1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The role of the Archives and Records Association

The Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland), formed by the merger of the Society of Archivists, the National Council on Archives and the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government in June 2010, is the recognised professional body for archivists, archive conservators and records managers. It is committed by its constitution to, *inter alia*, “advance the professional education and training of archivists, archive conservators and records managers and those engaged in related activities”.

In March 2011, membership of the Association stood at 2,235, the majority of whom are qualified at postgraduate level in archive and/or records management. The membership includes a category of Registered Member for those admitted to the Professional Register of the Association, which is, now, only conferred on those with professional competence and experience, and a demonstrable commitment to CPD, as evidenced by successful completion of the Association’s Registration Scheme. Entry to the Registration Scheme is normally reserved for those possessing an accredited postgraduate qualification.

The normal means of qualification for the archives and records management profession is through the educational programmes, offered both on site and by distance learning, by universities in the United Kingdom and Ireland and accredited by the Association.

Since their inception, the university programmes have established strong links with the archives and records management profession, recognising the value of such interaction for both sides. This includes employing qualified archivists/records managers as lecturers and assessors, and in interviewing potential students, arranging student work placements in and visits to archives and records offices, and participating in the committees of the Association concerned with education and training.

In 1984, the Society of Archivists introduced its procedure for the accreditation of university programmes. The accreditation procedure has two functions:

- to ensure that programmes provide professional education of appropriate content and standard, thereby providing students with confidence in the programme and the assurance that, once achieved, their qualification will be recognised by employers, professional colleagues and other educational institutions;

- to ensure the maintenance of a dialogue between the Association and each programme, thereby promoting mutual co-operation and development of the profession.
1.2 Education programmes

The following programmes are currently accredited by the Association as postgraduate level qualifications.

- University College London
  - Dip/MA in Archives and Records Management
  - Dip/MA in Records and Archives Management (International programme)

- University of Liverpool
  - Master of Archives and Records Management (MARM)

- University of Aberystwyth
  - Dip/MSc Econ in Archives Administration, full and part time
  - Dip/MSc Econ in Archive Administration, by distance learning
  - Certificate/Dip/MSc Econ in Records Management, full and part time
  - Certificate/Dip/MSc Econ in Records Management, by distance learning

- University of Northumbria
  - MSc in Records Management, by distance learning

- University College Dublin.
  - MA in Archives and Records Management

- University of Dundee
  - Dip/MLitt in Archives and Records Management, by distance learning
  - Dip/MSc in Archives and Records Management (International), by distance learning
  - Dip/MSc in Records Management with Information Rights, by distance learning
  - Dip/MSc in Records Management with Digital Preservation, by distance learning
  - Dip/MLitt in Archives and Records Management by Distance Learning

- University of Glasgow
  - Dip/MSc in Information Management & Preservation (Archives & Records Management)
  - MSc in Information Management and Preservation (Digital)

The following programme is currently accredited as an undergraduate level qualification.
Programmes offered by the universities vary in content and structure, reflecting the wide variety of skills and knowledge required by archivists and records managers. The Association’s accreditation process recognises this and acknowledges that all subjects cannot be covered to the same level and that programmes employ a variety of teaching methods. However the accreditation process seeks to ensure that all programmes include a minimum level of development in specific areas, as defined by the accreditation criteria in section 3, to provide students with sufficient knowledge and skills to begin work as an archivist or records manager at an appropriate level.

2 PROCEDURE FOR ACCREDITATION

2.1 Application for accreditation

The director of any programme seeking accreditation shall apply to the Honorary Secretary of the Association.

Newly established programmes may apply for qualified accreditation (see section 2.5) after operating for one full year. However, full accreditation will not normally be awarded until a programme has been in operation for three years and a further accreditation application has been considered.

Normally, accreditation continues for five years, after which the programme may apply for re-accreditation.

Significant changes to a programme, such as core modules being changed, would require assessment when introduced in order to continue accreditation.

Changes to modules or the introduction of new modules that do not change a programme significantly would not require assessment when introduced unless specifically requested by the programme director. Assessment should be done for new modules that can be taken for continuing professional development independently of the full programme, if they are advertised as being accredited by the Association.

