

Academy of Certified Archivists

Handbook
for
Archival Certification

Including the official role delineation,
study guide, and reading list

Published by the:

Academy of Certified Archivists

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ACADEMY OF CERTIFIED ARCHIVISTS

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Preface

The origin of the *Handbook for Archival Certification* stems from candidates for the examination requesting a study bibliography. In April 1996 the ACA Board directed the Committee for Examination Development to create an archives reading list. At its meeting in August 1996, the board expanded the committee's assignment to include new sample questions with commentaries and general advice for taking a multiple-choice exam.

Through the fall, committee members evaluated and updated the ACA question bank and created new questions. A reading list was created from the sources from which those questions were taken. At the same time Regent for Examination Development, Fred Stielow, forwarded suggested revisions for the old ACA candidate handbook to the Committee. Examination Development Committee member Anne Diffendal prepared a revised edition of the handbook that would accompany the new study guide

On a snowy weekend in Chicago in February 1997, the Examination Development Committee compiled a bibliography, selected sample study questions representing various domains of knowledge identified in *the Role Delineation Document* and the types of questions on the exam, and wrote commentaries for the sample questions.

By the end of the weekend, the Academy had the makings of a first draft that Regent for Examination Development Jane Kenamore edited for review by the board in April. With board approval, the draft was distributed to graduate archival educators for review. Many of their suggestions were later incorporated into the draft that went back to the committee in August. Additional changes were incorporated and a final version was sent to Regent for Outreach Leon Miller, who designed the handbook and updated the publication to include new board initiatives.

Section

1

The Academy of Certified Archivists

An Introduction to Who We Are and What We Do

The Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) welcomes your interest in archival certification. As a candidate, you will face what is technically a “practice-based” examination. Rather than laboratory or scientific testing, the archival knowledge tested derives directly from the practice and experience of professionals in the field. However, that pragmatic base presupposes a solid and growing theoretical component and written body of knowledge that directly underlies the structure of this examination.

This handbook provides background on the Academy and its testing services. It also contains information on qualifications for taking the examination and how you can apply to achieve the status of Certified Archivist (CA). It concludes with tools to help you prepare to take the archival certification examination. These include a discussion of the examination itself, sample questions with extensive analysis, and a reading list.

ACA Mission

The Academy of Certified Archivists supports and promotes the highest level of professional archival practice. The ACA takes a leadership role by defining the knowledge and abilities necessary to be an archivist. We achieve our mission by certifying archivists, ensuring professional archival standards, and promoting the employment of Certified Archivists

ACA Background and History

The ACA is a not-for-profit, voluntary, and independent accrediting agency. Although archives literally define the start of human history, the ACA traces its particular origins to the growing modern need for sophisticated methods to handle a burgeoning information infrastructure and still ensure the continuation of a documentary heritage and historical values.

Beginning in the 1970s and the onset of the Information Age, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) launched a sustained effort to increase the educational opportunities and establish adequate credentials for its field. In 1987, the Society formed an Interim Board for Certification (IBC) to determine the qualifications for professional archivists and develop an examination to certify such attributes. By 1989, the IBC’s ground breaking was largely accomplished. The interim board had supervised the development of an examination, inducted the first set of Certified Archivists, and given way to a formal election process and the establishment of the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Candidates will be most interested in the development of the examination itself. The IBC’s

project was a collaborative effort with a major educational testing service. Their first task was to determine the range of duties and body of knowledge over which certification candidates would be tested. Using survey and interview techniques, the IBC developed the *Role Delineation Document*. That instrument helped scientifically and consensually define the major functions or “domains” of archival theory and practice. Each domain was further subdivided into a series of appropriate activity or “task statements” and their related “knowledge statements.” This role delineation effort was then further validated by a larger group of archivists. They reviewed the seven domains and evaluated the relative importance of each within the overall range of archival activities. These elements still determine the framework for the information covered in the examination:

- Selection of Documents;
- Arrangement and Description of Documents;
- Reference Services and Access to Documents;
- Preservation and Protection of Documents;
- Outreach, Advocacy, and Promotion of Documentary Collections and Archival Repositories;
- Managing Archival Programs; and
- Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities.

