

Skills and Knowledge Required by the Twenty First Century Health Information Professional

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ABSTRACT

Objectives

The intention of this presentation is to use analyzed professional health information vacancy details advertised on three specific websites for six months from 1 June 2009 to 30 November 2009 to determine the competencies and skills required by health information professionals in the twenty-first century.

Method

The person specifications of relevant vacancies (that required an undergraduate or postgraduate information studies / management / science qualification) were downloaded from three websites. These websites were LisJobnet (<http://www.lisjobnet.com/Lisjobnet>), NHS Jobs that includes vacancies in England and Wales (<http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>) and jobs.ac.uk (<http://www./jobs.ac.uk>). The jisc-mailing list, Lis-Medical, was also monitored for posts. The research was conducted over a six-month period. UK vacancies advertised online provide sufficient information to enable the analysis of the person specifications. This enabled the core skills and knowledge required for these posts to be identified. Content analysis was utilized to analyze this information to determine patterns in the data and identify the core attributes required.

Results

The results were analyzed under the headings: education, skills, knowledge, experience and personal attributes. Comparisons were made to research conducted in 2006 to determine if person specification requirements had changed in the three years (Davies, 2008). The key skills identified in 2006 were information technology (IT), literature searching and teaching. In 2009 communication skills were mentioned more frequently than IT/computing skills; and other skills such as using your initiative and effective team working were ranked higher than teaching.

Conclusion

Previously IT skills, specifically MS Office, electronic resources, Internet experience and evidence-based literature searches were ranked highly; as were communication and interpersonal skills. These skills and experiences still ranked highly, but communication skills now rank above IT skills.

Reference

Davies, K. Job hunting in the UK using the Internet: finding your next information professional role in the health care sector and the skills employers require. *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 2008, 25, 106-15.