, Uppsala and Linköping. There was no such thing as a doctoral degree in LIS in Sweden and the existing research units were very small.

Göteborg University gets the first professorship in LIS

A centre for library research (CBI) was founded 1987 at Göteborg University on the initiative of Emin Tengström. One of the main benefits of this centre was the creation of the journal „Swedish library research“. Earlier, Tengström had been appointed by the National Board for Universities and Colleges (UHÄ) to examine the question of research and its relation to library education. Amongst other recommendations and issues, his report (Tengström 1986) raised the question of the establishment of a chair in Library and Information Science. His proposals were referred to the Council for the Planning and Co-ordination of Research (FRN) which, after its own inquiry (Forskningsrådsnämnden 1989), agreed to guarantee economic support for such a chair placed in Göteborg. Funds would cover one professor, two lecturers and one secretary. Unfortunately, inflation and administrative costs did not leave enough money for the lecturers at the time when the appointments were to take place. CBI was later turned into the Department of Library and Information Studies (DLIS). Lars Höglund was (in 1993) appointed as the first professor in LIS in Sweden. He had been one of the leading figures at INFORSK, the research unit that still is active at the Department of Sociology at Umeå University. The professorship in Göteborg had an important role as a door opener. It gave greater opportunities for researchers in the Nordic countries to take a Ph.D. in LIS. It gave new inspiration to schools in Denmark and Norway aiming at professorships of their own. Among the Nordic countries, only Finland has had four professorships and established research in LIS for several years.
Expectations were high but resources small for the new unit. The mission was to carry out research and postgraduate studies. Candidates came from all over Sweden but also from our neighbouring countries. The University College of Borås and SSLIS supported the further development of teaching staff by giving them opportunities to take part in the new postgraduate studies. From the start there were close links between SSLIS and the department in Göteborg. This connection has now developed into a joint unit placed in Borås.

In Lund the LIS programme had its own board and it was not clear whether it would be a part of the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Social Sciences. Initially there were ambitions to establish research in LIS but in 1993 the road to achieve this goal seemed long. Umeå also had ambitions to start a postgraduate programme but there were several complications. The Master's programme was a part of the Department of Mass Communication and the Faculty of Arts. INFORSK, where research in the area was pursued, was on the other hand, part of the Department of Sociology. The expectations of a professorship in LIS in Umeå are therefore connected to the Sociology Department and INFORSK. In Uppsala, where the programme was initially professionally orientated, the road seemed even longer.

A great deal has happened during the last few years. In Lund two doctoral candidates have been admitted. A first postgraduate course has been initiated. They still lack a professorship of their own but after merging several smaller units into the Department for Cultural Sciences an organizational connection has been forged between the professor in the History of Books and Libraries and BIVIL. An additional associated professor has been appointed.

Last year Umeå University reorganised the LIS programme under the Department of Sociology. A professorship has been advertised. The unit is still very small and two doctoral candidates are responsible for much of the work.

During the summer of 1999 a short e-mail message from Uppsala announced that the university had decided to start a postgraduate programme in LIS. What this means in reality is still not quite clear.

What seemed to be impossible a couple of years ago and was by some considered unnecessary is now a fact. Sweden is now on the threshold of a completely new situation when it comes to producing new staff in LIS programmes and in co-ordinating research efforts. There is a very high demand for doctors in LIS.

### The Economy of Postgraduate Education

The common threat against the positive development of recent years is the lack of financial funds for research and postgraduate education. The four programmes have joint conferences nearly every term. At the latest meeting, spring 1999, ABIS was formed, which stands for The workgroup for LIS research in Sweden. The purpose of this formation was to have a joint platform in communication with authorities and other funding institutions. Earlier forms of financing research were placed in the hands of FRN in the mid 80s and a programme for library research was introduced. LIS researchers took part in the committee responsible for the programme. FRNs own inquiry into a professorship in Göteborg took up the needs of long term support for the new research subject in order to give it a fair chance to establish itself. Paradoxically enough FRN cancelled the programme at about the same time as the chair was appointed.

1997 the government passed a new rule requiring that doctoral candidates should be fully financed before having the right to embark on postgraduate studies. The idea is that postgraduate studies should be pursued on a full time basis. Th question of how to fund new candidates in a new subject arises. At present Göteborg University finances one candidate in LIS. A donation from The Swedish Library Association (SAB) has had a substantial impact. 11 million SEK over three years to stimulate the creation of LIS research. It was an important contribution that has made much possible. SSLIS finances five doctoral candidates and can use some of the donation to appoint a new professor. The big problem is what to do when these funds have been spent?

