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Archive Service Accreditation and archives in museums



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Introducing Archive Service Accreditation

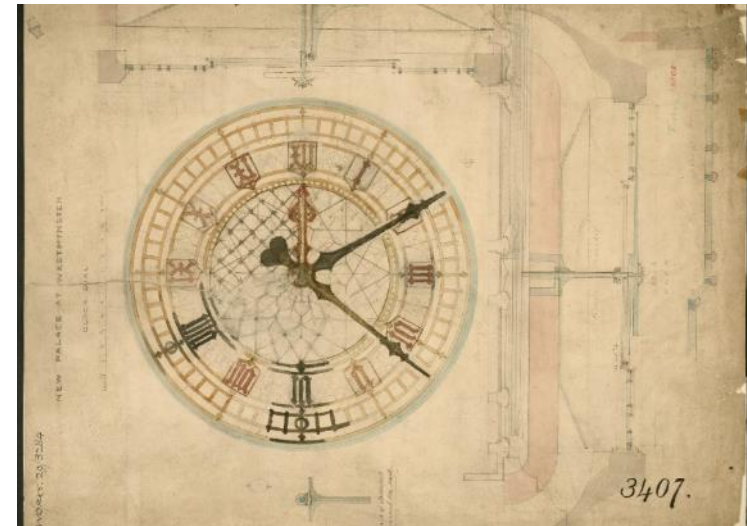
- The UK Standard for Archive Services, launched 2013
- Developed through a co-creation process with the archives sector and in dialogue with Arts Council England
- Supported by a partnership of Archives and Records Association, Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives, The National Archives and the Welsh Government, managed at home nation level
- Three modules: Organisational Health; Collections Management; Stakeholders and their Experiences
- Focus on policy, planning and procedures in delivering good service across these areas
- 175 currently Accredited Archive Services



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Why Archive Service Accreditation – the past

- Museum Registration 1988
- HMC Standard 1990 (and assessments 1998-2012 as TNA Standard)
- Goals: improving practice, reducing risk
- Mirrored standards: 5 modules
 - Constitution and finance
 - Staff
 - Acquisition
 - Access
 - Storage and preservation



Elevation for clock dial for Big Ben tower

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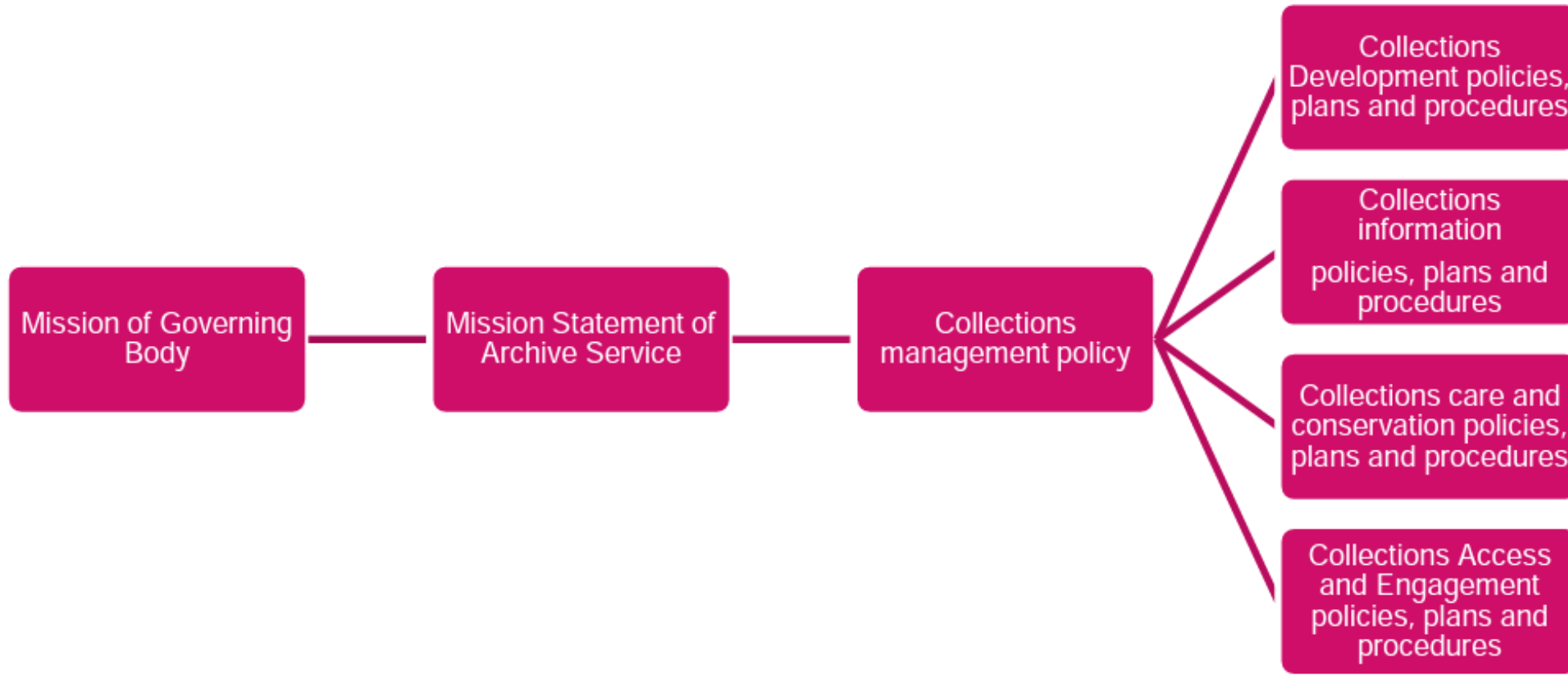
Why Archive Service Accreditation – the past

