Making CILIP connections at the University of Edinburgh

When **Christine Love-Rodgers** decided to embark on Fellowship, she wanted to find out if other staff were doing professional registration, and explains how this led to making CILIP connections at the University of Edinburgh.

IT all started with a question. I was considering options for mid-career professional development, and an article in *CILIP Update*[1] prompted me to think about Fellowship as a possibility. And I asked, where are the others in my organisation who are doing CILIP professional registration? The University of Edinburgh has 14,265 staff, of whom 708 staff are in the Information Services Group providing converged library, IT and e-learning services. The university also offers a CILIP-validated postgraduate course, the MSc in Book History and Material Culture. So I thought there must be others. But I found them hard to find. From where I was standing, CILIP professional registration was not visible within my organisation.

My next step was to send an Information Services-wide email asking about interest in CILIP professional registration, but this produced only a handful of responses.[2] I then contacted CILIP HQ to ask if they could identify how many CILIP members there were at the University of Edinburgh. Data from CILIP's membership database identified a total 29 staff at the University of Edinburgh as individual members, seven

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with current CILIP Professional Registration (all at chartered level), 10 who had applied to begin the CILIP Professional Registration process and 12 with no professional registration who had not applied to begin the process. (However as not all CILIP members choose to disclose information about who their employer is to CILIP, there may well be more CILIP members at the university.)

Engaging senior level support

I wanted to raise the profile of CILIP professional registration within the university and to get together with the others in my organisation who were undertaking profes-

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sional registration or were interested in it. To be successful, I realised I needed to engage senior management at Edinburgh to ensure high level support. I took a paper to the Library Management Team meeting outlining the benefits of CILIP professional registration to the library and linked the scheme to the university's strategic aims. For instance, a key strategic aim within Information Services at the University of Edinburgh is to contribute to national and international leadership within the library sector.[3] As candidates for CILIP professional registration are required to increase their professional awareness of these wider issues, and have opportunities to take roles in influencing wider issues through CILIP's professional networks, CILIP professional registration provides a route for leadership development.

Building reflective practice

At the University of Edinburgh, we expect our students to be reflective learners and to develop digital skills to collect evidence and reflect on their learning. I pointed out that the University of Edinburgh's Learning and Teaching Strategy sets out that it will "recruit and nurture excellent staff by ensuring opportunity for reflection, development and innovation".[4] In a recent article, Sheila Corrall points out that the reflective processes required for CILIP registration are critical to professional practice for library staff engaged in supporting and delivering learning.[5] I proposed that the CILIP Registration process provides a well-established and supported informa-

tion-domain specific pathway to build and embed these reflective skills. The reflective processes required by CILIP registration can also support the annual review process at the university, as CPD logs and reflective statements can be used as part of annual review.

Building CILIP into the organisation

I received support from senior managers to go ahead, and was asked to promote CILIP professional registration as one of a number of professional pathways that could be followed, alongside IT Service Management (ITIL), and professional registration with the Museums Association and the Archives and Records Association.

I created a web page which set CILIP in this context[6] and explained the benefits of professional registration. I had already begun work on creating a local support network at the university for those interested in CILIP professional registration. Which sounds ambitious, but I simply started by inviting anyone interested to have a coffee with me. Over the last six months we have had monthly coffee meet ups and it's been great to meet staff from right across Information Services,

from Help Services, Acquisitions and Metadata Services, Archives and Special Collections, and the Data Library. Because working schedules and helpdesk commitments mean that not everyone can meet in person, I set up an internal email list, CILIP-Connections, and a University of Edinburgh group on the CILIP VLE to keep in touch online.

Changes at CILIP

Raising my head above the parapet and identifying myself as someone organising for CILIP meant that I started to get enquiries from other staff about CILIP, including requests to talk to new staff as part of their induction programme. As well as new staff, I've had questions from long serving staff who were once members undertaking professional registration, but had not continued. They often discover that CILIP has changed since the time they were members. For some, the reduction in annual membership costs is a game changer. For others, creating an online portfolio for chartership rather than a printed booklet makes it feel more possible. Some staff have been in touch who have never been members of CILIP and do not have a postgraduate library qualification, but do have higher academic

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qualifications and have already built a library career. These staff don't want to undertake another masters degree, but are interested in the professional validation of their library experience that CILIP provides. Changes to CILIP in recent years have made them more welcome.

