

BACKGROUND PAPER

for attendees at the Archives & Records Education Stakeholders (ARES) Forum
to be conducted in North Melbourne on 12 & 13 June 2003

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Employers	2
Employees	3
Professional Associations	4
Regulators	4
Educators	5
<u>Appendices</u>	
1. ASA Information Paper on work of Joint ASA/RMAA Committee	
2. ASA and RMAA professional membership provisions	
3. 2001 survey of ASA/RMAA members' qualifications & training needs	
4. Examples of legislation affecting training needs	
5. Competency based training	
6. Courses in archives and records	

Archivist: A person, professionally educated, trained and experienced, responsible for the management or administration of archives and/or records by appraising and identifying records of continuing value, by documenting and preserving archives in their context and by enabling and facilitating their continuing use. Traditionally used for a keeper or custodian of archives. (Ellis Judith, ed. Keeping Archives, 2nd edn, Port Melbourne: D W Thorpe, 1993, pp 464 & 477)

Records managers: Records management professionals are responsible for all aspects of records management, including the design, implementation and maintenance of recordkeeping systems and their operations, and for training users on records management and recordkeeping systems operations as they affect individual practices. (Standards Australia, AS ISO 15489.1-2002 Records Management Part 1: General, 2002, Standards Australia International Ltd, Sydney, page 5)

Records management: [is the] field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. (Standards Australia, AS ISO 15489.1-2002 Records Management Part 1: General, 2002, Standards Australia International Ltd, Sydney, page 3)

Note: In recent years there has been considerable debate within the profession about the domains of 'archives', 'records' and 'recordkeeping'. The use of the three terms is intended to make it clear to all constituencies that the Forum will consider the broad range of activities in the field of archives and records, irrespective of the terminologies that those constituencies use.

Introduction

The ARES Forum is being organised by the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and the Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA). The Forum is intended to focus on education within a broad range of practices including archives, records, records management and recordkeeping. It will focus on the need to sustain specialist education within these fields rather than other areas which might be related to, or necessary to, support the education of an archives or records professional.

The ASA and the RMAA believe that educational qualifications should be required for professional practitioners in their respective fields. The two associations also take the view that professional education includes a broad range of activities pursued over a professional working life. They are concerned to ensure that such education is sustained in a climate of considerable change in the educational landscape in Australia and New Zealand.

The aims of the Forum are:

1. to ensure that all stakeholders understand the current environment for professional education
2. to ensure that stakeholders understand each others' views on education
3. to develop a shared agenda for professional education which will benefit all stakeholders
4. to develop a list of actions for implementation which will sustain professional education which is valued by all stakeholders.

This paper describes aspects of the educational landscape for archives and records in Australia to provide Forum attendees with some context for their participation in the Forum proceedings. It has been prepared on behalf of the ARES Forum Committee that consists of representatives of the ASA and the RMAA.

The Forum Committee has identified five groups that have a stake in archives and records education, namely Employers, Employees, Professional Associations, Regulators and Educators. Each of these groups views archives and records education from a different perspective seeking to benefit from it or contribute to it in different ways.

Employers

All organizations, public, private and voluntary keep records in connection with their business, even if they do not have a formal records management programme.

Some organisations are aware of the recordkeeping requirements of legislation and best practice standards that apply to their particular industry but view them as specialisations applying to their industry alone and do not know that there are generic specialists educated and experienced in recordkeeping who could contribute substantially to their business. This lack of awareness of the existence of generic specialists in recordkeeping (specifically recordkeepers, records managers and archivists) results in some employers seeking librarians, information managers, knowledge managers and the like with the view to providing on-the-job-training to train them to meet their special needs.

Some organisations that recognise good recordkeeping makes an essential contribution to their business are aware of relevant legislation and standards and are most concerned to employ highly competent and qualified recordkeeping staff.

Then there are organisations that have recordkeeping as their core business. They administer related legislation and set and promote the application of standards and are also most concerned to employ highly competent and qualified recordkeeping staff. These employers are interested in what education is available for their employees and will sometimes seek to influence that education or will develop their own courses. Once they do this they join forces with the educators.

Employees

This group consists of both paid and volunteer employees some of whom possess specialist qualifications and experience in archives and records, others who because of the education they have, or because of their aptitude for the work, or because they fell into a particular job, are employed as archives or records specialists. There are sure to be others who aspire to work in records or archives. Each of these sub-groups has a variety of views about education. One or more approaches from the following list are likely to meet their educational needs.

1. Enrol in available formal courses in the:
 - VET sector – AQF Levels 1 to 7
 - Workplace training
 - Workplace assessment
 - Registered Training Organisations
 - Higher Education sector - AQF Levels 6 to 12
(See Section 9 of [Appendix 1](#) for a list of courses recognized by the ASA or RMAA)
2. Pursue any available New Apprenticeships or scholarships
3. Obtain employment in records work or in an Archival Institution and attend any in-house training or professional development.
4. Work as a volunteer in records work or in an Archival Institution and attend any in-house training or professional development.
5. Attend workshops, seminars or conferences open to the public
6. Join associations or societies with an interest in archives or records management
7. Use self help via visits, libraries, the Internet, etc

The point of entry chosen will depend upon the motivation and aspiration of the individual. If we Forum attendees are to respond to these unknown aspirants we must know more about them.

