Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: Aberystwyth University

Unit of Assessment: 36 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

Title of case study: **Ensuring Professionalism: knowledge, competencies and skills for the global information profession**

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)   Departmental research identifying skills, knowledge and competency frameworks is used by a range of Governments and professional associations internationally to inform and improve contemporary information service provision and professional practice.   The development of robust frameworks and methodologies has resulted in a maturing knowledge and skills base for the information profession. Research on competencies contributed directly to the future education and training framework for the Australian library and information profession.   The design and evaluation of Continuing Professional Development frameworks ensures that information and library professionals acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills required to deliver quality information to industry, the public and society as a whole.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)   Aberystwyth has developed an extensive body of research expertise enabling the global information profession to develop a maturing knowledge and skills base for professional practice since 1997. Research analysing, evaluating and identifying frameworks and methodologies knowledge, competencies and skills to underpin the development of the information profession globally has been on-going since the 1990s, led by Judith Broady-Preston. In as much as libraries are fundamental to the conception of librarianship as a profession, similarly, the profession- oriented perspective plays a vital integrating role in sustaining library and information science as a field of research and education, despite its seemingly patchwork nature.   Award-winning research from 2000 onwards evaluating contemporary theories of professionalism, has led to a fundamental re-examination of the nature and role of the information profession. This work has four major strands: (1) a conceptualisation of the changing nature of the profession and its impact on professional practice; (2) development of a qualitative methodology to assess concepts of professional identity and knowledge in this context; (3) design, development, evaluation and accreditation of flexible entry routes into professional practice and (4) systematic frameworks to assess and accredit work- based learning and mandatory continuing professional development (CPD)schemes.   Research into the effects of operational convergence of information and library services and the necessity for a hybrid model of practice **[3.1]** resulted in the conceptualisation of 'blurring professional boundaries' and the concomitant need to develop blended information professionals **[3.2].** Previously rigid boundaries in relation to qualifications, professional practice, career development and professional skills and knowledge have become more diffuse and as a concept, have been identified as a key driver for change in the profession. This together with the impact of developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) is transforming the information landscape across all sectors of practice, including archives and records management, in addition to more mainstream library and information services **[3.3,3.4].**   Working in conjunction with colleagues in professional practice, including the British Library amongst others, a qualitative methodological framework combining strong Structuration and social identity theories was devised to determine the meaning of "professionalism" within the context of the contemporary information profession, outlined in an award-winning paper **[3.5].** The development of more flexible entry routes into professional practice is underpinned by research completed by Broady-Preston and Preston **[3.2],** complemented by the design of mandatory CPD schemes and frameworks for their evaluation. Professional identity is a key driver of CPD; the requirement to maintain and develop professional knowledge beyond initial qualification is considered by commentators to be a key attribute of professionalism. Broady-Preston participated in the design of the mandatory CPD scheme

by the UK Chartered Institute of library and Information Professionals (CILIP), subsequently developing an evaluative framework to assess its relevance, amended, and further refining this in 2010-11 via a collaborative research project with Cossham, a New Zealand academic **[6].**

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

3.1.[international conference address and peer-reviewed paper] Broady-Preston, J., and Bell, S. (2001), "Motivating mid-career LIS professionals: the Aberystwyth experience", *New Library World*, 102 (10), pp.372-381. DOI: 10.1108/03074800110408932 (Also published in: *Continuity, Culture and Competition – the future of Library and Information Studies Education?* Proceedings of the 4th British-Nordic Conference on Library and Information Studies, 21-23 March 200, Dublin, Ireland. Ashcroft, L.S.(ed), Bradford, Emerald, 2002, pp.179-190. ISBN 086176-655-5.)

3.2.[international conference address and peer-reviewed paper] Broady-Preston, J., and Preston, H. (2007). "Blurring the boundaries? Information studies education and professional development in England and Wales". In: H. K. Achleitner and A. Dimchev (eds.) *Globalization, Digitization, Access and Preservation of Cultural Heritage*: papers from the 6th International Conference, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, 8-10 November 2006 (pp. 289-300). Sofia: St Kliment Ohridski, University of Sofia.

