

1. Bachelor of Library and Information studies - an Overview of the program

Information is a vital commodity that empowers people to make choices in all areas of development. All sectors in the society and activities of individuals depend on the efficient handling of information. There is a rapidly growing demand of information by a wide range of users world-wide including educators, researchers, planners, policy makers, managers, technicians, business people, and the public at large - for their successful functioning. Meanwhile, information and communication technology (ICT) revolution is currently changing social as well as economic activities by providing opportunities and challenges for accelerating development. However, like most other Developing Countries, Tanzania is still an information-poor country because eighty percent of her citizens living in rural areas have limited access to information. Tanzania can leapfrog from an information-poor country to an information-rich society if it utilizes fully the potential in ICT. Efforts to make relevant, accurate, timely and adequate information available to the intended users to cope with the fast expanding flood of information require better means of handling information.

Setting up modern information systems and services for the purpose of enhancing the information sector, however, requires resource inputs of various types. Among them are ICT facilities, funds, appropriate locations, and the most important, is human resource. In Tanzania, manpower trained in Library and Information Studies (LIS) is essential not only to handle the collection, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information, using modern technologies of information handling, but also to facilitate friendly integration between information systems and information users by developing proper infrastructure. New technologies and concepts are being developed and new ways of utilising older and new technologies are being constantly developed. Thus, modern information professionals need to have access to the most current knowledge related to concepts, issues, trends and technologies in all activities regarding information generation, acquisition, storage and retrieval, processing and dissemination. Therefore, to meet this end, the highly trained manpower in LIS disciplines is crucial to enhance the national efforts of building an information society in Tanzania as part of National Development Vision 2025.

Several information professionals as well as others in seminars, workshops, research findings, and various published and unpublished reports have time and again expressed the shortage of skilled manpower for the efficient management of information in Tanzania. One of the main reasons put forward for the chronic inadequacy of information specialists in Tanzania is lack of fully developed educational and training programmes, at different levels, in the information profession disciplines especially in Library and Information Science. It is in this regard that the establishment of Bachelor of Arts in Library and Information Studies (BALIS) degree programme at Tumaini University – Dar es Salaam College (TUDARCO), has been initiated. This programme will particularly address the demand for professional librarians, documentalists, archivists, information scientists, ICT and electronic commerce experts, to gradually reduce the existing digital divide in both rural and urban areas in Tanzania.

PROGRAMME JUSTIFICATION

- Because information is a very powerful tool for national development in the current information age, there is a great need for Tanzania to leapfrog from being an information-poor country to an information-rich society by enabling the majority of the population to access information and thus reduce the existing acute digital divide in the country. One of the essential activities required for achieving this goal is to establish Library and Information Studies (LIS) programme at degree level.
- The LIS programme is an appropriate professional training because Tanzania needs highly qualified information professionals who can precisely perform various roles in the information sector including planning, management, marketing, effective implementation of policies related to information, and development of information resources and infrastructures. Thus, this programme aims to meet the existing human resource needs in the country.
- Today, graduates of Library and Information Studies want to work not only as librarians, but also as information brokers, database administrators, systems designers or analysts, information research consultants, marketing specialists, electronic publishers, electronic commerce experts, and the like. There is a great need therefore to design a wide programme (that is BALIS) which will cater for preparing Tanzanians to meet this quickly expanding job market and new roles for information professionals for enhancing information industry in Tanzania.
- There is a pool of candidates with Diploma in Library and Information Studies (LIS) in the country. These candidates are para-professionals in LIS disciplines, and thus, need degree level programme to advance their qualifications for becoming modern information professionals.
- Undergraduate studies in Library and Information Studies are needed to prepare candidates for postgraduate studies in Library and Information Studies.
- So far, there is no institution of higher learning in Tanzania that offers Bachelor of Arts in Library and Information Studies (BALIS) programme.

OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this programme is to train and produce modern **Information Professionals** for performing various technical as well as administrative duties in libraries; archives; documentation, information or computer centres; tertiary, research, publishing or media institutions; government departments; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); international institutions; business enterprises; Internet service providers; and/or to cater for self-employment. This means, the coverage of the candidates who are expected to graduate from this programme

include librarians, document lists, archivists, information managers, information officers, information policy analysts, information brokers, information research consultants, database administrators, trainers or instructors, electronic commerce experts, and ICT experts, such as information systems designers, information systems analysts and Website designers.

In this regard, the programme aims to provide theoretical and practical understanding of better information handling using the latest technology. It emphasizes the information professional's routines and practical work in the current and future information and communication technology (ICT) environment. Thus, on completion of this programme, students should be able to:

- Understand the nature and role of information in the modern thinking and its impact on socio-economic development activities in the society.
- Understand the global digital divide and how to reduce barriers hindering current national efforts for building an information society in Tanzania.
- Identify and apply various formats for information acquisition, processing and dissemination using current information systems.
- Explore and analyse information users' needs and work out on solutions to curb these needs.
- Initiate, market, promote and provide appropriate information services to potential information users.
- Cope with new roles, demands and challenges within the emerging job market for new types of information professionals.
- Play an active role in the invention or development of information resources especially ICT facilities in order to reduce the deficiency currently existing in the information industry in the country.
- Understand the current electronic business structures and the use of ICTs as tools for initiating and maintaining the automation of commercial transactions.
- Conduct research or instruct others to conduct research using electronic resources.