2.2 Qualifications Accreditation Team and the Council of the Archives and Records Association

The Qualification Accreditation Team shall be selected from within the membership the Association who have been approved to undertake such work by the Council of the Association. The membership of the Qualifications Accreditation Team shall provide a broad range of professional experience and type of employment. It is normally expected that not fewer than three members of the team shall visit and review any programme. The leader of the Qualifications Accreditation Team shall normally visit all programmes and be responsible for drafting the team’s reports to Council.
The Qualifications Accreditation Team is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the accreditation of external courses and qualifications. This includes the establishment, review and development of accreditation procedures and criteria, and selecting the membership of the team that assesses for accreditation any particular programme. The Qualifications Accreditation Team shall comprise registered members of the Association who have a sound understanding of professional standards (including providing evidence of their own on-going CPD) and of the role and process of professional education.

In relation to the accreditation procedure, Council shall:

- review and approve, or require amendments to, the membership of the Qualifications Accreditation Team;
- review and approve, or require amendments to, the criteria and procedures for accreditation and other matters relating to the accreditation of programmes, as drawn up by the Qualifications Accreditation Team;
- review and approve, or request clarification of, the recommendations of the Qualifications Accreditation Team in respect of the accreditation of specific programmes;
- request and receive reports from the Qualifications Accreditation Team on developments in university programmes and qualifications.

2.3 **Information required prior to the visit**

Before the visit to an institution, the programme director shall supply the following information for review by the Qualifications Accreditation Team:

- the programme brochure;
- the syllabus and timetable, including outline details of the content of each subject and the amount of time spent on it;
- examples of programme materials, including, where relevant, examples of distance learning materials;
- the names and qualifications of the teachers and assessors, with details of their previous and/or current involvement in archive/records management work and/or research or professional matters (including CPD);
- examples of examination papers and course work set in recent years;
- bibliographies for core subjects;
- summaries of feedback from students and reports from external examiners.
It is recognised that the form and range of documentation necessary for this will vary between institutions and it is a matter for the programme director to determine the most appropriate method of supplying the information.

The Qualifications Accreditation Team will also review any previous report on the programme and will normally, with the consent of the programme director, contact the external examiner.

Notice of the forthcoming cycle of assessment visits will be publicised in the Association’s ARC Magazine and the accreditation criteria made available on the Association’s website for the information of members.

2.4 Visit of the Qualifications Accreditation Team

The programme director is responsible, following consultation with the leader of the Qualifications Accreditation Team, for the preparation of a draft timetable for the visit. This shall include provision for:

- a pre-meeting of members of the Qualifications Accreditation Team involved in the assessment visit;
- a meeting with the Head of Department, programme director and other staff involved in the overall planning and administration of the programme. This meeting shall consider:
  - the current state of the programme as seen by the director, including developments since the previous assessment and planned or possible future developments;
  - issues or comments, specific or general, that have been raised formally and informally by students, staff, university or members of the profession;
  - staff and student recruitment;
  - new developments proposed or under consideration within the university that may affect the way in which the programme is taught or administered or its content.
- separate meetings with the teachers responsible for the various subjects. All staff teaching core modules should be available, and as many of those teaching optional modules as possible.
- opportunities to view the teaching and other facilities used in the provision of the course.
- a meeting with current students. The purpose of the session is to give the team an impression of the student body and its reaction to the programme, primarily as a basis for discussion with the staff. Meetings may be substituted by
telephone, web-based or video conferencing to accommodate distance learners or to allow participation by students unable to attend meetings

- a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor/Principal, Dean or other university or college officers under whose aegis the programme falls. This should normally take place towards the end of the visit and provide an opportunity for the members of the Team to indicate informally their impressions of the programme and for them to obtain an indication of the university’s or college’s attitude to the programme, its needs and its funding. In particular the Qualifications Accreditation Team will draw attention to any areas of concern which may depend on institutional policy, for example funding, staffing or accommodation.

- a final review meeting with the director and, if appropriate, Head of Department.

2.5 Accreditation report and recommendation

Following the visit, the Qualifications Accreditation Team will draw up a report comprising

- a description and assessment of the main features of the programme;

- recommendations and suggestions for consideration by the programme director and team;

- a recommendation to the Council of the Association as to the accreditation of the programme. This may take one of three forms:

  - full accreditation – that the programme be accredited by the Association for five years from the date of the recommendation, provided that any major changes to the programme during that time are notified to the Qualifications Accreditation Team;

  - qualified accreditation – that in respect of:

    (i) an established programme undergoing change or in need of development or revision, qualified accreditation may be awarded for a specified period of less than five years, with extension to the full five years being dependent on evidence being submitted to the Association regarding progress in necessary changes or specific improvements within a specified period to meet the recommendations of the Team.

