

**The ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary:
Survey and Recommendations.
June 2011**

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Context

This report grew out of the 2009 ANLTC/Swets Research Award. The author was commissioned by the ANLTC to carry out a survey on the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary, following her application for the 2009 Research Award.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the ANLTC for funding to carry out this research and for providing me with this developmental opportunity. I am particularly grateful to all those who took the time to complete the survey. Thank you also to Avril Patterson and Petra Schurenhofner for sharing their experiences of winning the award with me. I very much appreciate the support of the ANLTC Representatives in each of the libraries surveyed for their support in distributing the survey information and encouraging their staff to complete the survey.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at NUI Maynooth in particular the Deputy Librarian Helen Fallon for her encouragement and support.

Marie G. Cullen

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Background and Context to this project

The Academic and National Library Training Co-operative (ANLTC) Library Assistant Bursary was launched in 1996. At that time there were limited professional development opportunities nationally for staff at library assistant and equivalent grades. The award aimed to go some way to addressing this, giving the winner a budget for their professional development which could be utilised in a variety of ways. Established as a biennial award, its stated aim is to "To promote and support staff development."¹ The bursary was established prior to or in the early days of the establishment of staff development units – generally under Human Resources - within the member institutions.

Initially a CONUL award, the bursary was funded by CONUL and was open to staff from institutions that were full members of CONUL. The ANLTC took over the running and funding of the award at the request of CONUL and extended eligibility to all ANLTC-member institutions. Initially application involved submission of a 1,500 word essay/proposal outlining how the applicant would spend the bursary on their personal development, if s/he should be awarded the bursary. The sum awarded was IR£1,000. This was subsequently increased to €1,500. The required word count was also reduced from 1,500 to 1,000 words in order to encourage submissions. Winners have eighteen months to carry out their proposals and submit a written report to the ANLTC committee. There have been five winners from four Libraries, Irene Hennigan (DCU), Avril Patterson (UCD), Petra Schurenhofer (UCD), Marie Cullen (NUIM) and Maud Conry (NUIG).²

The judging panel – Chairperson of ANLTC, the ANLTC Bursary Co-ordinator, one other member of the ANLTC committee and a representative from CONUL – may decide to offer a second or runner-up award. This is generally half the value of the winner's award and has been allocated on three occasions. All applicants for the bursary receive an acknowledgement, currently in the form of a one-hundred euro voucher. Since 2007, the two winning entrants have received an engraved crystal vase in addition to the financial award.

Since winning the bursary in 2007, I have advised several hopeful applicants. I have also made a formal presentation to library staff from NUI Maynooth and other institutions that wished to attend the presentation in NUI Maynooth. In this presentation I detailed my experience and how I went about writing my proposal and completing my project. I have also spoken about the award at the INULS conference and my report on my research [*The British Library Digital Object Management Programme*](#) is freely available on the ANLTC website at www.anltc.ie/awards.

The ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary has been actively and consistently promoted by senior management

¹ ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary <http://www.anltc.ie/awards/> (accessed 5th May 2011)

² *ibid*

in the Library at NUI Maynooth. Since 2001, there have been entries from NUI Maynooth library staff each time the award has been offered. However despite this encouragement, only a small number of staff from NUI Maynooth have submitted entries to the award each time it has been offered. I wondered why this was, given that the library staff are enthusiastic participants in, in-house training and development and are more than willing to participate in external opportunities for training and development. Clearly staff appreciate the relevance and importance of staff development as a vital aspect of their professional/work life.

The Bursary is financially attractive with an award of fifteen hundred euro. The criteria for making a submission are not particularly prescriptive, thereby giving plenty of scope in terms of the content of proposals. Those making submissions are free to suggest the area of their professional development in which they would like to invest the award.

Overall, the format does not seem to be working satisfactorily. Since the inception of the Bursary application numbers have been very low, with a maximum of four submissions for each incidence of the Bursary, with the exception of 2009 when six submissions were received. With over four hundred and fifty staff eligible to apply, this is a very low submission level. For example, the Library at NUI Maynooth has a staff of approximately fifty and circa thirty of those staff are eligible to submit proposals.

In order to identify the reasons for participation and non-participation, I proposed to conduct an online survey directed at eligible staff, this would include previous winners and runners up and other staff at whom the award is aimed.

It should be noted that ANLTC is not the only organisation that has noticed a difficulty with the uptake of awards. According to the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) “It is noted that in recent years that nominations for these awards have generally been in decline,...”.³ They are currently undertaking a review to identify the reasons and to identify how they can reverse the decline to the benefit of their members.

Scope

The ANLTC currently has thirteen member institutions.⁴ These are Dublin City University, National University of Ireland, Galway, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Queen’s University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Limerick, Dublin Institute of Technology, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Royal Irish Academy, National Library of Ireland and the University of Ulster, Coleraine.

Due to the fact that it has recently joined the ANLTC and the nature of its work, the Royal Irish Academy decided not to participate in the survey on this occasion. The two Universities in Northern Ireland also

³ Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Awards <http://www.alia.org.au/awards/> (accessed 31st May 2011)

⁴ ANLTC Members <http://www.anltc.ie/contacts.htm> (accessed 26th September 2009)

decided not to participate. Both these institutions are tied in with U.K. training and development initiatives, including a wide range of CILIP activity and have not had entrants to the Bursary since ANLTC decided to extend the criteria for entry to include all ANLTC members.