3.3.[peer-reviewed paper] Broady-Preston, J. (2009) "Professional education, development and training in a web 2.0 environment, a case study of the UK." *New Library World*, 110 (5/6), pp. 265-279. DOI: 10.1108/03074800910954280

3.4.[international conference address and peer-reviewed paper] Broady-Preston, J. (2010) "The information professional of the future: polymath or dinosaur?" *Library Management*, 31 (1/2), pp. 66-78. DOI: 10.1108/01435121011013412 [Revised version of the paper presented to the People in the Information Profession Conference, Victoria University Convention Centre, Flinders Street, Melbourne, Australia, 15-16 October 2009.Featured Article in January 2010 issue, The Informed Librarian Online(www.informedlibrarian.com)

3.5.[peer-reviewed paper] Broady-Preston, J. (2009) "Structuration and social identity theories: qualitative methodologies for determining skills and competencies for the information profession in the 21st century", *Performance Measurement & Metrics: The International Journal for Library and Information Services*, 10 (3), pp. 172-179. DOI10.1108/14678040911014176: [Highly Commended, Emerald Literati Awards, 2010]

3.6.[peer-reviewed paper] Broady-Preston, J. and Cossham, A. (2011) Keeping the information profession up to date: Are compulsory schemes the answer? *IFLA Journal*, March, 37 (1) pp. 28-38 DOI: 10.1177/0340035210396777 [Revised version of the paper "Mandatory CPD and professional re-validation schemes and their role in motivating and e-energising information professionals: the UK and New Zealand experiences" presented at the IFLA Continuing Professional Development & Workplace Learning Section (CPDWL) program session "Retention and Job Satisfaction: Can continuing professional development make a difference?" at the 76th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, World Library & Information Congress, 10-15 August 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Widening access to and ensuring professional practice is "fit for purpose" is a key concern of Governments in the UK and overseas. This policy drive by Governments has led directly to new modes of delivering learning and teaching within and without universities, with the aim of developing more evidence-based practice and encouraging professional associations to open up alternative routes to professional practice, including differing ways of categorising the "professional". In the information profession, developments in relation to accrediting and recognising work-based learning formally and devising Continuing Professional Development (CPD) routes into professional practice have employed frameworks and methodologies developed by the Aberystwyth researchers.

Research by Broady-Preston and Bell into the effects of the operational convergence of information

and library services and the necessity for a hybrid model of practice, underpinned the development of an in-service training programme for South African Librarians **[5.8].** Frameworks identifying and analysing professional skills and competencies devised by Broady-Preston and Preston resulted in the conceptualisation of 'blurring professional boundaries' and the concomitant need to develop blended information professionals, directly informing curriculum review at the University of Sheffield **[5.2],** the re-conceptualisation and repositioning of Australian Library and Information Science education **[5.6]** and CPD frameworks in Australia, India, New Zealand and the Caribbean **[5.3].**

The 2009 qualitative methodology for reconfiguring concepts of professional identify developed by Broady-Preston informed the future direction of the library and information profession in Australia overall, being used in a variety of research and policy initiatives funded by the Australian Government. The Australian Learning and Teaching Council Project employed it in its 2010-11 identification of the knowledge base required to modernise the information profession in Australia to meet the needs of 21st century practice, and more specifically, to develop a structured, modular competency framework for health librarianship in the Health Libraries Australia (HLA) Research Project, 2009-2011**[5.4, 5.5]**. Broady-Preston's 2009 work on the future of the information profession and professional practice, together with the identification of skills and competencies for practice was used to identify future directions for the Australian Health Library profession by ALIA (Australian Library and Information Association) **[5.4].**

CPD schemes and activity constitute a discrete sub-section of work in relation to determining professional identity, skills, knowledge and competencies, directly contributing to developing more robust and rigorous evidenced-based practice. In 2008, Broady-Preston was appointed to two CILIP Council Task and Finish Groups, the first designing and reviewing the Framework of Qualifications and Accreditation (FoQA) for the profession, and the second established to determine policy in relation to Foundation Degrees **[5.2].** The purpose of both groups was to examine future needs for CPD in professional practice, including identifying mechanisms for recognising and accrediting work-based learning and requirements for lifelong learning in professional practice. This led to the production of a pioneering light-touch mandatory CPD programme for professional practice by CILIP, one of only two developed for the profession globally, evaluated subsequently by Broady-Preston in 2009.