Membership

Certified Archivists are practitioners who have demonstrated mastery of the knowledge and experience necessary for modern archival practice. As Certified Archivists, ACA members are dedicated to both enhancing the information services of their institution and preserving its documentary heritage for future generations. With their mix of technical and historical knowledge, these information professionals collectively define the highest accomplishments and bulk of the leadership of the American archival field. Working throughout the United States, Canada, and several other countries, the members of the Academy commit to the professionalization of archives and the mastery of a constantly increasing body of technical and legal knowledge and information standards.

The Academy certified the first group of archivists in 1989. Archivists with five or more years of experience had the option of certifying through petition. Others could qualify by passing the exam, which is the option now offered for new members. Seven hundred and fifty archivists were charter members of the Academy of Certified Archivists, founded at the Annual Meeting of SAA in St. Louis in 1989. Since then, the Academy has established itself as the credentialing agency for determining archival status. ACA certification has become a growing standard for employment and professional recognition throughout the United States and around the world.

Membership Ombudsman

The Academy has a membership ombudsman to help our members with any questions, comments, or concerns they might have. Our membership ombudsman serves as your first contact and referral point for any ACA membership questions. If our ombudsman cannot

answer your questions immediately, she or he will refer you to the proper source and make sure your questions are fully and quickly answered.

Because membership concerns are central to the life of the Academy of Certified Archivists, we have made the position of membership ombudsman the permanent duty of one of its highest officers, our vice-president / president-elect. In doing so, we hope:

- to ensure the concerns of our members always receive the highest level of attention and care;
- to instill in the ACA's upcoming president a thorough understanding of membership issues; and,
- to guarantee the goals and wishes of our members are always central to all ACA initiatives, meetings, and discussions.

ACA Board of Regents

The Academy's members elect a Board of Regents to oversee its affairs. This nine-member panel is composed of the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and regents for examination development, examination administration, certification maintenance, outreach, and nominations. The president is elected to the Board for a three-year term, serving as vice president, then president, then regent for nominations. The remaining members of the Board are elected for two year terms.

ACA Administration

Capitol Hill Management Services (CHMS) of Albany, New York, presently serves as the secretariat for the Academy of Certified Archivists. CHMS also provides support services for the examination for certified archivist. It is your first line of inquiry for information on the Academy and the examination. Please contact our secretariat directly to request Academy brochures, newsletters, candidate handbooks, application forms, and other Academy publications. It is also the address to which you should send change of address notices and other contact information. Please contact the secretariat at:

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Section

2

The Archival Certification Examination

For more information, see the ACA Candidate Handbook, which is available in an electronic form on the ACA website (www.certifiedarchivists.org) or in a paper form from the ACA Central Office, 90 State Street, Suite 1009, Albany, NY 12207, phone (518) 463-8644.

How do Archivists Become Certified?

Archivists become certified by qualifying for and passing an examination offered annually by the Academy. The exam is composed of 100 multiple-choice questions based on the Role Delineation Document described earlier and appearing in this Handbook.

When is the Examination Offered?

The Academy offers the examination during the week of the Society of American Archivists annual meeting.

Where is the Examination Offered?

The Academy offers the annual archival certification examination at three types of sites:

In conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) is the world's largest archival organization and has an international membership. Many examination candidates are members of SAA and attend its annual meeting. Therefore, while the SAA and ACA are independent organizations, the Academy offers the examination in conjunction with SAA in hopes of substantially reducing candidates' travel costs.

At previously announced sites selected by the Board of Regents

In addition to offering the examination in conjunction with SAA, the Academy holds its annual archival certification examination simultaneously at several other announced sites. The Board of Regents selects these sites approximately one year in advance and, along with the SAA site location, publicizes them as far in advance as possible. Candidates may opt to take the examination at any of these sites and, before a certain deadline, change their test location among these sites as their personal circumstances require.

At petition sites

The Academy's "You Pick Your Site" program allows candidates to petition the Academy to hold the certification examination in any cities of their choice. These locations are in addition to the regularly announced sites described above.