The survey thus covers the academic libraries in the Republic of Ireland (excluding the RIA) and the National Library. It is hoped that the findings and resulting recommendations will be of use to all the ANLTC-member institutions either in part or in full.

Objective

The objective of this research is to develop an understanding of the reasons why Library Assistants and equivalent grades choose to participate or not, in the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary. It is also hoped to capture the activity related to the Bursary undertaken in each institution and the levels of knowledge regarding ANLTC by asking survey questions such as “Do you know what the ANLTC does?”, “Does your Library have an ANLTC contact/representative?” Based on data collected from the online survey, interviews and informal discussions with a former winner, colleagues in my own library and other libraries and importantly based on my own experience as a Library Assistant Bursary winner, recommendations for changes and improvements will be suggested, to increase participation and make the format more attractive to the target group.

Methodology

Bristol Online Survey software, <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/>, was used to design and distribute the survey and it was also used to generate some analysis and tables displaying results.

The survey was conducted in the libraries of the following institutions.

Dublin City University (DCU)

Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)

National Library of Ireland (NLI)

National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)

National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM)

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

Trinity College Dublin (TCD)

University College Cork (UCC)

University College Dublin (UCD)

University of Limerick (UL)

The link to the survey was sent via email to the ANLTC representative in each of the participating libraries.

See Appendix 1. The survey was distributed to library staff at library assistant and equivalent grades by the local ANLTC representative. Two reminders were sent over the period of the survey for distribution by the local ANLTC representative.

Structure of the Survey

The survey was divided into five sections. The sections are listed below.

Section 1: About You

Where do you work in and at what grade? Questions 1 and 2

Section 2: ANLTC

What do you know about the ANLTC in general and within your library? Questions 3 and 4

Section 3: ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary Award

What do you know about the Bursary? Questions 5 to 10

Section 4: The Future

Suggestions for changes to the Bursary which might encourage submissions. Questions 11 to 12

Skills and training which might support and encourage participation.

Section 5: Any other suggestions

Question 13

Overview

Number of respondents: 87

Potential number of respondents: 459

Response rate: 19.0%

Launch date: 26 May 2010

Close date: 17 Jun 2010

Survey software: Bristol Online Surveys - <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/>

Survey: <https://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/nuimaynooth/anltclibraryassistantbursarysurvey>

The response rate was very low at 19%. Among the factors that may have affected the response was the timing of the survey i.e. coming up to the end of the second semester in the institutions surveyed and lack of interest. The number of potential respondents was compiled from figures supplied by the ANLTC representative from each participating library.

The responses to Questions 1 to 10 are listed in the following tables.

Table 1.	Breakdown of responses from each institution
Table 1(i).	Response rate, highest to lowest, by institution based on number of staff eligible to apply
Table 2.	What is your grade title?
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Table 3(i).	Responses to Q. 3 by institution (%)
Table 4.	Does your Library have an ANLTC contact/representative?
Table 4(i).	Breakdown of responses (%) by Library to Q. 4
Table 5.	Have you heard of the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary?
Table 5(i).	Responses to Q. 5 (%)
Table 5a.	If Yes (to Q. 5) from what sources did you hear about it?
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ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary Survey results analysis.

The total number of staff eligible to participate was four hundred and fifty nine of which eighty seven responded. This is a response rate of just under nineteen per cent. The analysis below should be viewed in the context of the response rate.

Results Section 1: About You

Where do you work and at what grade? Questions 1 and 2

Table 1. Breakdown of responses from each institution

1. Where do you work? Please select from the list below.			
Dublin City University:		8.0%	7
Dublin Institute of Technology:		10.3%	9
National Library of Ireland:		2.3%	2
National University of Ireland Galway:		10.3%	9
National University of Ireland Maynooth:		16.1%	14
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland:		8.0%	7
Trinity College Dublin:		17.2%	15
University College Cork:		6.9%	6
University College Dublin:		19.5%	17
University of Limerick:		1.1%	1

Table 1. illustrates the responses from each institution as a percentage of the response rate and as an actual number of respondents. For example the response from RCSI was 8% of the total response and the number of actual respondents was 7.

Table 1(i). Response rate, highest to lowest, by institution based on number of staff eligible to apply.

Institution	No. of Eligible Staff	Actual response	Response as %
RCSI	9	7	77.77%
NUIM	29	14	48.28%
DCU	19	7	36.85%
DIT	42	9	21.43%
NUIG	43	9	20.93%
UCD	99	17	17.35%
TCD	98	15	15.3%
UCC	62	6	9.68%
NLI	30	2	6.66%
UL	28	1	3.57%

Table 1(i). lists the number of staff eligible to participate in the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary and therefore eligible to respond to the survey. The response rate is given as an actual figure and as percentage of the staff eligible to apply from each institution.

Analysis of Question 2 to Question 10

The following analysis is based on a cross tabulation of Questions 2 to Question 10 by Question 1

“Where do you work? Please select from the list below.”

Table 2. What is your grade title?

