

## Analysis of New Zealand's Library Professional Accreditation System and Supporting Institutions: Postprint

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study employs the literature survey method and content analysis method to analyze the library professional qualification certification system and supporting institutions in New Zealand, aiming to provide insights and references for establishing relevant library professional competency standards in our country. [Method/Process] Using the literature survey method and content analysis method, this paper analyzes the Professional Registration Scheme for librarians and information professionals and its related implementation systems by the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA). The analysis elaborates on the overview of the professional registration scheme, certification implementation bodies, registration requirements, registration pathways, and supporting systems. [Results/Conclusion] New Zealand has developed a professional qualification certification led by library professional associations; constructed a certification standards system that integrates knowledge and practice; and established a long-term, multi-level, and multi-dimensional supporting system for professional development.

### Full Text

#### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study employs literature investigation and content analysis to examine New Zealand's library professional qualification certification system and its supporting mechanisms, aiming to provide reference for establishing relevant library professional competency standards in China. [Method/Process] The analysis focuses on the Professional Registration Scheme and associated implementation systems of the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA), elaborating on the scheme's

general framework, certification implementation bodies, registration requirements, certification pathways, and supporting systems. **[Result/Conclusion]** The findings reveal that New Zealand has established a professional qualification certification system led by the library industry association, built an integrated “knowledge-practice” certification standard system, and created a long-term, multi-level, and multi-dimensional professional development support framework.

**Keywords:** New Zealand; librarian; vocational ability; professional certification

Professional competency requirements, which describe job specifications, aim to improve employee performance. Librarian competency standards not only depict the environment libraries face but also serve as an evaluation tool, providing a framework for career design and development [?]. Such standards effectively address critical questions about personnel selection, training direction, pathways, and criteria. Professional competency development has long been a central theme in library science both domestically and internationally.

The United Kingdom pioneered library professional qualification certification, with the Library Association conducting its first professional qualification examination in 1855, granting successful candidates registered librarian status. In 1909, the association established a formal professional registration system. By 1968, M.L. Bundy and P. Wasserman had identified a troubling gap between professional practice and librarians’ actual work [?], highlighting the urgent need for a comprehensive qualification system. In 1992, the UK introduced National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) to the information and library services sector, formalizing the Information and Library Services Sector National Occupational Standards (ILSS/NVQs) [?]. Since the 1990s, the United States has developed multiple librarian qualification systems, including the American Library Association’s “Recognition of Higher Education in Library Science” and various professional certification programs that specify practical competency requirements [?]. Japan [?], South Korea [?], and Australia [?] have similarly established their own certification frameworks. However, few studies have examined New Zealand’s librarian competency standards.

China currently lacks a genuine professional qualification certification system for librarians, with no mandatory entry requirements, which undermines the sustainable development of the library profession. Consequently, numerous scholars have discussed the necessity and potential pathways for establishing such a system. In 2015, library competency research was included in China’s National Social Science Fund project guidelines, elevating it to a strategic priority. This shared concern creates opportunities for international exchange and learning. The Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) has developed a Professional Registration Scheme with comprehensive qualification standards, supporting systems, and procedures that have proven highly effective. This study analyzes New Zealand’s librarian competency standards and provides a detailed interpretation of their application scope, components,

and content to offer insights for developing China's own standards.

## 2 New Zealand Library Professional Qualification Certification Standards and Supporting Systems

To ensure smooth implementation of librarian qualification certification, LIANZA has established comprehensive standards and supporting systems that guide applicants in knowledge structure, competency composition, and skill requirements, while providing mentorship when needed.

### 2.1 Hierarchical Knowledge Architecture

To ensure New Zealand's library and information professionals possess rational, optimized knowledge structures, LIANZA has developed a hierarchical knowledge system comprising 11 units across 6 levels [?]. New members must map their work experience to this knowledge system, while renewing members must align their professional practice accordingly, making it both guiding and mandatory for registered members. The specific content is shown in .