Sitting for the archival certification examination demonstrates a commitment to the profession. The Academy's "You Pick Your Site" program recognizes that commitment in two ways:

- by providing candidates with a tool for reducing their associated travel expenses; and
- by bringing the examination closer to archival students, archival organizations, and international archivists.

For example, student chapters and archival associations can use this program to sponsor an examination in their area, and non-US archivists can save thousands of dollars in travel costs by holding the examination in their country.

To allow the greatest possible participation, the Academy has only two requirements to qualify for this program:

- Five or more candidates should petition the Academy to hold its examination at the same site; and
- All participating persons should mail their applications to the Academy by May 15. That is one month earlier than the deadline for registering to take the examination at one of the regular sites.

The Academy will announce petition sites on its web site as soon as they are approved, and candidates other than the petitioners may sit for the examination at petition sites. However, due to the tight time constraints associated with petition sites, the Academy will not always be able to fully publicize their locations and cannot be responsible for non-petitioners knowing of their availability.

Qualifying to Take the Archival Certification Examination

Qualifying to Take the Archival Certification Examination to Become a Certified Archivist

The Academy has established three options for people who wish to take the exam and become Certified Archivists.

Option 1. Master's degree with a concentration in archival administration plus one year qualifying professional archival experience

This option requires: (A) a master's degree that includes, or is supplemented by, at least 9 semester hours or 12 quarter hours of graduate study in archival administration and (B) at least one year of qualifying professional archival experience.

Option 2. Master's degree without a concentration in archival administration plus two years of qualifying professional archival experience

This option requires: (A) a master's degree in any field other than archival administration (covered in Option 1) and (B) at least two years of qualifying professional experience

Option 3. Previously qualified certified archivist (lapsed certification)

This option is for people who were once certified but have allowed their certification to lapse. Qualified applicants need to submit only a notice of intention to take the exam and their examination fee.

Option 4. Previously qualified certified archivist (current certification)

This option is for people who are certified and wish to take the examination for recertification. Qualified applicants need to submit only a notice of intention to take the exam.

Qualifying to Take the Archival Certification Examination to Become Provisionally Certified

This option is particularly intended for recent graduates of graduate archival programs. It requires a master's degree that includes at least 9 semester hours or 12 quarter hours of graduate study in archival administration. Individuals who qualify under this option may take the exam without meeting professional work experience requirements. If they pass, they are provisionally certified. They become fully certified and may use the title "Certified Archivist" upon presenting evidence of a minimum of one year's qualifying professional archival experience.

People who take this option have three years in which to obtain the qualifying experience (and to inform the ACA office so that the Academy can issue the Certified Archivist certificate) and they do not pay the certification fee until that time.

The benefits of this option are clear: graduates may tell employers they have passed the archival certification exam before they are Certified Archivists; they have three years in which to earn one year of professional qualifying experience while they are searching for employment; and they do not have to pay the academy's professional fees until they earn a professional income.

Explanation of Terms

Graduate study in archival administration means graduate courses that cover archival principles and practices; development and management of archival programs; and the topics outlined in the ACA's "Role Delineation" statement (available in the Handbook and on the ACA web site).

Qualifying professional archival experience means: Professional work as distinguished from non-professional or paraprofessional work. Professionals typically demonstrate a mastery of their field, manifest a service orientation and dedication, work with relative autonomy and independence, and by the quality of their work show a thorough understanding and ability to apply sound archival principles and practices. They have a strong sense of ethical obligation and a notable responsibility to contribute to the work and progress of their profession. Managing the work of archivists or administering an archival program is considered to be qualifying professional archival experience if successful performance of the duties of the position requires substantial knowledge of archival principles and practices.

Work in an archival program as opposed to museum, library, or other non-archival work. The archival program may be located in a library, museum, or other setting, but the applicant needs to demonstrate that the work consisted on applying archival principles and practices, working directly with archival materials, or providing services to the creators or users of archival records. The Academy counts positions that include a mixture of archival and other professional experience as qualifying on a prorated basis. For instance, an individual whose duties consisted of 50% professional archival work would be credited with a half year of experience. Part-time employment will also be credited on a prorated basis. (If a candidate has been dismissed from a position for unsatisfactory performance or malfeasance, the experience in that position is not applicable.)