2. What is your grade title?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
Senior Library Assistant	2	2	0	8	2	1	1	1	5	1	23
Library Assistant	5	7	2	1	11	6	8	4	12	0	56
Other (Please indicate below whether equivalent to Senior Library Assistant or Library Assistant Grade)	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	1	0	0	8
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

The proportion of respondents who were at Senior Library Assistant Grade was almost 26.44 %. The proportion of respondents at Library Assistant grade was just under 64.4%. The balance of respondents fell into either Senior Library Assistant or Library Assistant grade equivalents at 9.12%.

Results Section 2: ANLTC Questions 3 and 4

What do you know about the ANLTC in general and within your library?

Table 3. Do you know what the ANLTC does?

3. Do you know what the ANLTC does?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
No	0	0	2	1	3	3	7	2	4	0	22
Yes	7	9	0	8	11	4	8	4	13	1	65
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

A proportion of staff from seven of the ten institutions surveyed, **did not know (No)** what the ANLTC does? That is 22/87(25%+) staff who responded, **did not know** what the ANLTC does. Almost 75% (65/87) of those who did respond said **Yes**.

In the case of RCSI and TCD the numbers who responded **No** were just slightly less than those who responded **Yes**. Responses from DCU, DIT and UL were 100% **Yes**. It should be noted responses from UL are based on one respondent.

Table 3(i). Responses to Question 3 by institution (%)

Institution	No	Yes
DCU	0%	100%
DIT	0%	100%
NLI	100%	0%
NUIG	11.11%	88.88%
NUIM	21.43%	78.57%
RCSI	42.86%	57.14%
TCD	46.66%	53.33%
UCC	33.33%	66.66%
UCD	23.54%	76.48%
UL	0%	100%

Table 4. Does your Library have an ANLTC contact/Representative?

4. Does your Library have an ANLTC contact representative?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
No	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Yes	7	7	0	9	14	6	6	5	13	0	67
Don't know	0	2	1	0	0	1	9	1	4	0	18
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

67/87 (77%) replied **Yes** to this question. 20/87(23%) of staff answered **No** or **Don't know/Other** to this question.

Table 4(i). Breakdown of responses (%) by Library to Question 4

Institution	No	Yes	Don't Know/ Other
DCU	0%	100%	0%
DIT	0%	77.77%	22.23%
NLI	50%	0%	50%
NUIG	0%	100%	0%
NUIM	0%	100%	0%
RCSI	0%	85.71%	14.29%
TCD	0%	40%	60%
UCC	0%	83.33%	16.67%
UCD	9%	76.47%	23.53%
UL	0%	0%	100%

Results Section 3: ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary Award Questions 5 to 10

Table 5. Have you heard of the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary?

5. Have you heard of the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
No	1	3	2	0	0	3	11	3	2	0	25
Yes	6	6	0	9	14	3	4	3	14	1	60
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

25/87 (28.74%) responded **No**, 60/87 (68.96%) responded **Yes** and 2/87 (2.30%) responded **Don't know**.

Table 5(i). Responses to Question 5 (%)

Institution	No	Yes	Other
DCU	14.29%	85.71%	0%
DIT	33.33%	66.67%	0%
NLI	100%	0%	0%
NUIG	0%	100%	0%
NUIM	0%	100%	0%
RCSI	42.89%	42.89%	14.22
TCD	73.33%	36.67%	0%
UCC	50%	50%	0%
UCD	11.77%	82.35%	5.88%
UL	0%	100%	0%

Table 5a. If Yes (to Q.5) from what sources did you hear about it?

5.a. If Yes, from what source(s) did you hear about it?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
ANLTC Website	3	2	0	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	12
Your ANLTC contact/ representative	5	3	0	6	9	1	2	0	8	0	34
Colleague(s)	1	1	0	4	10	0	1	1	5	0	23
Your Library Website	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	9
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	1	8
<i>No Answer</i>	1	3	2	0	0	4	11	3	3	0	27
Totals	11	11	2	13	22	7	18	6	22	1	113

Respondents were only required to answer this if they answered **Yes** to question 5 above. Respondents were asked to indicate all relevant sources.

The most common way to hear about the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary was via the ANLTC representative. In most institutions it was the most popular means with the exception of NUIM, where hearing from a colleague was just more frequent. The next most popular was hearing from a colleague followed by the ANLTC website.

As 77% of those who responded were aware that their library had and ANLTC representative it is perhaps not surprising that this was the most frequent source of information.

Respondents from NUIG, NUIM and UCD (all who have had recent bursary winners) had high proportions of their respondents who indicated a colleague(s) as a source of information.

Table 6. Does your library hold any events to promote the Library Assistant Bursary?

6. Does your library hold any events to promote the Library Assistant Bursary?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
No	5	4	1	3	3	2	7	1	7	1	34
Yes	0	0	0	4	9	1	0	0	2	0	16
Don't Know	2	5	1	2	2	4	8	5	8	0	37
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

71/87 responses 81.61% responded **No** or **Don't know** in response to this question. 16/87 responses 18.39% responded **Yes**.

Respondents from four of the institutions NUIG, NUIM, RCSI and UCD indicated that events such as presentations from previous winners and emails from the ANLTC representative about the Bursary occurred in their library. Indicating a lack of awareness and or promotion, respondents from all libraries indicated **No**, or **Don't know** to this question.