    (ii) a newly established programme, which has operated for less than three full years, qualified accreditation is the highest level that may be awarded, full accreditation being considered following a further accreditation application at a specified date, addressing specific points raised.

  - no accreditation – that the programme be not accredited by the Association.
A copy of the report will be sent to the programme director for review and comment in respect of the accuracy of its content, prior to the recommendation being submitted to Council.

Following the decision of the Council in respect of the recommendation for accreditation, the final report, including recommendations/suggestions for consideration, will be sent to the programme director. The leader of the Qualifications Accreditation Team will be available to discuss any aspect of the report and recommendations / suggestions in greater detail with the programme director if necessary.

All aspects of the report and recommendations/suggestions will remain confidential and will not be revealed by any member of the Qualifications Accreditation Team or member of Council to any other party.

2.6 Broader professional developments

The Qualifications Accreditation Team can act as a medium, although not the only one, for conveying the views of programme directors and teachers to the profession. The visits should be seen as a means of two-way communication, and the leader of the Team will convey the concerns of the programmes to the Qualifications Accreditation Team and other committees of the Association as appropriate.

The Association reserves the right to publish general conclusions from the accreditation process about developments in the professional education and training of archivists/records managers and to draw attention to issues of particular value or concern.
3 CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

3.1 General

3.1.1 Overall aim

Archivists and records managers educated in the UK and Ireland should have a thorough grounding of the principles underlying the theory and practice of the care and management of archives and records in all formats. They should have specific knowledge of the historical, administrative and legal context of archival material and records, and of national and international legislative developments. They should have awareness and understanding of current research and best practice in an international context, professional and research methodology and current issues, and should possess a range of skills to carry out their work, including the potential to develop leadership and management skills. They should be equipped to proceed to Registration, via Continued Professional Development.

3.1.2 Balance of curriculum

The professional archivist/records manager needs both academic and practical knowledge and skills. There should be a balance between the two within the curriculum. There is also a need to give sufficient weight both to traditional skills and to current contemporary developments.

There should be evidence of regular updating of programmes to reflect changes in current professional practice and the marketplace.

3.2 Selection of candidates

Candidates should hold a first degree, or equivalent, or qualify under mature entry criteria or by accreditation of prior learning. Selection should be based on evidence of intellectual ability, personal suitability and awareness of the nature of archive and/or records management work and/or digital curation. A practising member of the profession should be involved in the selection process.

All students should have, prior to commencement of the course, appropriate practical experience of archive and/or records management work in accordance with the FARMER guidelines for pre-qualification work experience.

3.3 Teaching staff & resources

Each institution is expected to appoint such teaching staff as it considers necessary to deliver the aims of the programme. It is recommended that suitably qualified individuals, with appropriate experience and knowledge of archives and/or records management practice and/or digital curation, should lead or play a significant role in the course team.
Each institution is also expected to ensure that there are sufficient and suitable resources in terms of teaching, library, computing and other support facilities to enable delivery of the aims of the programme.

### 3.4 Curriculum

Syllabus design and method of delivery are the responsibility of the teaching institution, and the Association does not seek to offer a framework for delivery of the programme. However, without prejudice to the specification of additional outcomes, either as part of a programme’s core or as options, the Association does require that all programmes deliver the core outcomes specified below.

The outcomes are expressed in two parts: firstly, those expected from programmes offering both archive and records management education and secondly, those specialising in records management.

#### 3.4.1 Statements of Core Outcomes – Archives & Records Management combined programmes

**Context of Archives and Records Management**

**Aim:**

To enable the professionally qualified archivist and/or records manager to develop a critical theoretical and practical awareness of the nature, role and purpose of records and archives and their management in organisations, communities and society.

**Outcomes**

By the end of the programme students will be able to:

- Discuss the theory of archives and assess its contribution to the development of archival practice and the development of archives and records management as a professional discipline.
- Recognise the relationship between archives and records management and related professions.
- Evaluate the concepts of the records lifecycle / records continuum and identify the implications and issues for the processes of the archives and records management.
- Evaluate the different definitions of the nature and roles of records, data, documents, information, archives and other relevant concepts.
- Review the evolution of different types of records formats, media and recordkeeping systems and assess the implications for archives and records management.
- Appreciate the value of archives and records in different contexts as information resources, evidence for legal accountability and for cultural / historical purposes.
Interpret the administrative, legal and regulatory frameworks and best-practice standards relevant to archives and records management within different organisational contexts.