We also need to inform them of the nature of the environment they are entering so they have a clear idea of where their interest might lead. The ASA and RMAA have some tools to do this.

Approaches 4 to 7 can be pursued with limited financial and time commitment. To pursue approaches 2 and 3 the individual is making a substantial commitment. To pursue approach 1 is also a substantial commitment and is, no doubt, accompanied by the expectation of paid employment once any course is completed.

Some people who wish to gain access to records and archives education are not interested in becoming professional members of the RMAA or ASA and may therefore not feel the need to meet the Society's criteria for professional membership to practice as Records Managers or Archivists. As long as employers of Archivists and Records Managers do not insist that their employees are professional members of the RMAA or ASA it is those employers who set the educational requirements.

Professional Associations

The Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA) was founded in 1969, incorporated in 1975, and now has branches throughout Australia. The Association's educational objectives are:

- To maintain national policies and standards in records management;
- To develop, implement and maintain educational policies and standards;
- To provide professional development opportunities for records management and allied professionals, and
- To consult with educational institutions.

The Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) was formed in 1975 and could be said to have evolved from the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia (LAA, now called the Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA)) that was formed in 1950. The ASA has active branches throughout Australia. The Society's formal interest in education is expressed in objects 3.(iii), (iv) & (x) as follows:

- (iii) to establish and maintain standards of archival practice and administration and of professional conduct among archivists;
- (iv) to establish standards of archival qualifications and professional training; ...
- (x) to promote a professional identity amongst archivists and to advance their professional standing and welfare; ...

and in its membership provisions. (See [Appendix 2.](#))

The Presidents of the RMAA and ASA signed a Statement of Joint Purpose and Cooperation in May 2000 acknowledging the commonality of purpose between the two organisations and recognising that the organisations are the peak professional bodies in the recordkeeping sector in Australia. (see *ASA Bulletin* No.3, June 2000, pages 4-6).

During 2001, the ASA and RMAA were sufficiently concerned about education issues to sponsor a joint committee on Membership and Education to:

- Review professional membership qualifications (of both organisations) and develop a common position on what qualifications should be required for professional membership for both organisations;
- Review and report on how such qualifications may be acquired and maintained by members of both organisations over the next ten years;

See [Appendices 1 & 3](#) for the report of the work of the Joint-committee.

The two organisations gave further general expression to their mutual interests by conducting a joint national conference in Hobart in September 2001. During the course of the conference they carried out a Survey of Members' Educational Qualifications and Training Needs. The results of the survey can be seen at [Appendix 3.](#)

Regulators

This stakeholder group consists of those organisations that seek to ensure that recordkeeping standards are set and applied. The most obvious members of this group are Commonwealth and State Government archival authorities that have responsibility

for setting and monitoring the standard of recordkeeping implemented by Australia's public sector. See [Appendix 4](#) for examples of and references to legislation and standards. Other regulatory agencies within government such as auditors, privacy commissioners and those responsible for freedom of information also have an interest in ensuring that proper recordkeeping standards are observed. The fact that Standards Australia and the International Standards Organization have been prepared to develop best practice records management standards indicates that the demand for regulation is not confined to government.

Many of these organisations are only just moving from the policy and standard development stage to the implementation and monitoring stages. There is thought to be a substantial need for highly qualified records professionals to assist with the implementation of these standards and the training of the people who are to maintain them. Some regulators are conducting their own training courses and, as such, are also entering the Educator stakeholder group.

Educators

This group consists of professional educators working in the VET and Higher Education sectors and businesses and professional organisations offering specialised courses, workshops, conferences and other learning experiences.

Formal training in records management was virtually unknown until the late 1970s, early 1980s at which time a number of TAFE colleges began offering courses at about Certificate III level. Curtin University of Technology Offered a Bachelor of Applied Science (Records Management) in 1990, the first undergraduate course in Australia (see 'Educational Courses in Records Management, Archives and "Information" Fields of Study in Australia 1991' in *The Informaa Quarterly* Vol.7, No. 1, February 1991. p.16). Post graduate courses commenced in 1994. In the mid 1990s a national curriculum in records management was adopted. This was followed in November 1997 with the endorsement of the Records and Archives Competency Standards and the development of an increasingly de-regulated VET sector. De-regulation saw registered private training providers (Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)) offering competency based training and assessment outside the traditional TAFE environment. Inclusion of the revised Recordkeeping Competency Standards in the Business Services Training Package (endorsed in September 2001) has changed the VET recordkeeping training environment again. Some confusion exists as to who is considered competent to train and assess under this new Training Package. Some records management education is offered by the Higher Education sector. See [Appendix 5](#) for more details on competency based training.