Promotional events have been held in NUIM available to NUIM Library staff and staff from other ANLTC members. Despite this staff from all institutions responded **No/Don't Know** to this question.

Table 7. Have you attended an event(s) to promote the Library Assistant Bursary in your own institution or in another institution?

7. Have you attended an event(s) to promote the Library Assistant Bursary in your own institution or in another institution?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
Own institution	0	1	0	5	12	0	1	0	1	0	20
Another institution	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	7
<i>Other</i>	7	8	1	3	2	5	14	6	14	0	60
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

20 (22.99%) of respondents have attended a promotional event in their own institution. 7 (8.04%) of respondents have attended a promotional event in another institution. 60 (68.97%) of respondents indicated **Other** to this question.

Other was the highest response to this question. The majority of responses to this were “I have not attended an event”.

Table 8. Have you ever submitted an entry to the Library Assistant Bursary?

8. Have you ever submitted an entry to the Library Assistant Bursary?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
No	7	8	2	7	12	7	15	6	15	0	79
Yes	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	7
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

79 (90.80%) of those who responded have not submitted to the ANLTC Bursary. 7 (8.05%) of those who responded have submitted to the Bursary, with UCG, NUIM and UCD all having 2 respondents who had submitted entries.

Table 8a. If you have made a submission to the bursary, please describe below what encouraged you to do so?

8.a. If you have made a submission to the bursary, please describe below what encouraged you to do so?
Colleague, Deputy Library, a former ANLTC contact within this university, encouraged participation.
I entered twice, not to win but for recognition.
I had a project, which I really wanted to do, and thought the bursary might give me the means and opportunity to do it.
I was planning to study for the library diploma at the time and colleagues encouraged me to submit an application to help me in that endeavour. I also thought a bit of practice writing would be good practice for the studies I planned.
Interest in looking into the topic more - this would make it more focused.
Librarian sent a note to staff members and it sparked my interest to forward an essay project during Summer 2009.

Table 8b. What do you see as the barriers to you submitting an entry to the Library Assistant Bursary?

8.b. What do you see as the barriers to you submitting an entry to the Library Assistant Bursary?
Confidence, Lack of
Time
Lack of knowledge of the bursary
Don't know about it
Not interested

Table 8b. Summarises the responses to Q. 8b.

Table 9. Has anyone in your institution ever won the Library Assistant Bursary?

9. Has anyone in your institution ever won the Library Assistant Bursary?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
No	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Yes	2	1	0	9	12	0	1	0	12	0	37
Don't Know	4	8	2	0	2	5	14	6	4	1	46
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

3/87 (3.45%) responded **No** to this question. 37/87 (42.52%) responded **Yes** to this question. 46/87 (52.87%) responded **Don't know** to this question.

DCU, UCD (twice), NUIM and NUIG have all had winners of the Bursary. A high proportion of the staff who responded from those institutions indicated **Yes** and were therefore aware they had a winner of the Bursary. It is interesting to note the most recent winning institution, NUIG (2009) had the highest awareness of those who responded.

Table 10. Has anyone in your organisation ever been a runner up in the Library Assistant Bursary?

10. Has anyone in your organisation ever been a runner up in the Library Assistant Bursary?	Dublin City University	Dublin Institute of Technology	National Library of Ireland	National University of Ireland Galway	National University of Ireland Maynooth	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Trinity College Dublin	University College Cork	University College Dublin	University of Limerick	Totals
No	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	7
Yes	0	1	0	7	14	0	0	1	7	0	30
Don't know	5	8	2	1	0	5	15	5	7	1	49
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	7	9	2	9	14	7	15	6	17	1	87

30/87 (34.49%) responded **Yes** to this question. 7/87 (8.05%) responded **No** to this question. 50/87 (57.46%) responded **Don't know/Other** to this question.

Respondents from five out of the ten libraries surveyed were aware that they had had staff who were runners up for the award. Again reflecting a lack of awareness of the Bursary the bulk of respondents answered **No** or **Don't know**.

Findings for Section 4 and 5. Questions 11 to 13

This section concentrates on the three questions in Sections 4 and 5. These were open questions specifically seeking the views of the survey participants.

The questions were:

11. What changes to the format of the Library Assistant Bursary would encourage you to make a submission? Outline any suggestions below.

12. Describe the skills and training you feel you need in order for you to consider making a submission to the Library Assistant Bursary.

13. If you have any further thoughts or comments please feel free to include them below.

The following are responses to Questions 11 to 13. For clarity the responses have been summarised into a number of themes which represent the content of the responses given.

Promotion/Marketing

- Devise an ANLTC strategy for promotion and marketing of the Bursary within individual libraries.

Information pre-submission

- Provide clear outline of expectations and an explanation of requirements regarding submissions.
- Provide clear outline of expectations and requirements for the Bursary winner e.g. If the winning proposal includes a site visit, is this to be undertaken in the staff members time or library time.
- Provide presentations from previous winners and access to examples of winning submissions.
- Provide a short list outlining the criteria by which the proposals are judged.

Encouragement/Mentoring/Incentives/Motivation

- Provide encouragement from senior library staff.
- Provide incentives such as time to research and complete a proposal.
- Integrate the award into the institution's staff training programme.
- Provide mentoring from senior staff to help build confidence about taking on "something" alone.
- Provide workshops on essay/report writing.
- Organise a seminar on how to make a submission

Format: suggested changes or options

- Allow different submission types and approaches.
- Encourage collaborative submissions.

