

## Applications of ICT in Libraries

### Higher National Unit DP5C 34 Locating Information on Behalf of Clients

#### Pre-Course Questionnaire

The unit Locating Information on Behalf of Clients is designed to guide candidates to work logically through the steps of a reference enquiry, typical for a public library, using Internet resources.

Candidate Name	
Contact Details	
Date	

## Outcome 1

### Define the precise nature of the enquiry in conjunction with the client

This outcome relates to the initial definition of the information required by the client. You may conduct a reference interview with the client face-to-face, by telephone or through an exchange of e-mails. Whichever means of communication are used, the reference interview is a two-way interaction, where you have to take responsibility for the efficiency of the communication process. At the end of the reference interview you should be confident that the nature of the enquiry has been fully explored and that information required by the client has been specifically defined.

#### A. Reference interview techniques

Factors: Good communication skills appropriate language body language in face to face interviews feedback for telephone interviews clear written communication for e-mail interviews establish the client's need for the information find the client's starting point consider special needs.

Please rate your experience of applying interview techniques while carrying out reference interviews.

No experience	
Some experience	
Competent	

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

#### B. Open and closed questions

Do you understand the difference between open and closed questions and have you had practice in using them while carrying out reference interviews?

Yes	
No	

Tick one box

#### C. Nature of the information to be provided — quantity, level, format

Factors: seemingly identical requests can often demand very different quantities of information level may be determined by client's age, educational level, specialist knowledge or linguistic ability format could include information to be viewed on screen by client, printouts, audio or video.

Please rate your experience of estimating the quantity, level and format of information required by a client while carrying out reference interviews.

No experience	
Some experience	
Competent	

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

D. Constraints — deadlines for completion, currency of information and language

Factors: urgency of the enquiry    setting deadline dates    dynamic and static information  
information only available in a foreign language    is it possible that the required information  
could be found more easily without carrying out an Internet search.

Please rate your experience of evaluating the constraints for a search while carrying out  
reference interviews.

No experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

In the box below, briefly relate an example of a reference interview you have carried out.

## Outcome 2

### Create a search strategy to fully satisfy the client's enquiry

This outcome relates to the ability to choose appropriate key words to use as search terms in an Internet search and to use these in a logically structured search on the client's behalf. You need to know how best to use the various Internet search tools.

#### A. Choice of search terms

Factors: breaking the topic down into component parts to find keywords methods of combining the keywords lateral thinking to find keywords including synonyms and related terms searching within a website.

Please rate your experience in working out suitable search terms for an Internet search.

No experience	
Some experience	
Competent	

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

#### B. Structure of search

Factors: choosing which Internet resource to use for the search the value of repeating the search using alternative Internet resources knowledge of useful individual websites knowledge of the common web address (URL) suffixes.

Please rate your experience of structuring an Internet search.

No experience	
Some experience	
Competent	

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

#### C. Common search engines, directories and Metacrawlers

Factors: use of a variety of search engines use of directories use of metacrawlers differences between search engine, directory and metacrawler.

Please rate your experience in the use of common search engines, directories and Metacrawlers.

No experience	
Some experience	
Competent	

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

#### D. Portals

Can you give examples of Internet Portals and indicate how you might use them to find specialised information?

Yes	
No	

Tick one box

E. Bibliographic databases

Factors: using bibliographic databases to find information about print materials and other media commercial subscription services, eg [www.booksinprint.com](http://www.booksinprint.com) awareness of the databases to which your library subscribes.

Please rate your experience in the interrogation of bibliographic databases .

No experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

In the box below, briefly relate an example of a search strategy which you have created.

### Outcome 3

Evaluate the results of the search in terms of validity of information found and its appropriateness in meeting the client's needs

This outcome relates to the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the information search. You need to be able to evaluate the results of your searches objectively in terms of validity of information found and its appropriateness in meeting the client's needs.

#### A. Validity of information — reliability, accuracy and currency

Factors: judging reliability of web based information on expertise and reputation of website owner or contributors detecting bias in a website and seeking alternative websites giving opposing points of view thus providing a balanced coverage detecting websites which have a restrictive emphasis and noting it for the client cross-checking of information with alternative websites to obtain evidence for accuracy of results methods of establishing likely currency of information found on a website.

Please rate your experience in establishing the reliability of information found during an Internet search.

No experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

#### B. Success of search in terms of client's requirements — sufficiency, format and language

Factors: the amount of information provided the format(s) required meeting of deadlines currency of information is information in particular languages is required or to be excluded.

Please rate your experience in establishing the success of a search in terms of the client's requirements.

No experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

C. Search results for presentation to client, structure, storage, retrieval, future updating

Factors: necessity of presenting the raw data in a structured way which will facilitate understanding by client client should be informed of the source(s) of the information found usefulness of archiving the search results in such a way that the search can be retrieved by appropriate key terms importance of saving not just the search results but also the search strategy to repeat search at a later date reasons why the information might need to be retrieved in future.

Please rate your experience in preparing search results for a client giving due attention to structure, storage, retrieval and future updating.

No experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick one box and highlight any area in the factors where you lack experience.

In the box below, briefly relate an example where you have evaluated the results of an Internet search in terms of validity of information found and its appropriateness in meeting a client's needs.