### A Changing Labour Market

During the period of SSLIS monopoly, the majority of the librarians came, naturally, from this school. The impact was substantial in the public library sector. All 280 Swedish municipalities have a public library. This library is in many cases the largest cultural institution and very often its head position is a combination of head of the public library and head of cultural activities for the area. As long as the programme in librarianship existed about two thirds of the students chose studies leading to work in public and school libraries.

### The Development of Information Technology

The development of information technology has been one of the factors that has affected the development of library activities and the students view of library work during recent years. It has also influenced, to a large extent, the way in which the world around has looked upon libraries and the competencies of librarians.

### From Public Libraries to Trade and Industry

At the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s several factors of importance occurred at the same time. Information technology within the library sector took off, library education was questioned and the economy of the municipalities was in bad shape. The labour market that had attracted the majority of the students to SSLIS was more or less closed down. This led to some unemployment mainly for those students that were totally oriented towards working in a public library. They had seldom taken elective courses orientated towards information technology or information retrieval. But when some students started changing gear and taking positions in non-traditional jobs they were met positively. Students from SSLIS created hompages and produced interactive catalogues for major companies. Others managed to take employment within media, finance and technical companies.

Some of those that did not succeed in finding employment during this period added new courses focusing on information systems and information retrieval to their library degree. Unfortunately it was one of the very few courses of this kind offered since 1993. When the sy-
stem of financing higher education was altered it also affected central funds directed towards continuing education. It happened at a time when they were more needed than ever. SSLIS put all its effort into creating the new programme and the others were too small to be able to do anything about the situation.

The demands of the academy and the professional life
The same groups that criticised SSLIS for running a more theoretical programme at the end of the 80s have returned with their criticism. Now when public libraries have started once again to employ staff and are tackling a generation change there are new problems on the horizon. The unemployment caused by the declining economies of the municipalities did not last long. Students orientated towards other sectors. New university libraries were built which generated new positions. Many students found employment as webmasters, responsible for information systems and a variety of other positions where they could use their competence.

The employers in these new areas had other demands but for those who fit in salaries were considerably better than in regular library work. Today it is not uncommon that advertised library positions lack applicants. This is very much the reality in the Stockholm region where also the majority of the „alternative“ positions are located. One of the problems is that the public libraries do not want to or are unable to do anything about salaries without being caught in difficult discussions with the existing staff.

Competition from other groups
As long as the number of students taking a librarian degree at SSLIS matched the needs of the libraries the whole thing was a rather internal affair. Now and then surveys of different professions were published and regularly librarians had a low ranking when it came to the development of salaries, the ability to pay back study loans and the possibilities of professional development. No other groups were fighting to become librarians. Today the situation is another. The student that leaves the programmes with a Master’s in LIS does not necessarily want to become a librarian. The development of information technology with databases, networks and not least Internet, has made the area interesting for others. Many researchers in Scandinavia studying human aspects and the consequences of information technology. It is with these students that LIS Master’s students have to compete.

Continuing education and distance learning
After consolidating the LIS programmes and creating a base for postgraduate studies something had to be done about continuing education. Borås and the other schools have to cooperate with each other and with the library organisations in Sweden. Some joint efforts have been attempted. During the last few years it has been fairly easy to acquire funds for IT orientated courses. Other areas have been held back and measures need to be taken, some examples are children's librarianship and pedagogical courses for librarians. Many of those that would like to develop their skills do not have the means or the time to spend a month in Borås or any of the other places with LIS programmes in order to take part in a full-time 5 credit course. Great expectations are connected to the possibilities of distance learning. SSLIS has run a substantial distance programme since 1991 and now it is possible to distribute courses over electronic networks. The LIS programmes have produced a joint course material aimed at distance distribution over the Internet. Even if much of the work is still to be done SSLIS is going to continue its efforts and will during the next years carry out a developing project in finding new forms for distance learning.

4 Joint unit and new programme in Borås
1999 has been a year when much has happened in Borås. SSLIS in Borås and the Department of Library and Information Studies in Göteborg have been merged in a department placed in Borås. This unusual formation has been possible after a contract between the educational institutions. For the first time there is one complete department in LIS with basic courses, a Master’s and postgraduate programme. SSLIS has been retained as the name of the unit. Högskoleverket (The National Agency for Higher Education) has granted Borås the right to employ professors of its own. The ambition is to extend the chair in Göteborg corresponding to the four sub-areas of the programme. In the future a professor will lead each team of lecturers. New positions as lecturer are on their way to being filled with applicants and we are looking forward to a positive development.