Making CILIP Connections: the event
After contacting CILIP HQ about membership data, I'd been offered the opportunity for a CILIP speaker to come to the university, as part of our institutional membership. I organised a lunchtime event with a free lunch (kindly supported by the Library Management Team), which was fully booked. Despite severe weather conditions caused by Storm Caroline, 15 attended, from across Information Services at the University of Edinburgh. Four speakers from the university shared their stories of professional registration at certification, chartership, revalidation and fellowship level, and I spoke briefly about ways to get together with others interested in CILIP. Finally Helen Berry from CILIP (after a mammoth effort getting to Edinburgh in the storm) spoke about CILIP professional registration and its value. Positive feedback from the event stressed the value of "Hearing other colleagues experiences with CILIP", as well as "Clearing up misunderstandings about CILIP professional registration".

Creative collaborations
At the beginning of this process I had had several conversations with a colleague from the Educational Design and Engagement team, who is leading a project to support learning technologists to become Certified Members of the Association for Learning Technology (CMALT).[7] We realised that there was much in common between CMALT and MCLIP, which share the methodology of demonstrating professional development through a reflective online portfolio, which recognises and endorses work-based learning. My colleague was running reflective writing workshops as part of her CMALT project and she invited me to include CILIP candidates in these sessions, which had some spare capacity. Some staff in the Educational Design and Engagement team have a postgraduate Information Studies qualification and are interested in also pursuing CILIP Professional Registration. So CILIP professional registration has generated creative discussions about professional development across our different teams.

Going beyond the library
One thing I have learned is that I need to look for university CILIP members

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who are outside the library. Of the 29 CILIP members originally identified in the university, I believe fewer than I expected are actually based in the library. My own mentee is a Research and Data Information Officer based in one of the Schools of the University, and I suspect CILIP members are undertaking knowledge management, digital scholarship and other information roles advertised which are based within academic units, rather than Information Services.

I was delighted to hear our recently-arrived Professor of Digital Cultural Heritage, Melissa Terras, speak out for the value of CILIP's Professional Knowledge and Skills Base in an academic committee meeting recently. I ran a stall for CILIP at the university's Digital Day of Ideas in May this year aiming to make connections with CILIP members and prospective members in academic communities.

Future connections
Going forward, CILIP HQ confirmed in May that there are now 32 CILIP

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members identifying themselves as employed by the University of Edinburgh. That's a 10 per cent increase from September 2018, and I'm pleased that 13 of these members are enrolled for professional registration, up from 10 last year. I now have 21 people registered in my CILIP Connections email group, the majority of whom are not CILIP members but are interested in CILIP professional registration, so I know there is potential for further growth.

I had started out with the simple idea (or so I thought) of finding others at the University of Edinburgh interested in CILIP professional registration. However I've been aware all along that CILIP professional registration is also supported regionally and I expect that, going forward, I need to ensure we have links with these regional networks in Edinburgh and Scotland. And as I'm hearing from professional registration candidates that it can be challenging finding a mentor, I'm aiming to foster mentor development as much as I can by encouraging my chartered colleagues to register as mentors. Finally, I'd like to follow the example of my Fellowship mentor who is part of a Cambridge "Ring of Fellowship" and create an Edinburgh "Ring of Fellowship" for candidates following this professional registration track.

Where are the others?
During my professional career I've had times of growth when I've been professionally active, and other times when family life has meant professional activity has been put on hold. But throughout all of that time I never stopped believing that the professional values that CILIP stands for, and the professional registration process that develops them, matter. By asking that question: "Where are the others?" and taking simple steps to make connections with them I've discovered that other colleagues in my workplace believe that too. I believe that CILIP membership offers more as part of a community than it does if you are alone.

If you would like to be one of a group doing CILIP professional registration rather than on your own, try asking "Where are the others?" And then go and find them. **IP**

References
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4 University of Edinburgh Learning & Teaching Strategy. http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf
5 Corrall, S. 2017. "Crossing the threshold: reflective practice in information literacy development". *Journal of Information Literacy*, 11 (1), pp23-53.
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