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Investors in People

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Investor in people

Felicity McGregor
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The University of Wollongong Library is the first library in Australia to be awarded the Investors in People (IIP) standard.

IIP is an internationally recognised standard concerned with achieving best practice in the management and development of people to achieve organisational goals, together with a framework for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

The standard originated in the United Kingdom and is administered in Australia by NCSI (NATA Certification Services International). The award was presented by the chief executive officer of NCSI, Sue Chapman at a ceremony on 25 February 2000, attended by the University's vice-chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton, the pro vice-chancellor (Academic), Professor Christine Ewan (whose portfolio includes the Library) and many other members of the university community.

In her presentation speech, Mrs Chapman commented: 'Winning the award is not a warm, fuzzy activity - applying the principles of the IIP makes good business sense. One of our evaluators said the University of Wollongong Library was one of the most impressive organisations he had visited.' Mrs Chapman also commented that libraries today have double the challenges of most organisations. Not only must they grapple with changes within the business/operating environment, but also with the explosive changes in information technologies.



[1-4] Christine Ewan, pro vice-chancellor (Academic), Sue Chapman, NSO, Felicity McGregor, Gerard Sutton, vice-chancellor

In responding, university librarian, Felicity McGregor said that investing in training and development was a strategic decision, directly related to the Library's vision of becoming recognised for the provision of exceptional information services. 'Staff skills, knowledge and attitudes', she said, 'are the foundations of a quality service.'

Ms McGregor also said that all library staff could feel pride in winning the IIP award: 'With all organisational achievements, it is not sufficient to only have good leaders and managers, we need staff who are motivated, willing to learn, flexible, knowledgeable and committed.'

Ms McGregor particularly praised the contribution of the library's staff development officer, Lorraine Denny. 'Lorraine works very hard to ensure we get the best value for our training dollar and that programs are related to achieving the library's mission and goals.'

The Investors in People Standard is based on four key principles:

- *Commitment* - An IIP organisation makes a public commitment to develop all employees to achieve its business objectives;
- *Planning* - An IIP organisation regularly reviews the needs, and plans the development of all employees;
- *Action* - An IIP organisation takes action to train and develop individuals on recruitment and throughout their employment; and
- *Evaluation* - An IIP organisation evaluates the investment in training and development to assess achievement and improve effectiveness.

The four principles are supported by a number of specific criteria and it is against these that organisations produce evidence for assessment. Preparation of the supporting documentation was the responsibility of a small team of library staff working with the staff development officer. The second stage of assessment included a site visit by two accredited evaluators who selected and interviewed a number of library staff. The evaluators' report noted that the library 'exceeded the requirements of the Standard in virtually all indicators.'