Analyse the relationship between different types of organisations and the records and archives they produce.

Assess the roles and purposes of archives and records, understand the variety of their uses and users, and evaluate the implications for their access.

Analyse the relationship between records and archives and the historical representation of their communities and societies.

Identify the range and types of archives and records management services within the UK, Ireland and elsewhere.

Assess the impact of the political, economic, social and technological environment, and of international considerations, on archives and records management.

Evaluate different types of organisational structure, culture and strategy and recognise their potential constraints and opportunities.

Recognise the need for, and key principles of, effective human resources management, project management, financial management, communications and interpersonal skills in the operation of an archives and/or records management service.

Appreciate the value of partnering with professionals in related disciplines and sectors and with other stakeholders, building networks and developing influencing skills.

Assess the importance of professional standards of conduct (including ethical considerations) to, and the role of professional bodies within, archives and records management.

Records Management (within a combined archives & records management programme)

Aim:

To enable the professionally qualified records manager to design and implement effective policies and programmes, applying best-practice principles and standards, for the management of records in all formats and media throughout their lifecycle / continuum within an organisation.

Outcomes

By the end of the programme students will be able to:

- Explain the benefits of records management, design policies and define responsibilities for implementation.
Use appropriate investigative and analytical techniques to collect data and identify organisational functions, records systems and records, including vital records, for the development of records management programmes and systems.

Evaluate, design and implement systems and procedures for records capture, control, organisation, indexing, identification, retrieval and tracking.

Organise the appropriate and cost-effective storage and physical protection of records, both digital and physical.

Undertake records appraisal, develop records retention / disposal schedules and implement disposition activities.

Design and implement programmes for communication and training and for evaluation and auditing of records management programmes.

Understand the role and purpose of records management within a risk management context.

**Acquisition and Preservation**

**Aim:**
To enable the professionally qualified archivist or records manager to design and implement effective policies and procedures for the acquisition, storage and preservation of archive holdings of all formats.

**Outcomes**
By the end of the programme students will be able to:

- Design and apply an acquisitions policy, taking into consideration the legal, financial, technical and procedural issues impacting on acquisition.
- Develop and implement an appraisal strategy, taking into consideration the purpose of the archive, the range of its holdings and its role in society.
- Assess threats to the security and physical composition of archival holdings in different media and formats.
- Specify the parameters for, and organise and manage, the storage, handling and movement of archival holdings in accordance with established standards and best practice.
- Recognise the nature of damage to archive holdings, the role of conservation and the basic principles of document conservation.
- Design and apply a preservation policy.
- Develop and implement a disaster plan or equivalent, including undertaking risk assessments and mitigation strategies.
- Design an appropriate surrogacy programme, including digitisation and media conversion.
Archival Arrangement and Description

Aim:
To enable the professionally qualified archivist to facilitate the identification and location of archival source material by users through their effective description.

Outcomes
By the end of the programme students will be able to:

- Apply the principles governing archival arrangement and description.
- Identify appropriate reference material and systems for understanding, describing and authenticating documents, recognising the role of the science of diplomatic.
- Interpret and apply appropriate standards to the description of archives of varying age, provenance, media and format.
- Interpret and apply appropriate standards to the creation of archival authority files in the development of appropriate finding aids.
- Understand the issues involved in the development of archival cataloguing software applications and specify local requirements for their development and usage as appropriate.
- Be familiar with search and retrieval strategies and methodologies.

Access and User Services

Aim:
To enable the professionally qualified archivist to design and implement policies and procedures to develop public awareness of the role, purpose and holdings of archives, to develop the uses to which archival holdings may be put, and to ensure the effectiveness of the archive service in responding to user requirements.

Outcomes
By the end of the programme students will be able to:

- Ensure effective standards of customer care, including the provision of appropriate user training.
- Design and implement procedures to support a range of research topics.
- Develop an effective enquiry service and design the physical layout and contents of a search room, establishing procedures for their effective operation, including the deployment and training of staff as appropriate.
- Understand issues involved in operating an effective on-line presence.
- Research the potential of archives as a resource for learning and for the support and development of communities, and design policies and programmes to promote their relevance to, and their understanding and use by, different groups.
Recognise the benefits for archives of raising awareness and profile, and of exploiting the potential of archives for income generation.