Widespread debate within the profession took place during and following the presentation of the scheme and its evaluative model at the World Congress in 2009. The debate was such that CILIP UK launched a survey of their members in January 2010, revisiting their 2009 policy decision to introduce mandatory CPD **[5.8].** This led subsequently to the development of a global framework for evaluating mandatory professional CPD schemes, developed in conjunction with colleagues in New Zealand. A comparative critique of the two schemes formed the basis for a structured workshop discussion at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress August 2010 in Gothenburg, Sweden, focusing on the role and relevance of mandatory CPD activity in motivating and regenerating the contemporary information profession, led by Broady-Preston. This contributed to the temporary suspension in 2011 of the original UK scheme with its subsequent revision and re-introduction in 2013 as a Revalidation scheme **[5.1].**

Further evidence of policy development and improvements to professional practice is demonstrated by Broady-Preston's appointments and advisory roles to Government and professional bodies resulting from the above, including: 2009-10 membership of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) Steering Group, Apprenticeships and Foundation Degrees;
2012 Adviser and Evaluator for the new CILIP Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB) and the development of flexible CPD and access routes into professional practice; and her 2013 appointment by the EU ESCO (European Skills/Competences qualifications and Occupations) Secretariat to the ESCO Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Reference group, a European Commission Europe-wide initiative to identify and categorise skills, competences, qualifications and occupations in a standard way, using standard terminology in all EU languages and an open format, usable by third parties' software **[5.9].**

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)
5.1. Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) (2011) Trustee Report and

Financial statement:
http://www.cilip.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Annual%20report%20and%20accounts%202011.pdf

5.2. Corrall, S. (2010) "Educating the academic librarian as a blended professional: a review and case study", *Library Management*, Vol. 31 Iss: 8/9, pp.567 – 593 DOI: 10.1108/01435121011093360

5.3. Gosine-Boodoo, M. and McNish, M. (2009) "Pursuing CPD in the Caribbean: Individual quest versus organizational goal" doi: 10.1177/0961000609345090 *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* December 2009 vol. 41 no. 4 203-211

5.4. Hallam, Gillian, Ritchie, Ann, Hamill, Cheryl, Lewis, Suzanne, Kammermann, Melanie, O'Connor, Patrick, Clark, Catherine, & Newton-Smith, Carol (2011) Health Librarianship Workforce and Education: Research to plan the future. Final Report. Australian Library and Information Association, Canberra, ACT. http://www.alia.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/our-communities/Healthlibrarianshipworkforcereport.pdf

5.5. Partridge, Helen L., Hanisch, Jo, Hughes, Hilary E., Henninger, Maureen, Carroll, Mary, Combes, Barbara, Genoni, Paul, Reynolds, Sue, Tanner, Kerry, Burford, Sally, Ellis, Leonie, Hider, Philip, & Yates, Christine (2011) Re-conceptualising and re-positioning Australian library and information science education for the 21st century [Final Report 2011]. Australian Learning and Teaching Council, Sydney, NSW. http://eprints.qut.edu.au/46915/

5.6. Shepherd, E. (2010) "In-service training for academic librarians: a pilot programme for staff", *Electronic Library*, The, Vol. 28 Iss: 4, pp.507 – 524. DOI: 10.1108/02640471011065346

5.7. "Moving In, Moving Up, and Moving On: Strategies for Regenerating the Library and Information Profession" Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section and New Professionals Discussion Group, Bologna, Italy 18-20 August 2009. 8th World Conference on Continuing Professional Development & Workplace Learning for the Library and Information Professions. http://www.ifla.org/events/moving-in-moving-up-and-moving-on- strategies-for-regenerating-the-library-and-information-0 Accessed 28 September 2013.

5.8 "Cilip mandatory CPD survey – speak now…"(the) Health Informaticist. http://healthinformaticist.wordpress.com/2010/01/07/cilip-mandatory-cpd-survey-speak-now/ Accessed 19 November 2013

5.9 Advisory roles and appointments (Broady-Preston):
1. Letter from the Customer Service Manager (Face to Face) One Stop Shop, Registration and Library Service Resources Group in relation to 2009-10 MLA appointment

2. Director of Professional Services, CILIP
2.1 Focus group on Models, routes and pathways into qualifications Sent 21/09/12.
2.2 Testing the Accreditation guidance. Sent: 14/12/12.

3. (April 2013) Email from Vice Chair, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Reference group. Appointed by the EU ESCO Secretariat to serve on the ESCO (European Skills/Competences qualifications and Occupations) Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Reference group.