

# **REVIEW OF LIS CURRICULA IN NIGERIA AND WAY FORWARD: AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA EXPERIENCE**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper provides an overview of curriculum review in the Department of Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Since its inception in 1968 with Diploma and Bachelor of Library Science programmes, the Department has taken curriculum review as a continuous exercise. All the reviews done by the Department are in response to the ever-changing information needs of the Nigerian society. The Bachelor of Library Science programme has not only expanded but has also metamorphosed into Bachelor of Library and Information Science, leading to the change of the name of the Department to Department of Library and Information Science.*

*The postgraduate programme has also been reviewed frequently leading to the creation of Postgraduate Diploma in Information Management and Master in Information Management, as well as creating M.Sc Information Science out of the existing Master of Library Science.*

*Staff and facilities needed to implement the changing curriculum contents have indeed increased significantly, with the staff possessing required qualifications and skills to execute new curricula. Facilities and equipments in the computer laboratory and library workshop have been upgraded regularly to support any curriculum review*

*As a way forward, the Department intends to concentrate on Postgraduate programme, making it more in depth and highly specialized to meet the NUC new strategic plan for Nigerian Universities, as well as creating research groups and areas*

# INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Overall mission of any academic programme is to prepare students for life-long intellectual pursuits and professionalism. Elements of academic programme are the: need, objectives, contents, organization, methods and facilities
- ❖ **Definition of curriculum**. Muhammed (2006:1) noted that as educators broadened their view they progressively review the concept of curriculum from schools plan for all the learning experience the learner is expected to engage in under the guidance of the school to total environment in which education takes place, including all the subject studies activities guidance and extra-curricula

Curriculum as Madkson (2006:78) observed must not only be holistic and multidisciplinary but should be “unfretted by pre-established rules” and in conditions of constant change and unpredictability responsive. This is why Lawal (2006:3) view curricula as the nerve centre for relating the various facets of change in the environment.

# THE NEED FOR LIS PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

- ❖ Realized since 1941 when Nigerian were sent abroad to attend courses organized for West African library staff in Ghana and Britain, where they obtained in both places British ALA Certificate.

However, a significant break through was achieved when a library school was established on a regional basis for the whole of West Africa at Ibadan.

- ❖ After the establishment of the University of Ibadan Library School, the need for more library training institutions became apparent, subsequently departments of library science were established at A.B.U., Zaria, University of Nigeria, Nsuka, Bayero University, Kano, University of Maiduguri, e.t.c.
- ❖ the 1990s witnessed an upsurge in the establishment of library and information science schools across the country in both Federal and State Universities as well as in Colleges of education and Polytechnics. Thus by the year 2002, there were no fewer than 16 university based library schools in Nigeria.

- ❖ Ibrahim (2007:3) observes that despite this long years of their establishment, library schools in Nigeria are still clearly in their early stage of development; *displaying inadequacies in funding, staffing, infrastructure, e.t.c..*
- ❖ Lawal (2003) provided an extensive review of library education in Nigeria, including discussions on the issue of curriculum, going as far as comparing the curricula of some library schools in the country. He however *lamented the uncoordinated design and implementations of these curricula*, which he attributed to the present *discrepancies in curriculum objectives, contents and implementation* among the library schools in the country.
- ❖ Equally concern with the above, the Nigerian Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) themed its 2007 biennial conference “Standardization of Library and Information Science Programme in Nigeria.” The Conference concluded among others that there is the urgent need for NALISE, Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Library Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and other stakeholders to urgently come together to fashion out standards for Library and Information Science programme.