Develop programmes and presentations to promote archives to different audiences, collaborating as appropriate with professionals from other cultural domains and from the design and media sectors.

Identify and develop a range of educational services involving archives, liaising with other professionals on the planning, use and presentation of appropriate materials.

3.4.2 Statements of Core Outcomes – Records Management programmes

Context of Records Management

Aim:

To enable the professionally qualified records manager to develop a critical theoretical and practical awareness of the nature, role and purpose of records management in organisations, communities and society.

Outcomes

By the end of the programme students will be able to:

- Explain the historical background of the evolution of records management as a discrete professional discipline.

- Recognise the relationship between records management and related disciplines including archives administration, information/knowledge management, information technology and compliance management.

- Evaluate the concepts of the records lifecycle / records continuum and identify the implications and issues for the processes of records management.

- Evaluate the different definitions of the nature and roles of records, data, documents, information and other relevant concepts.

- Review the evolution of different types of records formats, media and recordkeeping systems.

- Appreciate the value of records in different contexts as both information resources and evidence for legal accountability and historical purposes.

- Interpret the administrative, legal and regulatory frameworks and best-practice standards relevant to records management within different organisational contexts.

- Evaluate different types of organisational structure, culture and strategy and recognise their potential constraints and opportunities.
Analyse the relationship between different types of organisations and the records they produce.

Assess the impact of the political, economic, social and technological environment, and of international considerations, on records management.

Recognise the need for, and key principles of, effective human resources management, project management, financial management, communications and interpersonal skills in the operation of a records management service.

Appreciate the value of partnering with professionals in related disciplines and sectors and with other stakeholders, building networks and developing influencing skills.

Assess the importance of professional standards of conduct (including ethical considerations) to, and the role of professional bodies within, records management.

Understand the role and purpose of records management within a risk management context.

**Records Management Systems and Programmes**

*Aim:*

To enable the professionally qualified records manager to design and implement effective policies and programmes, applying best-practice principles and standards, for the management of records in all formats and media throughout their lifecycle / continuum within an organisation.

*Outcomes*

By the end of the programme students will be able to:

**Records Management Policies and Responsibilities**

- Assess an organisation’s records management requirements and develop effective and appropriate policies and procedures to meet them.

- Explain the benefits of records management including improving business processes and service delivery, supporting decision making, protecting the interests of the organisation and its stakeholders and maintaining corporate memory.

- Define and assign managerial and operational responsibilities as appropriate for records management processes and compliance.
Records Management Processes and Controls

- Use appropriate investigation and data collection techniques (e.g. audit / inventory, interview, etc.) to identify and appraise the range, nature and role of different types of records.

- Apply functional analysis and business classification techniques for the design of records management systems.

- Implement access and security classification and control requirements as appropriate for the organisation and its records.

- Manage procedures for maintaining and administering information rights relating to privacy and freedom of information relevant to the organisation and jurisdiction concerned.

- Evaluate, design and implement systems and procedures for records capture, organisation, indexing, identification, retrieval and tracking.

- Recognise the needs of users of records management systems and design procedures to assist them to access records in accordance with their requirements.

- Design a digitisation and media conversion programme appropriate for the organisation and its records.

- Organise the appropriate and cost-effective storage and physical protection of records, both electronic and non-electronic.

- Undertake records appraisal and develop records retention / disposal schedules and other techniques and procedures to manage the systematic disposition of records.

- Implement records disposition activities including the review, destruction or transfer to permanent archives as appropriate.

- Develop and implement a business continuity / disaster recovery plan, including the identification and protection of vital records.

- Evaluate the use of in-house or outsourced facilities and services.

Records Management Communication and Monitoring

- Design and implement effective communication programmes, including appropriate documentation and training, to develop understanding of and compliance with records management policies, principles and practice.
- Design and implement regular monitoring and auditing activities as appropriate for the records management programme.

**Records Management Practical Context**

- Apply the principles and practices, and appreciate their relationship to records management, of one or more related discipline e.g. archives administration, knowledge / information management, information technology, litigation support, risk assessment, compliance management.

- Identify the distinctive nature of the records and their management in one or more different sectors e.g. central and / or local government, higher and further education, health services, the financial services industry, the pharmaceutical industry, and business and corporate structures.