- Reduce the number of words required for submission.
- Encourage project based proposals with a dedicated time period at work allocated to doing the research.
- Allow entrants make a presentation rather than a written submission.
- Allow broader subject matter including non-library related subjects.

Bursary Fund

- Allow the award to be spent on any course, not just library related.
- Split the Bursary in two and give two people an opportunity to visit and be hosted by another library for 2/3 days.

Skills/Training

- Provide training on report writing, academic writing.
- Provide opportunities to gain writing experience.
- Provide workshop on essay/report writing.
- Provide training on research skills e.g. undertaking a literature review, writing a research proposal, using electronic and print resources.
- Provide training on putting a proposal together.
- Provide training on communications, public speaking training and presentation skills.
- Creative thinking rather than training.
- Provide computer skills, IT skills.
- Provide course on submitting reports and proposals.
- Personal marketing skills.

Time, time management and space

- Allow time to do the research and writing during the working day.
- Allow submission over the summer, as term time is very busy for academic libraries.
- Increase completion time from eighteen months to twenty four months.

Reflection based on discussions with previous winners

It was suggested that the Bursary has outlived its original purpose because the profile staff at whom it was aimed has changed and the academic library environment has also changed. It is important to bear in mind that the Bursary was established when there were less opportunities for library assistants with regard to training and development. In the intervening years the lines between the duties undertaken by library assistants and librarians have blurred and the training courses offered by ANLTC are often relevant to both grades of staff. Many library assistants now have a degree and possibly a postgraduate qualification. Many will have developed the kinds of skills that the Bursary may have encouraged and promoted, such as proposal writing and research skills.

In the current economic climate, with pay cuts and little opportunity for promotion, winning the Bursary may not be particularly attractive to library staff. The prestige associated with winning is important but is definitely related to career stage and whether the applicant is likely to be looking for promotion or seeking to move to another institution. Being in a position to include success in the Bursary on a curriculum vitae or application form is undoubtedly a positive thing. If there are a number of candidates for a post or applicants for a course it may be the thing that makes s/he stand out from the field of equally qualified applicants.

If a winner is in a permanent post for many years s/he is unlikely (in the current climate) to be job hunting. While winning the award may bring prestige to the Library and the person, perhaps resulting in opportunities to speak at conferences or to staff in their own or other institutions, this is not necessarily viewed as a requirement for many staff in the undertaking of their day to day work in a committed, enthusiastic and innovative manner.

Summary of Findings

The objective of this research was to develop an understanding of the reasons why library assistants and equivalent grades choose to participate or not, in the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary. It was also hoped to capture the activity related to the Bursary undertaken in each institution and the levels of knowledge regarding ANLTC by asking survey questions such as “Do you know what the ANLTC does?”, “Does your Library have an ANLTC contact/representative?”

Total number of respondents: 87

Total number of eligible staff: 459.

Number of institutions surveyed: 10.

Section 1: About You Where do you work in and at what grade? Questions 1 and 2

The proportion of respondents who were at Senior Library Assistant Grade was almost 26.44 %. The proportion of respondents at Library Assistant was just under 64.4%. The balance of respondents fell into either Senior Library Assistant or Library Assistant grade equivalents at 9.12%.

Over a quarter of respondents were at Senior Library Assistant grade or equivalent and the balance at Library Assistant grade or equivalent. The bulk of staff are probably in post for a considerable time without the opportunity for promotion and will have reached the top of their salary scale. The Bursary is of no obvious benefit to them except the prestige. It brings no obvious benefits in terms of opportunities for promotion and salary increases. Despite staff enthusiasm for in house and other training opportunities it seems when it comes to submitting applications to awards such the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary many staff are not prepared to do this as it is not meaningful to their situation.

The reality is also that many for many staff there training and development needs are being met by their library or the larger institution, in the case of universities. Time is also a significant consideration. Funding for training and development is not necessarily an impediment in the same way as lack of time when placed in the context of demands being placed on staff in the work context. Libraries may not be in a position, in the current climate, to free staff to carry out projects.

The profile of staff eligible for the Bursary has changed since its inception. Those eligible are now probably more highly educated than when the Bursary started.

As can be seen from the summary of response to Q3 to Q10 below the knowledge of the Bursary and the ANLTC varies greatly from library to library.

Section 2: ANLTC What do you know about the ANLTC in general and within your library? Questions 3 and 4

A proportion of staff from seven of the ten institutions surveyed, did not know what the ANLTC does - that is just over 25% of the staff who responded. Almost 75% of those who did respond said they did. 77% of those who responded knew that their library had an ANLTC Representative.

Substantial and almost similar numbers of staff were aware of the ANLTC and their local representative.

Section 3: ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary Award

When it comes to knowledge about the Bursary the **Yes** responses begin to drop to just below 70%. The numbers are still reasonably high. Almost a third of those who responded indicated **No** or **Don't know**.