Completing the Application

Applicant's Responsibilities

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all the information requested in the application plus the supporting materials and to submit it on time. Reviewers need to gain a clear and complete picture of the candidate's education and experience, so it is in the candidate's interest to submit a full and revealing set of materials. Where there is a question about whether the work is professional or not, the candidate should demonstrate that it is.

Makeup of a Complete Application

A complete application consists of:

Examination Application for Certified Archivist. This must be filled out completely, including the sections on graduate study in archival administration and qualifying professional archival experience. Applicants are encouraged to provide supplemental information when appropriate, as discussed below. The affirmation at the end of the application must be signed.

A copy of the applicant's transcript showing graduate archival courses completed for Option 1, above or a diploma showing the awarding of a graduate degree, for Option 2, above. Copies of transcripts and diplomas do not need to be certified.

Supporting information. Applicants are encouraged to provide a limited amount of clear, concise, well organized supplemental information in support of their application where it is needed to give ACA reviewers an accurate understanding of their education and work. For instance, applicants who took archival courses whose titles do not reflect their archival content might wish to submit course descriptions. Applicants whose job titles do not fully reveal the nature of the work they do are encouraged to submit some or all of the following:

- A description of the mission and responsibilities of the archival program where the applicant works.
- An official job description clearly showing the professional archival nature of the work carried out.
- An individual workplan, statement of goals and objectives, or other documentation of the work actually carried out.

Four complete sets. Applicants must submit four complete sets of their applications.

Incomplete applications. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant.

Re-applying to take the examination. People who are re-applying (that is, if previously approved to take the test), complete ONLY the application checklist and the declaration. No supporting documentation is necessary unless the qualifying status has changed since the first application; if so, applicants should submit documentation supporting that change.

Must be submitted on time. Applications post-marked after the deadline will not be accepted.

Application Review

The Regent for Examination Administration oversees the review of all applications. The regent is helped by a committee normally composed of the ACA's immediate past president and current vice-president/president elect. The application review process evaluates an applicant's education and experience to determine whether the applicant qualifies to take the examination. The reviews are handled in a group after the closing date for applications with notices normally sent out in early June.

The Academy will inform unsuccessful applicants of the reasons for their disqualification. This judgment may be appealed by letter to the ACA secretariat. Appeals will be considered by a committee consisting of the president, secretary, and treasurer of the Academy. If your appeal is successful you will be eligible to take the next examination. You may reapply to take the examination as often as you wish.

Application Fee

A non-refundable fee of US\$50 in the form of a check or money order payable in United States currency must accompany the application. Please make checks payable to "Academy of Certified Archivists." Do not send cash. Applications not accompanied by the application fee will be returned. The application fee covers only a portion of the actual expense for evaluating and processing the applications. We regret we therefore cannot refund the application fee if the applicant does not qualify to take the examination.

Certification Fee and Dues

Individuals who successfully complete the examination and who have demonstrated the necessary experience and qualifications must pay a US\$150 certification fee within thirty (30) days of notification by the Academy that they have passed the examination. Annual dues of US\$50 per year will be payable starting July 1 of the following year.

As described above under the "Option A" qualification option, applicants who have not yet achieved one year of qualifying professional experience are considered "provisional members." Provisional members do not have to pay the certification fee or dues until they have acquired one year of qualifying professional experience.

Taking the Test

Admission and Identification

Applicants who qualify to take the examination will receive printed directions and the exact address and room number of the test site. You will need a positive proof of identity bearing a recent photograph to be admitted to the testing room. Examples of acceptable forms of identification include a driver's license, an employee identification card, and a passport. A Social Security card is not an acceptable form of identification.

Examination Schedule

8:30 a.m. Report to testing center
8:50 - 9:00 a.m. Proctor reads instructions and distributes materials
9:00 a.m. Examination period begins
12:00 noon Examination period ends

If you must travel a considerable distance to the test site, consider arriving the night before the examination or allowing additional travel time to compensate for heavy traffic, poor weather conditions, car difficulty, or other unforeseen events. Or, if you have five or more candidates join you, you can petition the Academy to offer the examination in your city, drastically reducing or even eliminating your time and travel costs (for more information, on making arrangements to hold the examination in your city, see the section on "petition sites" beginning on page 4).

