



What MLIS Students Need to Know BEFORE Graduation

A diploma might not be the only thing between you & your dream job.

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Know Your Niche: Join the Ranks

- Academic, Public, Special, School Media: How do you know your niche? Visit the libraries you are interested in working at and observe the happenings. Find one that you're interested in and volunteer or intern.
- What technical skills or credentials (like a teaching certificate) will you need to know for your niche? Read job descriptions to discover what additional skills to work on. Match your classes to your specialty or obtain a certificate in your niche.
- Learn niche-specific software: Elluminate, Oracle, Archon/Archival Toolkit, Ask-A-Librarian, etc. Take advantage of FLA's webinars and seek out other web-based resources.
- Letters of Recommendation: Who to ask? Know the job application requirements for references; provide this information to the person writing the letter.
 - Have more than three (3) references. Not everyone will be available when you need them.
 - Keep your list updated with current contact information.
 - Stay in touch with your references and update them on your accomplishments.
- Expand your vision: There are many job paths for librarians beyond the library. Publishers, vendors, archives, museums, research groups, think tanks, and many more!

Education: Going the Extra Mile

- Land a job or volunteer in a library WHILE YOU ARE IN SCHOOL. Some MLIS programs offer internships for credit. Check with your advisor for specifics for current openings, application process, and assignment requirements. Volunteering can offer insight into the ebb and flow of the library, build your resumé, and may help you find your niche.
- If you already work in a library ask for projects that are outside of your area, show initiative, and be prepared to learn. Be sure to add these to your digital portfolio and resumé, and include links to pages, guides, or aides you have created.
- Join the Club: Student membership to professional association: ALA, FLA, SAA, or any group in your niche.
- Let the networking begin: Attend a conference, present a poster at a conference, apply for a mentor, join a group.
- Find a mentor or two through professional associations, networking, or seek out an individual who is in the type of position you are seeking.

Job Hunt: Degrees and CVs

- Resumé or CV? Read the job description carefully, but know academic and speciality libraries look for CVs and public libraries and school media positions require a resumé.
 - Know the difference between a CV and a resumé.
 - It is good to have a variety of versions ready to submit; be sure to update regularly as you gain more skills. This is a good habit to practice and maintain throughout your career.
 - Look online for good and bad examples and start writing cover letters.
 - Highlight: research papers, technical skills, projects to include finding aides, LibGuides, pathfinders, videos. You can build a website or use a blog. A visual representation of your work will elevate you from others. Online portfolios are not just for artist and designers. Show your best work and include links.
- Publish: Yes, start now. There are journals and publications that welcome submission from students. Know the journals that are relevant to the subject of your writing and follow the submission guidelines exactly as written. Expect to rewrite. Having work published will distinguish you and if your niche is in academic libraries, you can expect to write more papers.