Given that 77% of staff were aware of their ANLTC Representative it is perhaps not surprising that they were the most common means of hearing about the Bursary. In most institutions it was the most popular means with the exception of NUIM, where hearing from a colleague was marginally more frequent. It should be noted that NUIM has had a winner and a number of runners-up in the Bursary. The next most popular was hearing from a colleague followed by the ANLTC website.

When it comes to events to promote the Bursary the responses shift to high numbers of **No** responses, with 81.61% responding **No** or **Don't know** regarding whether their library holds events to promote the Bursary with the exception of NUIM.

Respondents from four of the institutions NUIG, NUIM, RCSI and UCD indicated that events were organised in their library. Indicating a lack of awareness and or promotion, respondents from all libraries indicated **No** or **Don't know** to the question regarding events to promote the Bursary.

Promotional events have been organised in NUIM and have been open to NUIM Library staff and staff from other ANLTC members. Despite this staff from all institutions responded **No/Don't Know** to this question. However, it must be recognised that travelling to Maynooth for a presentation by previous winners and a discussion time, may not be feasible, particularly for library staff outside the Greater Dublin area.

The high level of awareness regarding the ANLTC and its local representative does not appear to be being built on to promote the Bursary. Having a winner it seems, is a useful promotional tool.

With regard to submitting to the Bursary either personally or by someone in their library, the percentage of respondents who had never submitted was over 90%. This is not surprising when put in the context of the low number of submissions over the years.

When it came to awareness of winners or runners-up from each institution, 3/87 (3.45%) responded **No** they had not had winner. 37/87 (42.52%) responded **Yes** to this question. 46/87 (52.87%) responded **Don't know** to this question.

Lack of knowledge regarding runners up may not be surprising, as a runners-up award has not always been presented. The institutions which have had winners and runners up had **Don't know** responses alongside the **Yes** responses even though having a winner was cited as a popular promotional tool.

High levels of awareness of the ANLTC and the ANLTC Representative does not appear to be trickling down with regard to knowledge of the Library Assistant Bursary. A factor in this may be that the award is only offered every two years, while courses and seminars are ongoing.

Section 4: The Future and Section 5. Any other suggestions

In summary the responses to the question in Section 4 and 5 emphasised the importance of a clear outline of the requirements for making a submission to the Bursary and the promotion of the Bursary within individual libraries. Encouragement, accompanied by incentives and measures to build confidence e.g. mentoring by senior staff were also deemed essential. Changes of format were also suggested e.g. collaborative/project based submissions and a reduction in the number of words. Skill and training to support making a submission included public speaking, essay writing, research skills and confidence building measures. Time to do the research and writing was also another big issue mentioned in the responses.

The responses indicated a definite lack of confidence in the ability of those who responded to undertake the work involved in putting a submission together. It was very clear that respondents felt a strong need for mentoring and support from senior staff within their institutions, accompanied by a range of supports as outlined above and the time to undertake the work required.

Recommendations

These recommendations are underpinned by the following considerations

- The reality is that for many staff their training and development needs are being met by their library or their parent organisation. Much IT training and general skills such as customer care, team building and presentation skills are being provided at institutional level. This has advantages in that it doesn't require travel, generally does not incur a financial cost to the Library and allows staff to gain experience from the wider university staff as it is generally not library-specific.
- Most ANLTC member libraries have experienced significant cutbacks in staffing and budgets. Freeing people up during worktime to write submissions and to carry out follow on work, if awarded the Bursary, may present serious organisational challenges in already straitened circumstances.
- Differences in library and institutional policy with regarding to funding undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in librarianship may influence applications. For example, if an institution funds undergraduate/postgraduate study, it is likely that there will be fewer applications for the Bursary for this purpose, from those institutions.
- The profile of staff eligible for the Bursary has changed over the years since its inception.
- The range of staff development opportunities available to library assistants is now quite extensive nationally and people are increasingly travelling to courses/conferences in the U.K.

General recommendations

- Divide the Bursary fund into a number of awards e.g. three bursaries of €500 each, with different requirements for each. Each €500 to be subdivided into winner and runners up. In the case of a group submission the €500 to be awarded to the group members.
- Allow individual and group submissions
- Encourage the institutions where staff are undertaking submissions to provide matching "funding" in the form of time and mentoring pre and post submission (where feasible).
- Nominations to be supported by management within each institution.

Proposed Award Scheme Options

Four award models are outlined below. They try to cater for group and individual submissions by providing a range of submission options and opportunities.

- 1. Innovation/Best Practice Award**
- 2. Study Bursary to undertake a course in a field related to libraries and cognate areas**
- 3. Travel/Exchange Bursary within Europe**
- 4. Associateship based on a portfolio of training undertaken by individual staff**

1. Innovation/Best Practice Award

Process

Invite nominations of individual or teams calling for examples of innovation and best practice in a library context. Staff may self-nominate or be nominated by a member of their management team. All nominations to be supported by management.

Submissions

All submissions to include nominee details, name of the library, signature of manager.

- Short proposal (500 words)

Or

- Poster Presentation

E.g. Recently the Centre for Teaching and Learning at NUI Maynooth had a learning festival where entries were by poster and entrants completed a PowerPoint template. There was then a morning session where people from across the University viewed the posters. This model attracted a lot of interest, including five posters from library staff, and didn't require major time to prepare. A model similar to that with either a session for viewing posters or a virtual exhibition on the ANLTC website, using a resource such as Flickr might be considered. See <http://ctl.nuim.ie/news-events/nui-maynooth-teaching-and-learning-innovation-showcase-2011>

Or

- Completed application form or template available from the ANLTC containing the following sections. Brief overview of the project, how the idea came about, evidence of collaboration within the library and institution (where appropriate), research and implementation and benefits to the Library and its staff/users, nominee details, name of the library, signature of manager.