Rules for the Examination

The examination will be held only at the time and places scheduled.

Bring at least three well-sharpened No. 2 pencils and a good eraser to the test site. Pencils, erasers, and sharpeners will not be available at the test site.

You may not take books, papers, or other reference materials into the examination room.

The presence of PDAs, cell phones, calculators, cameras or other electronic devices are not permitted into the examination room. Devices needed to assist with disability accommodation are exempted from this exclusion.

The proctor will not answer questions concerning the content of the examination or the meaning of questions.

All examination questions are multiple choice. There is only one correct choice for each question. If an applicant gives more than one answer, the question will be counted as wrong.

The proctor will answer questions concerning the completion of the answer sheet. It is important to complete the answer sheet carefully and accurately. The time required to correct inaccurate candidate information on the answer sheet can delay the reporting of test results.

The answer must be marked on the answer sheet. No credit will be given for answers marked in the test booklet. Make certain to verify that the number of the question corresponds to the number on the answer sheet.

There is no penalty for guessing; attempt to answer all questions.

No test materials, documents, or notes of any sort may be removed from the examination room.

We Welcome the Physically Challenged

The Academy of Certified Archivists is committed to making our examination easily accessible to the physically challenged. If you are physically challenged or have a condition that would affect your ability to take a multiple-choice examination, indicate your condition on the application. The Academy has a formal policy of working with and supporting such applicants. We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate you.

Test Results

The test is scored by a professional testing expert. Capitol Hill Management Services (CHMS) will report your test score approximately eight weeks after you take the examination. Send requests for duplicate score reports to the ACA secretariat and include your examination identification number and a check or money order for US\$10 payable to the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Successful Completion of the Examination

Should you receive a passing score on the archival certification examination and have the necessary experience qualifications, you will be eligible to join the Academy of Certified Archivists and achieve the status of Certified Archivist. To complete the process, submit to the ACA secretariat a check or money order for US\$150 within thirty days of receiving notification of successful completion of the examination. The Academy will only process requests that include the certification fee. You will receive a membership certificate thirty to sixty days after the ACA receives your fee. You must pay annual dues of US\$50 starting July 1 of the following year.

If you receive a passing score but have not yet earned the necessary experience qualifications, you will be admitted as a "provisional member." As a provisional member, you will not be required to pay the certification fee or dues until you gain your one year of qualifying professional experience. You will have three years to submit a job description of a qualifying position and a letter from a supervisor indicating you have successfully completed one year in that position. The Academy will pro-rate part time work.

After submitting such evidence, subject to approval by the application review subcommittee, submit to the ACA secretariat a valid check or money order for US\$150 in U.S. currency, payable to the Academy of Certified Archivists. Do not send cash. You must submit the US\$150 certification fee within thirty days of receiving notification that the qualifying experience meets the requirements. You will receive a membership certificate thirty to sixty days after ACA receives your fee. Annual dues of US\$50.00 are payable to the Academy starting July 1 of the following year.

Applicants who pass the examination but who do not submit evidence of qualifying professional experience within the deadline will forfeit the US\$50 application fee and must take the test again in order to be certified.

Unsuccessful Completion of the Examination

If you do not pass the examination, you are welcome to retake it. There is no limit on the number of times you may take the examination. Candidates must pay the application fee each time they apply to take the examination. If you wish to retake the examination, contact the ACA secretariat for more information. Members of the Academy are available as mentors to help with your study. You must submit a renewal application accompanied by an application fee each time you apply to take the examination.

Duration of Certification

Certification is for a period of five years (beginning on January 1 after the examination), after which recertification will be required.

Recertification

Academy members must recertify every five years to retain the title of Certified Archivist. Members may choose to recertify either by examination or petition.

Option A. Recertification by examination

You may recertify by again sitting for the archival certification examination. This option has several advantages.

Minimal fuss. Simply taking the examination is the fastest and easiest way to recertify. Most persons complete the examination in about an hour to an hour and a half. Furthermore, if you normally attend the Society of American Archivists annual meeting, or if the examination is held in your area (such as through our “You Pick Your Site” program), then you will incur no additional travel expenses.

