

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, BOARD OF EXAMINATION, CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION OF LIBRARIANS

NEWS RELEASE No. 3

May, 1963.

1. The Board of Examination met in Melbourne on 16th, 17th and 18th April, 1963. The whole of one day was spent on the scrutiny of the draft papers submitted by examiners for the 1963 examinations, to see that questions were clear in their meaning, within the syllabus, and of an appropriate standard.

2. NOTES FOR TUTORS AND CANDIDATES

The following notes are issued for the information or guidance of tutors and candidates. It is hoped that Branches will take steps to bring them, if not the whole Newsletter, to the attention of those concerned:—

(a) Papers 5 A, B & C

The layout of the syllabus on p. 20 of the *Handbook* appears not to have been entirely clear. There are three options; each comprises Library Administration, in general and with special reference to one type of library. The headings used in the Reading Lists (p. 30 - 31) and on the examination papers (p. 43 - 45) are perhaps rather clearer. The syllabus includes each of the topics in Sections (a) — (n) under 5 on p. 20, in their general aspects and with particular reference to one of the three options. Candidates will not be expected to make detailed comparisons between the three types of library embraced by the options but some knowledge of other types is necessary under certain topics: for example, under (e) candidates will not be examined on budgeting matters in other types of library but under (h) will be expected to understand generally the place and role of all types of library.

(b) Paper 6

There will be two compulsory practical questions:

- (1) on descriptive cataloguing (Section (c) of the syllabus);
- (2) on filing rules (Section (i) of the syllabus).

There will also be a choice of four out of eight other questions.

(c) Paper 13

This paper will be divided into four sections—

- A1 covering Section A of the syllabus less subsection (c);
- A2 covering subsection (c) of Section A of the syllabus;
- B covering Section B of the syllabus;
- C covering Section C of the syllabus.

Candidates will be required to answer questions from each Section of paper as under:—

- either
or
- A1 at least one question and not more than two questions out of four questions;
 - A2 two questions out of four;
 - B) at least one question and not more than two questions out of four questions;
 - C) four questions.

(d) Papers 14, 15, 16

In these papers, which are compulsory papers for candidates for the Registration Certificate in Archives, the choice of questions will be in the same proportion (normally 6 out of 10) as in the other compulsory papers (Nos. 1-7).

3. EXAMINERS' NAMES

In future examiners' names will not be printed on examination papers, but will be published later in the *Handbook*. It is considered, on balance that this is fairer for most candidates.

4. MARKS TO BE ISSUED TO CANDIDATES

In 1963 the examination results will be communicated to candidates in the form of the marks awarded and the pass mark instead of by the mere statement that the candidate had passed or failed. This additional information may prove of value to students and to tutors. The results of, and reaction to, this change will be considered by the Board in 1964 and a decision then made on whether to continue it or revert to the former practice.

Some candidates fail by only a very few marks. Some pass by an equally narrow margin. Those who just fail may wonder whether with better luck they might have passed. It should be stressed that no borderline case is failed until:

- (a) the whole paper has been reviewed by its original examiner;
- (b) the paper has been independently marked by a second examiner who has also failed it;
- (c) in case of any remaining doubt the paper has been reviewed by one or more members of the Board of Examination, acting as assessors.

The general standard of marking in every paper is always examined by assessors from the Board of Examination before the Board confirms the final results.

5. EXAMINATION REPORTS TO BE PUBLISHED

After each examination is marked, the examiners make a full report to the Board on the standard of the candidates, and reasons for success and failure. Part of these reports is confidential to the Board but much could with advantage be made available to future candidates and to tutors. The Board will therefore send copies of the appropriate parts of these reports as soon as possible to all the major libraries of Australia (see p. xiv of the *Handbook*) and to the educational institutions listed on p. 38 of the *Handbook*. More than one copy will be forwarded to each recipient so that copies may be available for loan to people unable to visit the libraries concerned.

6. REGISTRATION EXAMINATION: RECIPROCITY WITH THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Reciprocity of examination qualifications has existed between the Library Association and the Library Association of Australia since 1948. It was started on the initiative of the L.A.A. It has always been on a basis of examination, NOT of status of membership. It happened that both Associations gave comparable status of membership after passing comparable examinations. Both Associations have recently decided to alter fundamentally the examinations in question and the Library Association has abolished its Registration Examination. As a result they are no longer directly comparable. Therefore the old basis of reciprocity no longer exists, *de facto*.

The Board has therefore been obliged to consider whether it would be in the interests of the L.A.A. to negotiate a new basis of reciprocity with the L.A.

Only about six Australians per annum have sought registration by the L.A. Apart from those employed in Australian organisations, only three Professional Members appear to be working in Britain at present. The number of members of the L.A.A. likely to be affected is therefore negligible.

There is certainly no need now for Australian qualifications to lean on the British connection for either national or international recognition.

The shortage of librarians is so acute in most countries that a well qualified Australian librarian could probably get a job anywhere and British qualifications would now add little to his or her chances of doing so.

The Board therefore considers that the original object for which the L.A.A. originally sought reciprocity no longer applies, and that there appear to be no other substantial advantages to be gained by the L.A.A. from seeking a new basis of reciprocity, nor disadvantages to the L.A.A. from the ending of the old basis.

7. STATEMENT ON GRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS

Enquiries received by the Board show that there is some misunderstanding of the purport of the Statement on Graduate Qualifications.

The Statement does NOT state that new entrants to the profession will at some date be required to be graduates; it does NOT state, nor imply, that a degree will be a requirement for candidates for the Registration Examination; it does NOT state, nor imply, that at some future date the method of qualifying will be through a post graduate diploma course or a degree in librarianship.

What it says is—

“ Therefore the Board considers that unless the Association, within the not distant future, requires all new entrants to *full professional standing* to be not only qualified in librarianship but also graduates ”

This means *only* that from some date to be determined by the General Council, before a member could be elected to full professional standing in the Association, he would have had to pass both the Registration and a degree examination, in either order, and by any method of full time, part time or private study.

The Board wishes to state explicitly that its views and policy are accurately and fully expressed in the quotation above. It hopes that this will reassure any, particularly young, non-graduate student librarians, who may have been alarmed by a misunderstanding of the Association's intentions.

The Board received at its last meeting an enquiry as to whether it would approve the establishment of, and accord recognition to, a training school in one State Library for non-professional staff. The Board considers that non-professional staff have an important, indeed an essential role, in larger libraries at least, but it does not consider that their training needs can best be met by an emasculated form of professional study. It considers that the training of non-professional staff to perform efficiently their duties in a particular library is the responsibility of the employing authority or State Library authority and is to be clearly distinguished from the “ Examination, Certification and Registration of Librarians ” which comprise the terms of reference of the Board. It would emphasise that entry to the staff of a library does not constitute entry into the profession of librarianship, and that professional education is appropriate only to those who have both the qualities for and the wish to embrace librarianship as a profession.