## ESTABLISHMENT OF LIS PROGRAMME AT A.B.U., Z

- Is credited to the popular Sharr report, which did not only recommend the establishment of the programme but went further to propose the type of programmes to be offered in the library school. His report according to Ibrahim (2004:5) undoubtedly allowed the department to begin its life with a firm vision of its mission. The vision of the department as pointed out by Grey – Theriot (1982) was based on the needs firstly of Northern Nigeria, then Nigeria and Africa as a whole.
- This vision, according to Olden (1982:2) is a *very significant feature* of the Department, because it was the *first library school in the country to provide a professional qualification in librarianship at first degree level*. According to him the first degree is the best basic professional programme for producing librarians in Africa, especially in countries where the profession is expanding rapidly

# THE FIRST DEPARTMENT'S CURRICULUM

- ✓ the Department started with two programmes, namely:  
Bachelor of Library Science and Diploma in Library Science  
The Bachelor of Library Science (BLS) was a three –year degree programme
- ✓ In each year of the 3-year programme students were expected to offer library science subjects and two subsidiaries subject drawn from the faculties of Education and of Arts and Social Sciences.  
The courses offered by students were as follows:
- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Year - Organization and Management of Libraries
  - Cataloguing and Classification
  - + 2 subsidiaries courses
- ✓ 2<sup>nd</sup> Year - Organization and Management of Libraries
  - Cataloguing and Classification
  - Bibliography
  - + a course from each of the same subsidiaries
- ✓ 3<sup>rd</sup> year - Organization and Management of Libraries
  - Cataloguing and classification
  - Bibliography
  - Documentation

## FIRST DEPARTMENT'S CURRICULUM Cont.

- ✓ There was also optional subsidiary leading to the award of Graduate Certificate in Education, and Transliteration
  - ✓ subsidiary courses offered included Education, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, English, History, Geography and French ( was compulsory)
  - ✓ With the rapid expansion of the Department and increase in the number of staff, the Department had course to increase the number of courses offered. This was done mainly through subdividing and reorganizing large courses and through the introduction of new courses. Among the courses introduced were Reference service; Children literature, Administration of various types of libraries, Book production; Research method and a Project (an independent research work conducted by students under the supervision of a staff member.
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## DIPLOMA IN LIBRARY SCIENCE

This is a two-year programme leading to the award of Diploma in Library Science (DLS).

The courses offered were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year:-
  - Library organization
  - Cataloguing and Classification
  - Library routines
  
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year:-
  - Cataloguing and classification
  - Bibliography and documentation
  
- Later- the Diploma Programme also expanded leading to the creation of new courses such as Technical service, Reference service, Library work for young people and practical work in libraries

## THE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ BLS : GCE with passes in 5 subjects of which 2 had to be at 'A' level; or GCE with passes in 4 subjects of which 3 had to be at 'A' level; or a pass in the final examinations of the School of Basic Studies of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria  
Grade II Teacher's Certificate with merit or credit in relevant subjects; WASC with credit in relevant subjects; HSC with subsidiary pass  
Diploma in Library Science with 60% mark in the final examinations.
  
- ❖ DLS  
GCE with passes in 5 subjects at 'O' level  
WASC with credit or distinction in 5 subjects  
Grade II Teacher's Certificate with merit or credit in 5 subjects other than teaching practice + A credit in English.

# MASTER OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

The programme was designed to both full-and part-time and involved

course work and a thesis. The courses under this programme were divided into two:

- For those with BLS, the courses offered are as follows:

Research Methodology

And 3 courses from

Advance reference service

Comparative librarianship

Achieves administration

Communication studies

Library administration of EITHER university, public Or special libraries

Bibliography and literature of EITHER humanities, social sciences, Or science and technology

Documentation/information science

- For non-BLS Students  
Research Methodology  
Organization of knowledge  
Library and the community  
Reference service  
Administration of libraries, and  
EITHER documentation, Or Book production and history of  
the book, Or Bibliography and literature of specific field, Or  
Archives administration.
- In addition to the above listed courses both BLS and non-BLS  
students must offer two faculty base courses: Educational  
statistics and Educational Research Methodology, and  
complete a thesis.  
The Entrance requirement was BLS degree or a degree in any  
other field of study

## THE Ph.D PROGRAMME

The programme was established in the 1980/81 sessions. The programme is a combination of taught courses and theses on the American pattern. It is specifically designed to provide an advanced education leading to specialization and leadership in the field of Librarianship, and to promote independent and in-depth research resulting in a substantial contribution to knowledge.