**Level 1: Understanding the Information Environment** - BOK1: Information environment, policy, and ethics - History of the information field and its changing characteristics

**Level 2: Understanding Information Needs, Production, and Access** - BOK2: Production, communication, and use of information - Understanding information creation, representation, dissemination, and use processes - Relevant legal, policy, economic, and ethical issues - Significance of the Treaty of Waitangi in service and resource development - Purpose and content of professional codes of conduct - BOK3: Information needs and design - BOK4: Information access processes - BOK5: Organization, retrieval, and preservation - Identifying impacts and opportunities from the changing publishing environment - Understanding information institutions' role in information generation and exchange - Identifying and evaluating client needs - Designing and providing information services - Understanding how users find information - Developing information literacy skills - Applying consultation and research techniques - Promoting reading and lifelong learning - Describing, classifying, and storing information - Principles of protection and preservation - Designing systems for information storage, description, and retrieval

**Level 3: Understanding Information Resources and Knowledge Management** - BOK8: Information resource management and knowledge management - Basic principles of collection development and management - Definitions, concepts, and frameworks of knowledge and knowledge management - Applying knowledge sharing strategies

**Level 4: Understanding Information and Communication Technology** - BOK7: Application of information and communication technology - Characteristics of changing ICT and its applications - Identifying and evaluating ICT

**Level 5: Understanding Information Organization Management** - BOK6: Research, analysis, and information interpretation - Understanding research characteristics, methods, and practices - Evaluating research quality and relevance - Conducting research by collecting and analyzing data and applying findings to professional practice - BOK9: Management of information organizations - Participating in strategic planning, business, and operational design - Managing finance, human resources, and materials - Governance structures and stakeholder relationships - BOK10: Evaluating service effectiveness - Measures for evaluating service quality and effectiveness - Designing methods to evaluate library service effectiveness - Measuring or assessing quality of library and information facilities, products, and services - Analyzing and interpreting service effectiveness or quality measurement results

**Level 6: Understanding Indigenous Knowledge Paradigms** - BOK11: Awareness of indigenous knowledge paradigms - Understanding the importance, diversity, and structure of Māori knowledge - Understanding how Māori development processes, philosophy, and language are inherent in their knowledge frameworks - Understanding the importance of Māori research methods to meet client information needs

This knowledge system uses information as its central thread, following a hierarchical and progressive flow from information environment → information production and access → information management → information technology → information organization management → indigenization. Information serves as the trunk, while information environment, production and access, management, technology, and organization management function as interconnected yet independent branches. This structure enables practitioners to understand the overall architecture of information services while highlighting priorities and characteristics of different components. For instance, Level 2 on information production and access encompasses information creation, dissemination, publishing environment changes, information needs identification and design, user information literacy development, various consultation and communication techniques, and promotion of lifelong learning awareness.

## 2.2 Four-in-One Cognition-Behavior Model

To achieve balance between theory and practice and integrate consciousness with action, LIANZA proposes a four-in-one cognition-behavior model comprising four modules: cognition, practice, sharing, and leadership [?]. The cognition module relates to professional knowledge and skill development through courses, conferences, reports, on-the-job learning, and professional literature reading. The practice module involves applying professional skills through designing and providing services, evaluating and improving practices, and implementing new initiatives. The sharing module emphasizes communication, exchange, relationship building, and promotion through online and offline channels, including professional networking, internal and external liaison, online discussion participation, and service marketing. The leadership module requires demonstrating

professional leadership and creativity through organizing meetings and events, leading or supporting colleagues, mentoring and encouraging others, and advocating for change, as shown in [Figure 1: see original paper].

### 2.3 Worker-Oriented Skills Map

Beyond the knowledge system and cognition-behavior model, LIANZA has constructed a skills map for library and information professionals [?] that explicitly identifies required competencies and provides skill guidance. The map includes seven dimensions: library and information skills, IT skills, research ability, teaching ability, management ability, communication ability, and personal ability, as shown in .

**Table 2: LIANZA Skills Map**

Skill Category	Specific Competencies
Library & Information Skills	Service delivery for diverse user groups, reading promotion, creating new services, retrieval skills (catalogs, databases, web), consultation skills, business information research, legal information, information literacy, digital literacy, cataloging, metadata, Māori subject headings, indexing, physical and digital preservation, digital curation, knowledge management, archives management, Māori information management, traditional practices (oral history, local chronicles, genealogy, Māori heritage), collection development, collection management, collection knowledge (physical, online, internet), service evaluation, informetrics, critical analysis

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Skill Category	Specific Competencies
IT Skills	Common IT/ICT skills; ability to learn new technologies; troubleshooting; Web 2.0 and Library 2.0; social media; cloud computing; big data; metadata schemas and transformation; structured markup languages (HTML, XML); data analysis; server principles; digitization; digital curation; MOOCs; computer-assisted instruction; IT project management; IT innovation; critical analysis and comparison of technologies; content management systems; information systems; advanced Windows applications; open source software; software evaluation, installation, and support; mobile applications; mobile devices; image uploading and editing; music technology; online meetings; downloadable media; Skype and REANNZ networks; database development; web skills, content management, standards, development; web applications; browser usage; intranet management; wiki creation and management
Research Ability	Information retrieval, research data management, understanding research needs, research advancement, analysis and presentation, field research
Teaching Ability	Educational learning theory, adult teaching, training, program development, presentation skills, content adaptation, personal learning networks
Management Ability	Ethics and values, lobbying and public relations, statistics, human resource management, leadership