Minimal paperwork. All Certified Archivists are forever qualified to sit for the examination. You therefore do not need to resubmit the examination application or complete lengthy petition forms. To recertify by examination you need do nothing more than notify us of your intent to do so.

However, the most important benefit of recertification by examination is:

Self-evaluation. The certification examination is your best available method for comparing your professional knowledge to a consensus view of archival standards. It is also an excellent way to gauge the impact of emerging technologies and new research on the archival profession. This makes the archival certification examination the most important self-evaluation tool archivists possess.

Option B. Recertification by petition

Recertifying by petition uses a point system to reward experience, continuing education, and contributions to the profession. Every archivist engages in some of these activities, depending on their resources, opportunities, and personal interests. For example, you may attend an archival meeting, participate in a workshop, present a paper, serve on a committee, etc.

Such activities are important for maintaining your skills and advancing the profession. Recertification by petition provides the only professional forum for recognizing and rewarding the normal professional activities in which archivists routinely engage. **This makes recertification by petition one of the greatest benefits of being a Certified Archivist.**

Recertifying by petition involves taking approximately two hours to complete a petition form once every five years. On the form, you will briefly describe the activities for which you claim credit. Recertification by petition is on the honor system; unless a question arises (such as a point being unclear to the petition reviewers), you need not submit evidence of your activities. However, the Academy recommends you maintain a file of your activities (in which you save programs of meetings you attended, workshop agenda, etc.) as a personal aide-mémoire to help you fill out the petition form.

Which Recertification Option Should You Choose?

Both options have significant advantages. Therefore, the Academy recommends you choose both.

That is, because the self-evaluation benefits of the examination are so great, we hope all Certified Archivists will choose to recertify by examination once or twice during their careers. Likewise, the opportunity to be recognized and rewarded for your professional activities is unique within the archival profession. We encourage Certified Archivists to take advantage of this important certification benefit at least once during their careers.

One scenario is to begin with recertifying by petition and then alternate between the two. Regardless of which option you choose, however, the Academy will always consider both alternatives equally valid. Your recertification choice should be dictated solely by your preferences, circumstances, and goals.

There is No Recertification Fee

You must maintain your annual dues, but, regardless of which recertification option you choose, there is no recertification fee.

We will notify you when your recertification is due. More information about recertification is available on the ACA's website or from the ACA secretariat. You are also welcome to contact the ACA's Regent for Certification Maintenance with your questions or comments.

Emeritus Status

Because the knowledge and experience of retired archivists are invaluable to the profession, the Academy of Certified Archivists offers them emeritus status. Emeritus status:

- honors their career contributions to the archival profession;
- allows them to remain fully active in the life of the profession to the degree they wish;

Section

3

Role Delineation Statement for Professional Archivists

The role delineation, developed by archivists in coordination with archival educators, defines the knowledge and skills necessary for archival work. Therefore, it is one of the Academy of Certified Archivists greatest contributions to the archival profession.

Preamble

These specifications for the certified archivist examination delineate the major domains of archival practice. Within each domain a series of tasks and related knowledge statements are defined. Together these elements encompass commonly accepted duties and responsibilities that professional archivists perform in the course of their work. This document assumes that individuals seeking certification recognize that (a) their professional practice is performed within the context of an institutional mission and is directed to the achievement of goals consistent with that mission, and (b) their professional practice has an ongoing effect on the emergence and evolution of that overall mission and its associated goals, as well as the development of the archival profession.

In addition, although those seeking certification do not necessarily control how archival policies are set that relate to activities such as acquisition, access, preservation, and security, it is assumed that archivists understand that the elements contained in such policies are important in carrying out in a professional manner the tasks specified below.

Each of the seven major domains is comprised of task statements which outline the duties included within each domain, as well as knowledge statements that describe generally what archivists need to know in order to complete each of the tasks. Preceding the domains is a listing of General Knowledge Statements applicable to several or all of the seven areas.