Entrance to the programme requires an MLS degree. The courses offered were:

Library and Information Science

Administration in Higher Education

Archives Administration

Communication Studies

The publishing industry and the Book Trade plus three faculty based courses – Advance statistics, Advance Research Methodology and Advance Educational Thought, and a Dissertation

## ❖ STAFFING

the Department of Library Science's first set of staff; four in number came from the university library. Librarian Ahmadu Bello University, was appointed as the first Head of Department. All were part-time.

The first full-time staff, two in number took up their posts at the start of the 1969/70 session..

the bulk of the staff were foreigners: Britain, Pakistan, United State and Ireland.

## ❖ STUDENT

the number of applications for places on the Department programme has always been far in excess of the number of students who could be admitted.

The majority of the students admitted into the programme had worked previously as teachers. The students came from various states through out of the country with only a handful of non-Nigerians.

## ❖ FACILITIES

had sufficient offices for its staff and two lecture rooms. The Department tried to secure a separate library to serve as the departmental library as well as laboratory for students practical. However, this could not be achieved and instead the faculty's library was used.

## **THE FIRST CURRICULUM REVIEW**

In 1987 the Department began its first major curriculum review as a result of the introduction of the Course Credit System (CCS) in compliance with the National University Commission (NUC) minimum standard. Under this new dispensation, the BLS programme was expanded to a four year degree programme. Students with different qualifications can gain admission at different entry levels. Candidates with DLS, NCE and IJMB start at 200 level their counterpart with 5 passes at '0' level and an acceptable pass in the university matriculation examination (UME) start at 100 levels.

Accordingly, students from both levels are expected to earn credit units as below before graduation.

|                         | 100 level | 200 levels |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Core course             | = 54      | =50        |
| Cognate                 | = 44      | =20        |
| Gens Courses            | = 07      | =07        |
| Restrictive Electives   | = 07      | =07        |
| Unrestrictive Electives | =08       | =06        |
| Total:                  | =120      | =90        |

## ❖ STAFFING

The staffing situation during this period increased with number reaching a peak of 17 and by early 1980, the quality of staff has improved remarkably. Four of those on study leave have acquired their PhD and already back in the department. The period also witnesses the promotion of many staff to various senior cadres.

## ❖ FACILITIES

With regards to facilities, it is noteworthy that this period also witnessed a remarkable increase in both infrastructure and facilities. It is in this period that the long waged battle for securing a library for the Dept was won. Subsequently, a library was established to serve as a public library to the community surrounding the University, as well as a laboratory for students' practical. The library is funded by the main library of the University and through an annual donation of books via British Book Aid International (BAI). Working tools such as Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), Sear's Lists of Subject

## **CURRICULUM MODIFICATION**

To meet up with the rapid expansion in the national economy and produce librarians and information specialist who are good in the collection, organization retrieval and dissemination of all forms of recorded knowledge irrespective of the format and medium/channel of delivery. And also librarians, who could design, develop, operate and apply total quality management and information resource management techniques using the information and communication technologies to cope with the intensity of the complex information needs and demands in the emerging information age, the Department added the following new specialized courses into the content of the existing curriculum:

LIBS 211: Introduction to Telecommunication

LIBS 216: Operating Systems

LIBS 218: Media Resources and Services in Information Work

LIBS 303: Information and Communication Technology

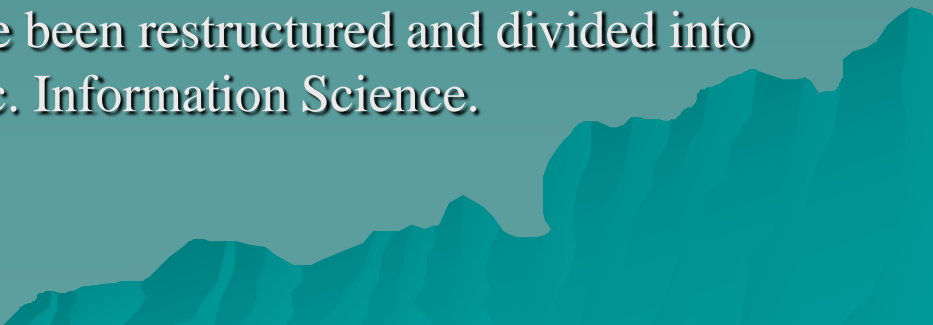
LIBS 309: Social Science Information System and Services