The journal „Swedish Library Research“ has now been joined by two other sister publications in the wake of the establishment of new research centres at SSLIS. The Centre for Cultural Policy Research and Debate (CCPRD) is a recognised focal point in the Nordic countries for researchers in that area. The Centre publishes „Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidskrift“ (Nordic Journal of Cultural Policy), a Scandinavian refereed journal. The Centre came about as a result of initiatives from SSLIS and was initially financed wholly through the school’s own budget. Nowadays, funds granted by government for research activities include the means for its operation. With a permanent staff and with a series of on-going projects and others in the pipeline – the Centre has the stature of an established research unit within Högskolan i Borås.

Another centre, which is still under development, is the Centre for Information Technology Studies as a Human Science (ITH). One of the products of this Centre is its journal „Human-IT“ which has become a meeting point for many researchers in Scandinavia studying human aspects and the consequences of information technology.

Other centres are under discussion, for instance, a library-educational centre, which would concern itself with studying pedagogical questions, related to library and information activities and information management. With the support of SSLIS/DLIS, a special association publishes dissertations, reports, monographs and other papers from the school. The association has been named Valfrid, in honour of one of the best known Swedish library pioneers – Valfrid Palmgren.
Problem-oriented teaching methodology

The new, academically orientated courses at SSLIS have changed in character, they have become more general in content and the emphasis is more and more on problem solving as the teaching methodology. The conversion from a vocational education to an academic programme has not been without discussion – or problems. Within the courses offered by SSLIS today, students are expected to acquire broad-based knowledge in library and information science, which they would be able to apply in a variety of professional situations. Since our students have very varied backgrounds, ranging from freshmen directly from upper secondary schools to those with many years of university-level studies – with or without any experience of library work – they graduate from SSLIS with differing educational strengths and interest profiles.

Opening the LIS-programme to university freshmen has meant that these students are more likely to complement their LIS-studies with a wider variety of other university-level subjects like the natural sciences, technology, electronic engineering etc. This tendency is in keeping with the general belief that not all students who study at SSLIS intend to work in libraries. There are those who study LIS as a part of another degree course, others who see the usefulness of combining information skills for application in other professions and yet others who visualise an academic career and who aim for the doctoral programme.

A new study programme

Barely five years after the 1993 curriculum came into operation, it was once again felt necessary to revise the programme.

The four perspectives mentioned above and which guided the LIS programme since 1993, still continue to exist and in fact constitute the basis of the new programme. The difference is that the structure of the 1993 programme required all students to study the same courses during the whole of the first year; furthermore, these courses, reflecting each of the four perspectives, varied in duration. In the new programme, all students will study two common, compulsory, foundation courses of equal length during the first term.

Thereafter, for their second and third term studies, they will choose one of the four perspectives (see below) which form four tracks of studies. All courses within a particular track of studies are compulsory and the student will be required to stick to the chosen track of studies throughout the second and third terms. But the design of the programme also offers a certain degree of flexibility. Each track will be offering a number of electives (over and above the required modules).

Starting from the base (the foundation course), the individual student will discover that there are opportunities for free choice in LIS and, afterwards, of combining these studies with any other university-level subjects thereby fashioning a unique profile by the time they graduate. The flexibility built into the new model is conceived to function in the following manner:

– Bachelor studies: to qualify for a Bachelor’s degree, a student must obtain a minimum total of 120 credits. In order to have the degree designated as a degree in LIS, a student must obtain a minimum of 60 credits in LIS (these are predetermined and compulsory) and obtain a further 60 credits in one or several other university-level subjects. Now, the student can choose any number of electives offered within LIS by any of the four tracks instead of these other university-level subjects. Herein lies the flexibility!

– Master’s studies: in order to obtain a Master’s degree, a student needs a minimum of 160 credits; to obtain a Master’s degree in LIS a minimum of 80 credits must be in this subject and the rest can be in any one or several other university-level subjects, including LIS. If a student chooses to do just this, he/she (just as for the Bachelor), may study any number of electives offered by any of the tracks. This is the flexibility the programme offers!

(For both categories of students there is yet one more opportunity to broaden the base of one’s LIS-oriented courses beyond the required 60 (Bachelor) or 80 (Master) points for the respective degrees: you simply abandon the track of studies you have embarked on – or completed – and just choose another track!)

Main features of the new programme

All students admitted to SSLIS, irrespective of whether they wish to study for a Bachelor’s or a Master’s degree are required to take the foundation course, which completely covers the first term. The foundation course is divided into two sub-courses of equal length and has the following aims:

– to provide a good, all-round introduction to the development of LIS;
– to present the different core areas within LIS;
– to provide a sound understanding of the key ideas and problems within LIS.

The two sub-courses during the foundation term are:

– The development of LIS and its core areas,
– Introduction to the different problems and issues in LIS examined in the light of different standpoints and through information seeking exercises.