Award

- Group and individual awards.
- Winner €250 and two runners up prizes €150 for individuals and or a team prize of €500.

Requirements

- Short presentation (15- 20 minutes) in home institution, at INULS or the LAI Joint Conference or an ANLTC event specifically to promote the output from the applications.

2. Study Bursary to undertake a course in a field related to libraries and cognate areas

Process

Invite submissions by individuals for study proposals. Staff to make submissions with the support of management. Online course preferred but not mandatory.

Submissions

All submissions to include nominee details, name of the library, signature of manager.

- Short proposal (500 words)

Or

- Completed application form available from the ANLTC containing the following sections. Brief overview of the course, how the course would benefit the staff member and the library, nominee details, name of the library, signature of manager

Award

- Individual award.
- Winner €500.
- Paid study leave (if feasible) from the winning institution (expressed in day/hours)

Requirements

- Short presentation (15- 20 minutes) in home institution, at INULS or the LAI Joint Conference or an ANLTC event specifically to promote the output from the application.
- Evidence of attendance and payment.

3. Travel Bursary/Exchange within Europe

Process

Invite proposals for a Library Assistant exchange programme facilitated by the ANLTC and member libraries with libraries within the European Union.

Submissions

All submissions to include nominee details, name of the library, signature of manager.

- Short proposal (500 words)

Or

- Completed application form available from the ANLTC containing the following sections. Brief overview of the how proposed visit/exchange would benefit the staff member, their library, the library to be visited, nominee details, name of the library, signature of manager

Award

- Individual awards.
- Winner €500.
- Paid leave (if feasible) from the winning institution (expressed in day/hours) for the duration of the visit.

Requirements

- Short presentation (15- 20 minutes) in home institution, at INULS or the LAI Joint Conference or an ANLTC event specifically to promote the output from the application.

4. Associateship based on a portfolio of training undertaken by individual staff.

Rationale

To give recognition to the valuable and essential contribution of staff at library assistant grade and equivalent grades to the services provided by libraries. A register of training and development courses etc is kept for each staff member by most libraries. Based on this associateship could be offered in the same way as CILIP and the LAI offer such schemes to librarians.

Partners

Joint ANLTC/LAI initiative. While membership of the LAI is open to library assistants, many may not see the benefits of such membership to them.

Submission

Portfolio to include the following

- Application form listing training undertaken and other relevant information such as educational qualifications, best practice and innovation in the workplace, involvement in community and social activities, representation/membership of relevant groups, internal and external, e.g. Budget group, INULS organising committee.
- 300 word document outlining achievements and the benefits (personal and professional) to the staff member and their library
- Supporting letter from manager

Award

- €500 and paid study/travel leave (expressed in day/hours) to be taken within three years of gaining associateship as a tangible benefit from the staff members employer. This is in the context of time and money being an impediment to training and development.

Or

The four models outlined above are suggestions for an alternative to the current model for the Library Assistant Bursary. Another option is to maintain the present format. If this were to happen I would recommend considering the following. Parts and or all of the recommendations below may not be feasible. They are based on the responses of the library staff who offered suggestions regarding the future of the Bursary and the kinds of supports they require.

- Providing training specifically designed for this Bursary. This might include training on writing and research skills, public speaking, presentations and communication skills and working collaboratively. It might also include training on how to put a proposal together. Given the costs involved in travelling to courses, providing some online training or written guidelines on the above via the website, might be a feasible alternative to an actual course in an ANLTC-member library. A toolkit with guidance, templates and samples of previous winning entries could be made available via the ANLTC website. This could include You Tube presentations by previous winners. This could be promoted by the ANLTC representatives. It should also be noted that many ANLTC member libraries have opportunities to access training within their institutions which while not designed specifically for the ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary, could be very relevant in gaining particular skills.
- A training workshop would help in promoting and marketing the Bursary. Promotion was an area mentioned many times in the survey response and is clearly seen as an essential element of any strategy regarding the Bursary.

- The issue of time to write a proposal and carry out the resulting research if successful is a significant issue for many staff. Whether time should be given and if so how much, is a significant issue for library management, given the current embargo on filling vacancies. If special leave is granted, this may impact on other staff and services. However it needs to be recognised that most staff do not want to write proposals and carry out research outside of work.
- Encouragement and mentoring from senior staff and management arose as a very strong need. Writing a proposal and if successful, delivering the outcomes can be a very daunting task. The issue of support and mentoring needs to be addressed. This could include mentoring from managers, senior library staff, previous winners and peers. Mentoring could also be carried out electronically, using tools such as Skype and Yahoo groups, which would have the benefit of introducing staff to a new tool. This could be similar to the academic writing blog for library staff already established. <http://academicwritinglibrarian.blogspot.com/>
- A strategy document for the Bursary which covers the elements mentioned above and which would be implemented in all member libraries would be helpful. A taskforce to draft the strategy could be convened and the draft circulated for comments and amendments. Once approved it could then (hopefully) be implemented as part of or in conjunction with the existing staff development framework within the institution.