Skill Category	Specific Competencies
Communication Ability	Common communication skills, non-verbal communication, listening, interpersonal skills, cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution, interviewing, networking, social media, communication planning, negotiation, marketing, media handling, persuasion and influence, report/business plan/annual report writing, information statistics, current awareness services
Personal Ability	Flexibility/resilience, optimism, initiative, self-esteem, self-awareness and development, confidence in dealing with diverse people, cross-cultural awareness, stress management, information overload handling, time management and prioritization, creative thinking, critical thinking, abstract thinking, questioning ability, career planning and management, continuous learning and improvement, personal cultivation

The skills map can be categorized into general competencies, professional competencies, and comprehensive competencies. General competencies cover library and information industry knowledge and skills, including personalized services, retrieval techniques, consultation, collection development, cataloging, metadata, and knowledge management. Professional competencies relate to specific job content and positions. For example, IT work requires programming, cloud computing, and big data skills; teaching and training require understanding educational theory, program development, and content adaptation. Comprehensive competencies emphasize communication skills and personal qualities. Communication skills focus on coordination, marketing, negotiation, teamwork, and efficient collaboration. Personal qualities emphasize career management abilities developed through professional activities, including initiative, resilience, stress management, time management, creative and critical thinking, abstract thinking, questioning ability, career planning, and continuous improvement.

## 2.4 Mentorship System

LIANZA maintains a mentorship team of over 30 professionals covering public libraries, academic libraries, business libraries, school libraries, and law libraries to assist new members and renewing members. Mentors help applicants analyze their current situation and development vision, research and formulate personalized professional training plans to successfully achieve certification. For new

collection development librarians, training plans may cover seven areas: understanding the librarian profession, ethical codes, designing professional practices, addressing knowledge and skill gaps, understanding the breadth of library services and diverse client needs, participating in professional associations, and comprehending local treaties like the Treaty of Waitangi to adapt to New Zealand's cultural context [?]. For applicants with overseas qualifications, mentors help develop targeted professional development plans to adapt to evolving information environments and needs.

For renewing members, LIANZA requires re-certification every three years through submission of a professional development log covering the previous three years. Given requirements on activity quantity and description length, selecting appropriate activities and effectively summarizing them is crucial. Applicants with questions can request mentor assistance to ensure application quality and fully demonstrate their qualifications and strengths.

### 3 Implementation Process of New Zealand's Library Professional Qualification Certification

Based on its certification standards and supporting systems, LIANZA has established an implementation process centered on the Professional Registration Board (PRB), featuring multiple entry pathways with parallel application and review procedures, as shown in [Figure 2: see original paper].

The PRB serves as the professional body for librarian registration and certification, comprising experienced library and information professionals responsible for reviewing materials, making certification decisions, approving mentor applications, and advising on professional development plans [?].

LIANZA delineates three application pathways based on applicants' qualifications, each requiring different documentation:

**Pathway A** applies to applicants holding LIANZA-recognized New Zealand library and information qualifications, limited to graduates from Victoria University of Wellington and the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, with a minimum bachelor's degree in library studies or information and library studies.

**Pathway B** applies to applicants with recognized overseas library and information qualifications, specifying approved overseas associations: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (UK), Australian Library and Information Association, American Library Association, and Canadian Library Association. Applicants from other overseas associations must hold postgraduate qualifications and undergo international qualification assessment by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

**Pathway C** applies to applicants with bachelor's degrees or higher in information technology, information studies, archival science, education, or related fields, who also hold New Zealand library and information diplomas, certifi-

ates, or degrees obtained before LIANZA's Professional Registration Scheme implementation, plus five years of work experience.

Pathways B and C applicants must additionally map their educational background and work experience to the knowledge system to demonstrate theoretical coverage and mastery.

Certified librarians must undergo re-certification every three years to maintain professional status. Beyond standard application materials, they must submit professional development logs demonstrating understanding and application of the knowledge system and cognition-behavior model. The process emphasizes comprehensive coverage and practicality, requiring activities covering all six knowledge system groups with at least two activities per group, and involvement in at least three of the four cognition-behavior domains. The process also emphasizes outcome-oriented reflective descriptions highlighting learning outcomes. This re-certification process affirms that professional status requires continuous learning and practice within the established knowledge and behavior frameworks, balancing knowledge systems with practical application and integrating consciousness with action to sustain personal careers and library development.