As in the past, LIS will be viewed against and organized around four sectors or perspectives:

1. Libraries, culture and information in a societal perspective

The central questions to be considered here are: why have libraries been established and how have they developed; how have cultural policies been formulated during different periods; factors and circumstances that influence the need for information, and the interplay between the development of information technology, the development of society and the development of library and information services.

2. Basic problems in the organization of knowledge

The main focus is on how documents can be described, organized and retrieved.

3. Interaction between individuals and groups and library and information systems

Considers problems like how the need for information arises; examines the obstacles that prevent the satisfying of such needs; what methods can be developed to fulfil these needs.

4. Organization, management, strategic planning and development within libraries and other information-mediating activities

Deals with questions concerned with types of organi-
ization, personnel policies and issues and range and nature of services.

During their first term, students choose one of the above four tracks for their second and third term studies. Once you choose a particular track of studies you are required to stick to it throughout your second and third terms unless, of course, you abandon it for another track! Each track offers both compulsory courses and electives (given in modules of 5 or 10 credits).

However, the compulsory modules by themselves amount to 20 credits – the full requirement for any one term of studies! What then is the sense in having the electives? The simple answer is that the electives serve the purpose discussed above concerning flexibility. The organization of the second, third and fourth terms is as follows:

- **Second term**: at this level (21-40 credits), students study three compulsory 5-credit modules including the module scientific theory and research methods (5 credits) and submit a paper equivalent to 5 credits. The other two compulsory modules for each of the tracks are:
  
  **Track 1**:  
  a) Library history and the sociology of literature  
  b) Cultural and information policy

  **Track 2**:  
  a-b) Organization of knowledge

  **Track 3**:  
  a-b) Interaction between users and information systems

  **Track 4**:  
  a) Management, strategic development and marketing  
  b) Financial planning and evaluation  
  c) Information resources management  
  d) Scientific theory and research methodology

(Note: Bachelor students choose any but only two modules within their respective tracks since they have to write a 10-point thesis; Master's students must take all the courses within their respective tracks; note exception for track 1 above)

- **Fourth term**: at this level (61-80 credits), Master's students can choose either to write a single 20-credit thesis or to write two 10-credit theses. Technically, a student may register for the PhD programme on completion of the Bachelor's degree; however, a student usually completes his Master's degree first before proceeding further. Also, the most common path chosen is one that leads directly to the PhD although there is the odd student that pauses halfway and takes a shot at the Licentiate degree before going full out for the PhD. Diagram 1 shows the way from the foundation term right up to the PhD.

**Diag. 3** Showing the organisation and courses of the various programmes at SSLIS

In launching the new programme, SSLIS has also altered the system of student intake. In future, students will be admitted only once a year; up till now, the school has always had two intakes per year. 200 full-time students...
will be admitted every autumn term but 80 places (= 40 FTE:s) will be reserved for a spring intake for students wishing to study in the distance mode, on a half-time basis.

New emphasis

By shifting to a more problem-based method of teaching and by using pedagogical methods that place a greater emphasis on the learning process (increased student activity) than on actual teaching (less one-way communication), we hope that the academic staff will have more time at their disposal for their own personal development doing research, project work etc.

The road towards the establishment of LIS as a proper academic discipline in Sweden has been both a long, winding and sometimes uphill one. Now that SSLIS and DLIS exist side by side, there is suddenly, and not surprisingly, a feeling that a new atmosphere of “academia” is present at SSLIS. Since both undergraduate and postgraduate education and research are physically in the same place, the goal is to develop an organization where each activity stimulates the other.

Although the conditions can be considered as being promising, it would be a mistake to expect immediate results. What we now have are investments, for instance in personnel, in projects and equipment and ideas that will surely affect education and research in LIS in the long term. LIS as a discipline is comparatively small but it is gaining in recognition and this is important. How this seedling will fare will depend on how it is nurtured – by us and by others; but whatever its future fate, SSLIS will have a special responsibility. SSLIS can easily be reached on URL http://www.hb.se/bhs/.

Our own internal evaluations during the past years show, amongst other things, the following:

- A decidedly vocation-oriented curriculum has been transformed into an academic programme.
- Since 1995 SSLIS has graduated more than 300 Master’s students with LIS as the main subject. As a matter of fact, SSLIS has developed one of the largest Master’s programmes in Sweden during this period, all subjects considered!
- A large number of the teaching staff is engaged in postgraduate studies. SSLIS can also offer postgraduate scholarships of its own to its own academic staff.
- Two research centres – CCPRD and ITH, each with its own journal – have been established.
- SSLIS is soon to appoint two new professors; the process of evaluating the applications is currently in progress. Prof. Tom Wilson from the Department of Library and Information Studies at Sheffield University has been appointed Visiting Professor for 1999.
- Funding-wise, our budget for research and development has grown from virtually nothing to between SEK 8-10 million!

References


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