

2B—THE CHANGING NATURE OF LIS EDUCATION #1

Academic Librarians and the PhD

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Should the PhD be a requirement for academic librarians? While faculty status is not universal across Canada, it is a hard-won recognition (and obligation) for many academic librarians. As “scholar-practitioners”, we have a valued tradition of service (practitioner) but increasingly we also teach full-time and undertake extensive research (scholar)—exactly the model of our faculty colleagues. And yet the “terminal degree” in our field remains the Master’s degree. Are we fully prepared for the new roles academic librarians are encouraged to undertake? Is the PhD credential less an “academic ticket” and more essential training? While not all disciplines within the university require a PhD, the LIS field is more closely aligned with those that do. Drawing from the literature and the outcomes of a forum at the 2017 Ontario Library Association SuperConference, a case will be made for the PhD as the terminal degree for academic librarians.