LIBS 313: Science and Technology Information Sources and Services


LIBS 323: Introduction to Application Packages\

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## CURRICULUM REVIEW CONTINUED

- the Department carries out curriculum review periodically, especially when there is the need to do so.
  - In line with the above and in response to the growing Information Industry and future needs of Information workers, the Department created two programmes:
  - the Postgraduate Diploma in Information Management (PGDIM) and
  - the Masters in Information Management (MIM).
  - Both programmes are part-time and designed specifically for those graduate Librarians who want to update their knowledge in this ever changing Information World and those with Higher National Diploma (HND), and graduate non-librarians working or having interest in Information work.
  - The MLS and Ph.D programmes have been restructured and divided into two pathways: the MLS and the M.Sc. Information Science.
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## COURSE CONTENTS

- ✓ The MLS pathway maintained the library science courses, including new courses such as Library Application Software, Computers in Library and Information Work, Information Technology, etc.
  - ✓ The M.Sc. Information Science pathway has entirely new set of courses which include among others, Information System, Analysis and Design, Information Network and Networking, Infometrics, etc.
  - ✓ The idea for creating these pathways was borne out of the need to have specific area of specialization.
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## THE NEW TREND IN THE DEPARTMENT

- ❖ NUC's Strategic Plan for Nigerian Universities to concentrate on PG programme with a view to making it more in depth and highly specialized.
  - ❖ By breaking the MLS programme into two, the Department has already gone ahead to radically address the NUC aspiration.
  - ❖ And already the Department in its way to creating 2 additional pathways: the M.A. Records and Archival Management and Publishing and Book trade.
  - ❖ It is interesting to note that when the idea of creating, M.Sc. Information Science out of the MLS programme was presented and approved by the University Directorate of Academic Planning, many departments in the University also followed suit.
  - ❖ Another new trend which the Department is set to implement is the idea of creating research groups and research areas. One of the goals of this innovation is to be able to address research problems holistically, thereby generating and increasing literature in those research areas.
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## ❖ STAFFING

The staffing situation continued to reflect the new change in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Apart from acquiring computer skills, some staff also have knowledge of some library application software, networking skills, operating systems, etc. In addition, the Department also started to utilize the services of Lecturers from related departments, such as Mass Communication, Mathematics and Business Administration, and Media Specialist.

## ❖ FACILITIES

the Department provides different lecture rooms for Ph.D, Masters/ MIM, PGDIM. Each of the lecture room is furnished with reading tables and chairs, air conditioners, rug. Computers and Internet connectivity are also provided in the classes.

### LIBRARY WORKSHOP

the Department established a workshop room at the Abdullahi Muhammad Library. The workshop has most of the tools needed to conduct library tasks. These tools have just been acquired by the University for the Department and are current. They include: LCCS, DDC, UDC, LCSH, SLSH, AACR II, Transfer foil, Accession machine, Double sided Steel Shelf, etc.

## ❖ COMPUTER LABORATORY

Established in 1999, has now been expanded.

- ❖ Practical that are Information Science related are conducted here.
- ❖ Both undergraduate and postgraduate students are allowed to browse and do their assignment freely.
- ❖ Apart from the over 30 computers in the laboratory, there are also other ICTs equipment such as Multi Media Overhead Projector DECC, Scanners 3 size HP, Sony Digital Cam Coder, Digital Camera 256 MB with ex MC, Computer & Flat Screen monitor, Flat Screen Television, etc.

## ❖ EXTRA-CURRICULA ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Linkage programme, which it established with SOAS, Emporia and eIFNet. In the linkage programme resources was shared and staff exchanged.
  - ❖ The students are now more involved in such extra-curricula activities as sports, club, tutorial, etc. They are also more involved in SIWES; annual production of newsletter, year book, etc.
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