- Shifting professional standards (Museum Accreditation, PAS197, PAS198)
- Governance/delivery models changing significantly
- From HMC to TNA moved the remit from UK to England – aspiration to broaden this
- Limited application, excluding private archives – business archives strategy urging change
- Strategic drivers shifting: Archives for the 21st Century, Archives Unlocked



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PAS197 (EN17820:2023) *Cultural Collections Management* standard as a guiding principle



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Meet the Modules

1 Organisational Health

- Mission
- Governance
- Planning
- Resources

2 Collections

- Management
- Development
- Information
- Care and Conservation

3 Stakeholders and their experiences

- Policy
- Planning
- Procedures/ Activities

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Learning from Museum Accreditation and cross-domain practice

- Connectivity is evident in module design
- Three modules: organisation, collections, people
- Emphasis on forward planning and risk management is core
- PAS197 influence: mission>policy>delivery
- PAS197 influence: development, information, access, care
- Organisational health, not only domain-specific factors
- Broad understanding of access, beyond the searchroom



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Distinctly different despite this

- Wider eligibility types: archives as business-integral
- Collections development to document, incl accruing collections, appraisal
- Flexible in documentation requirements
- Models of access, especially cataloguing as user priority not only a management tool
- Compliance and info governance drivers
- “Stakeholders” not “users”: varieties of user need beyond traditional access – includes depositors/accurring collections, public bodies, internal business use
- Remained open 2020-22: archive services in ongoing delivery while public access restricted



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Museums using Archive Service Accreditation

- Many national museums have come through the programme – due to compliance drivers
- Mixed picture for smaller museums but many archives within a museum reporting structure have applied
- Shared policy and planning often a feature – for Archive Service Accreditation there are few models and a focus on function
- But the documents do need to work for both criteria – to meet “the different needs of the collections and their users”
- More challenging areas: understanding archive users when they are a fraction of a heritage audience; diffuse management of records across curatorial departments; CMS frustrations; understanding digital collections
- Underplayed areas: embedding archives into museum access opportunities, collections research, outreach and web content

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Cross-referencing – respect the archives!

- Museum Accreditation scheme and cross-referencing
- At Collections Development Policy level
- Replaces text relating to the Standing Conference on Archives in Museums
- Make it more than a cut and paste job!

8 Archival holdings

This clause is optional within the template policy depending on whether your museum holds or intends to collect material which may be considered archival, for example documents and photographs – in paper-based or digital formats. If so, describe your rationale and approach to developing this collection.

Museums with archival material may also wish to look at the [Archive Service Accreditation Scheme](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/) for these collections.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/>

Arts Council England, Collection Development Policy template

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Or to put it another way...

1.4 Relationship to Museum Accreditation

Archive Service Accreditation is designed to align with Museum Accreditation. Both share the same focus on organisational health, collections and the experiences of people who engage with the service. Both programmes have the same ethos of helping to raise standards and reward achievement. Archive Service Accreditation focuses specifically on the needs of archive collections and their users. Museums with significant archive holdings are therefore encouraged to apply for Archive Service Accreditation, even if they already hold Museum Accreditation, to ensure that their archive collections are managed in line with current archival practice.

Getting Started with Archive Service Accreditation, 2018

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And there's always celebration



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If you want to follow up...

- Contact accreditation@nationalarchives.gov.uk if you're in an English or national museum and want to plan an application – or your home nations assessor body if in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland
- Visit <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/supporting-guidance/> for lots more detail – *Getting Started* guide, introductory e-learning and more

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