Conclusion

Based on this research I conclude the Library Assistant Bursary is no longer fit for purpose as currently configured. The ANLTC and the Bursary in some form can still be an important element in options for training and development. In these straitened economic times, it may be even more important to provide opportunities to recognise the excellent work undertaken on a daily basis by library assistants and equivalent grades.

While many of the comments from those who completed the survey are worthwhile, some of the suggestions for support and training are already available within institutions e.g. report writing. They are not aimed directly at the Bursary but have applicability none the less.

The type of support and mentoring which is desired by staff, as evidenced in their responses to the survey, may not be feasible in today's economic climate (and may never have been). Online forms of learning, support and mentoring may be an option. Staff should be encouraged to reflect on the existing opportunities and see how the learning gained from different courses could be applied in different contexts.

In a situation where, in the universities, most of the needs regarding training are provided in-house (they may not be library specific) or are widely available, the ANLTCs role should be to provide further opportunities which benefit, motivate and recognise staff at Library Assistant grades.

If it is not already the case the ANLTC Bursary and other training events need to be part of the already existing training and development frameworks within libraries. It should not be an imposition in terms of time and money but a benefit to the training framework already in existence.

With less or no opportunities for promotion, pay cuts and straitened economic times staff motivation may be one of the things to suffer. Opportunities to help prevent this are important. Many staff will have reached a “plateau”⁵ in their career/work life. Encouraging staff to set new goals, to challenge themselves, to renew their job satisfaction despite the lack of promotion and less money is an important part of training and development and one in which the ANLTC and the Library Assistant Bursary can play a role.

The ANLTC Bursary has provided a number of people, including myself, with an excellent developmental opportunity. Going forward and building on that, will involve a substantial rethink of how best to utilise this resource. A meeting between previous Bursary winners, representatives from the ANLTC and a representative from CONUL might provide a useful forum for making a decision on what format ANLTC’s support specifically targeted at library assistants should take.

⁵ D.L. Montgomery, Happily ever-after: plateauing as a means for long-term career satisfaction, *Library Trends*, vol.50 (4), 2002, p. 702, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, viewed on 31st May 2011.

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Appendix 1: Useful links

Academic and National Library Training Co-operative (ANLTC)

www.anltc.ie

Academic Writing Librarians Blog

<http://academicwritinglibrarian.blogspot.com/>

American Library Association Awards and Grants

<http://www.ala.org/ala/awardsgrants/index.cfm>

Australian Library and Information Association (ALAI)

<http://www.alia.org.au/awards/>

Bristol Online Surveys

<http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/>

CILIP Qualifications for Library Assistants

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/jobs-careers/qualifications/pages/assistants.aspx>

CILIP Robinson Award for innovation in library administration by para-professional staff

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/about-us/medalsandawards/robinson-medal/Pages/robinsonaward.aspx>

LAI CONUL Information Literacy Award

<http://www2.libraryassociation.ie/2010/05/24/entries-for-lai-conul-information-literacy-award/>

Library, NUI Maynooth

<http://library.nuim.ie/>

Library Association of Ireland (LAI)

<http://www2.libraryassociation.ie/>

Library Journal Paraprofessional of the Year Nomination Guidelines

<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA606277.html>

Margaret Watson Award

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/prison/activities/Pages/awards.aspx>

NUI Maynooth Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation Showcase

<http://ctl.nuim.ie/news-events/nui-maynooth-teaching-and-learning-innovation-showcase-2011>

University College and Research Group (UC&R Group) Awards

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/ucr/awards/pages/default.aspx>

Appendix 2: ANLTC Library Assistant Bursary Winners and Projects

2009

Winner: Maud Conry, National University of Ireland Galway

Project: E-book Update in Irish Academic Libraries – an Overview

2007

Winner: Marie Cullen, National University of Ireland Maynooth

Project: A visit to the British Library Digital Object Management Programme

2004

Winner: Petra Shurenhofer, University College Dublin

Project: Bursary used to finance visit to the University of Phnom Penh Cambodia

Joint runners-up:

Andrea Mullen, St. Angela's College, Sligo (constituent college of National University of Ireland Galway)

Project: Bursary provided funding towards a course in librarianship at the University of Aberystwyth

Louise Walsworth-Bell, National University of Ireland Maynooth

Project: Bursary used to finance attendance at conservation conference

2001

Winner: Avril Patterson, University College Dublin

Project: Attendance at ILL conference

Runner-up: Cecilia Kehoe, National University of Ireland Maynooth

Project: Study visit to special collections in Irish universities

1997

Winner: Irene Hennigan, Dublin City University

Project: Study visit to Sheffield Hallam and John Moore's universities

Source: Helen Fallon and ANLTC Awards <http://www.anltc.ie/awards/>

Appendix 3: ANLTC Contacts

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ANLTC Committee role: Library Assistant Bursary Award

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ANLTC Committee role: Continuing Professional Development

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ANLTC Committee role: Vice Chair, Minute Secretary

Source: ANLTC Contacts, updated 1st April 2011, viewed 5th May 2011, <http://www.anlrc.ie/contacts/>