## **4 Analysis of New Zealand's Library Professional Qualification Certification System**

### **4.1 A Complete, Standardized, and Sustainable System Led by Professional Library Associations**

LIANZA, as New Zealand's professional library association, plays a leading role in the country's librarian professionalization process. It has developed a complete and standardized industry certification system featuring professional certification bodies, clear requirements, strict entry mechanisms, comprehensive standards, transparent procedures, and holistic supporting systems, ensuring registered professionals possess required competencies, meet high professional standards, and gain industry recognition. LIANZA serves New Zealand's library and information industry through continuous professional development programs, professional awards, and registration services, enhancing the profession's status and advocating for library development.

Survey results indicate strong approval of LIANZA's Professional Registration Scheme, which enhances the profession's credibility and covers current and future required skills. However, some respondents noted the review process is time-consuming, costly, and inflexible [?], prompting LIANZA to consider sustainable improvements that simplify procedures without compromising integrity.

## 4.2 Building an Integrated “Knowledge-Practice” Certification Standard System

LIANZA emphasizes close integration between knowledge systems and work practice in its certification standards. The knowledge system and cognition-behavior model constitute two complementary aspects, balancing theory and practice. The knowledge system decomposes relevant knowledge, concepts, and elements according to information flow, providing a highly condensed summary of practitioners’ knowledge architecture. The cognition-behavior model summarizes cognitive, thinking, and action patterns based on library and information work characteristics, emphasizing that knowledge serves as a means while practice represents the ultimate goal. Only through their integration can knowledge structures become localized and operational, achieving effective learning-practice synergy.

## 4.3 Establishing a Long-Term, Multi-Level, and Multi-Dimensional Professional Development Support System

To support professional librarians’ development needs, LIANZA has created a comprehensive support system. The PRB provides professional guidance through mentorship during entry and growth phases. LIANZA’s website offers diverse courses, training, and resources [?], including: - Modular courses on change management, strategic planning, reference services, and library marketing, allowing user selection of content and timing [?] - Free webinar series for interactive discussion and learning [?] - Online courses covering collection development, staff recruitment, intellectual property, leadership, social media, and personal learning networks [?] - Five-minute training videos for fragmented learning [?]

This online training demonstrates clear hierarchy, integrating systematic courses, modular content, and fragmented learning to meet diverse needs.

# 5 Implications for China’s Library Professional Qualification System

## 5.1 Fully Leveraging Library Associations’ Role in Professional Certification

China currently lacks an authoritative, universal competency model and qualification system for library and information professionals. This creates challenges for self-assessment and continuous learning among practitioners, with libraries developing disparate competency definitions lacking uniformity, standardization, and foresight. Sustainable library development requires knowledge system construction, knowledge transfer and improvement, and behavior pattern building—a virtuous cycle from theoretical to practical innovation and back. This process requires an industry organization like LIANZA to collaborate with LIS education institutions and libraries, summarize work responsibilities, en-

try requirements, knowledge systems, skill frameworks, and behavior patterns for different types of practitioners, balance theory and practice, and establish comprehensive career development systems.

Drawing from New Zealand's model, China should fully utilize library associations, particularly the China Society of Library Science, to lead qualification system development. Under unified planning, the society should mobilize libraries and professionals nationwide, engage with government departments, and seek breakthroughs in institutional, policy, and legal dimensions to make certification feasible and operational.

## 5.2 Establishing a Sustainable Professional Qualification Model Integrating Theory and Practice

China's Ministry of Labor and Social Security and Ministry of Culture issued the "National Occupational Standards for Library and Information Personnel (Trial)" in 2004, proposing an assessment system combining theoretical knowledge and professional competence. However, this outdated framework no longer aligns with current LIS developments, and its 120-minute examination model is overly simplistic. Guo Jing et al. developed a competency standard system for Chinese academic library subject librarians based on international experience and domestic practice [?], but this remains limited to subject librarians and lacks universal applicability. The 2015 "Library Reference Service Standards" only address service norms without specifying competency requirements for reference librarians. The 2017 "Public Library Law of the People's Republic of China" states that public library staff should possess relevant professional knowledge and skills, with technical staff eligible for professional title evaluation [?], but fails to define these competencies clearly.

Drawing from LIANZA's experience, China should establish a qualification system that integrates theory and practice, emphasizing sustainability. Given regional, institutional, and scale disparities, the system should be stratified by type, level, and position to ensure both guidance and feasibility, serving LIS practitioners and the library community effectively.

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*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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