Education in archives administration outside the workplace was first offered in Australia by the Library Association of Australia via its Registration Certificate. The Registration Certificate was discontinued in 1980 when it was considered sufficient Librarianship courses were available in Australian tertiary education institutions. A full Higher Education Sector course in archives administration was first offered in 1973 when 'The School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales, ... admitted the first post-graduate students to its course in Archives Administration.' (*Archives and Manuscripts* Vol.5 No.2 Feb 1973, p 38) Previously, from 1966, three elective subjects in archives had been offered within the Diploma of Librarianship and before that, a single elective in archives and manuscripts.

The following description of archives and records management education in Victoria provides an example of the changes in the records and archives education environment that have occurred over the last 20 years.

The first Graduate Diploma in Archives and Records Management was offered in 1985 through the Melbourne State College (a Teacher Training College) later Melbourne College of Advanced Education. It grew out of the school librarianship program and was established with extensive consultation from local organizations such as ASA and NAA. At the same time Records Management education (as opposed to Archives) was concentrated in the TAFE sector and a RM Diploma/Certificate was taught at Prahran TAFE. The Graduate Diploma was primarily aimed at prospective students who worked in the field and who wanted to complete professional studies over two or three years part time. When institutional amalgamations occurred, the Melbourne College of Advanced Education was amalgamated into Melbourne University.

In 1995 the Archives Graduate Diploma was moved to RMIT University. The course continued to attract students both full and part time. There were 15-20 enrolled each year. In recent years RMIT placed restrictions on class sizes which cast doubt on the viability of small niche courses. Up until that time, it was economically viable to offer courses for as few as 15 - 20 students. Prahran TAFE and Swinburne TAFE merged during amalgamations and the RM Diploma/Certificate moved to Swinburne University of Technology. The course there was run on an adjunct model with subjects taught by various people seconded from the profession.

Monash University established a Master of Arts (Archives and Records) in 1988. This research-oriented program grew out of the Graduate School of Librarianship which subsequently became the Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records (DLAR). Later, in 1990, in the tertiary education sector, funding was available for vocational teaching initiatives. The Graduate Diploma in Archives and Records was established in 1990, and in 1995 Monash established an undergraduate program in Information Management (BIM) including an elective Records and Archives stream, and two new masters degrees – Master of Information Management (Records and Archives) and Master of Information Management (Librarianship) – they replaced the MA. In 1996, DLAR moved to the Faculty of Information Technology and in 1999 it officially merged with Information Systems and became the School of Information Management and Systems (SIMS). Currently, a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters in Information Management and Systems are offered. All have Records and Archives specialisations which were recognised by the ASA and RMAA. A Records and Archives specialization is also available in the Bachelor of Information Systems (BIMS) which superseded BIM.

Monash's first graduate student intake in 1990 numbered 10-12 students and this grew steadily to classes of 35-40 indicating higher numbers in the program as a whole. Since the post graduate courses were HECS-based, a large percentage of students came to the program directly from various undergraduate courses. When fees were introduced in post graduate courses in the mid-90's, they were gradually phased in and did not initially have a huge impact. In 1997 Archives

and Records graduate courses were first offered by distance education. Currently, in the post graduate Records and Archives specialisations in full fees environment, there are classes of 25-30 students, some on campus and some off campus. SIMS currently has the equivalent of 450 full time students studying subjects in its post graduate programs. About 50 % are international students. The Records and Archives specialisation is attractive to a niche market within the broader market of students seeking to do degrees in Information Management and Information Systems. Monash offers the only PhD program in Archives and Records nationally and currently has 5 candidates. It is expected that the recently introduced graduate loan scheme PELS will boost numbers of local students in all post graduate programs.

According to Professor Sue McKemish, head of the School of Information Management and Systems, the Monash Archives and Records program is sustainable and doing well. She attributes this to a number of factors including the delivery of the program in on campus and off campus mode; the synergies associated with the positioning of the program in a school which embraces the multidisciplinary perspectives, knowledge and skills of the fields of information systems, library and information science, and records and archives; and the research track records of Archives and Records staff at Monash, including success in competitive research grants, research publications and attracting higher degree research students.

Bruce Smith, who taught in the RMIT program, suggests that increasing fees is responsible for negating a viable course at the post graduate level. Bruce noted that there has been no formal announcement of the closure of the Graduate Diploma in Information Management (Archives and Records) at RMIT. The future of the Information Management discipline at RMIT is currently under review. Current information is that the Archives and Records subjects will not be offered in 2003 but could be offered in a revamped Graduate Diploma in Information Management in 2004 if there is sufficient demand.

The number of universities actively offering professional education courses in archives and records across all states of Australia has reduced from six in the mid 1990s to three by 2002. As noted above, the future of this discipline at RMIT is uncertain. The University of New South Wales and University of Canberra courses are no longer taking new enrolments. The remaining courses are offered by Curtin University, Edith Cowan University and Monash University. All three institutions offer their courses by distance education. Curtin and Monash University also have on-campus programs. ECU delivers its courses entirely online.

Appendices 1 & 6 provide information on records and archives courses.

oOo