The ACA Role Delineation uses the definitions and distinctions found in the Society of American Archivists' Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies: "Archival records and papers are recorded information, regardless of physical format or type of creator (public or private), that is created or received by an individual or organization carrying out its activities and that is set aside for preservation and future use. Archival records and papers are instrumental for evidence and accountability as well as for social and cultural memory. The phrase records and papers will be used to encompass documentary evidence produced by organizations and individuals in all media (paper, digital, audio, and visual) and in any format."

General Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

- K-1 the impact of social, cultural, economic, political, and technological factors on the evolution and characteristic of records and papers and their management.
- K-2 the origins, development, and definitions of archival concepts, terms, principles, practices and methods.
- K-3 the development of archival institutions and programs in society.
- K-4 the similarities and differences between the nature and administration of organizational records and personal papers.
- K-5 the physical and technological characteristics of records and papers and how these characteristics influence their appraisal, acquisition, preservation, and use.
- K-6 archival theory, methodology, and practice appropriate for records and papers on all media: paper, digital, audio, and visual.
- K-7 the standards and accepted professional best practices that apply to archival work, including their rationale and implications.
- K-8 the concepts of the life cycle of records and the records continuum.
- K-9 the relationship between accepted professional policies and practices and institutional applications of these policies and practices.
- K-10 how the core archival functions (selection, appraisal, and acquisition; arrangement and description; reference services and access; preservation and protection; and outreach, advocacy and promotion) relate to each other and influence the administration of records and papers.
- K-11 the different institutional settings in which archival programs may exist and the implications of placement within a particular institution.
- K-12 how the administration of archives is related to, different from, and draws upon the theory, methodology, and practice of such allied professions and disciplines as: history, library and information science, records management, museology, historic preservation, historical editing, and oral history.
- K-13 how archival theory, methodology, and practice have been influenced and affected by computer technologies and applications such as electronic communication, including e-mail; and online information exchange, including the World Wide Web.

Domain 1: Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition

- Task 1 Identify sources of archival records and papers by applying knowledge about subjects, individuals, organizations, and others that create, receive and accumulate records and papers appropriate for acquisition.
- Task 2 Establish, maintain, and keep a record of communication(s) with creators and/or potential donors of records and papers.

Task 3 In determining the acquisition of records and papers, identify and evaluate record characteristics.

Task 4 Appraise records and papers for their long term retention.

Task 5 Implement disposition recommendations or decisions through legal instruments of transfer such as schedules, deed of gift, purchase contracts, and deposit agreements.

Task 6 Promote cooperative acquisition and disposition strategies when appropriate.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

K-101 how the mission and holdings of archival repositories relate to selection, appraisal and acquisition.

K-102 techniques for locating and surveying potential acquisitions.

K-103 the evolution, nature, and variety of recordkeeping systems and practice.

K-104 the history of record-creating and record-accumulating sources.

K-105 factors that should be considered when defining collecting or accessioning areas and developing an acquisition policy.

K-106 solicitation and negotiating techniques, including ways of educating document creators about the importance of preserving records and papers.

K-107 laws, policies, regulations, procedures, legal instruments, and ethical standards relating to acquisitions.

K-108 the values of records such as evidential, informational, administrative, legal, fiscal and intrinsic.

K-109 the past, current, and potential uses of records and papers.

K-110 inventorying, scheduling, appraisal, and disposition techniques.

K-111 selection, sampling, weeding, and other techniques to reduce volume.

K-112 methods of deaccessioning and other techniques of internal disposal.

K-113 impact of technology on traditional methods of inventorying, scheduling, appraisal, and disposition.

K-114 selection and appraisal methodologies, including documentation strategy and functional analysis, on all media: paper, digital, audio.

K-115 the characteristics of records and papers such as trustworthiness, authenticity, reliability, usability, and comprehensiveness, as well as form, uniqueness, and quantity.

Domain 2: Arrangement and Description

- Task 1 Analyze the existing arrangement and description of records and papers and make decisions about any further arrangement and description that may be necessary.
- Task 2 Design and implement an arrangement plan to either perfect the existing arrangement or establish a new one.
- Task 3 Design and implement a descriptive plan to identify and explain the structure, context and content of records and papers to promote their accessibility.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

- K-201 the complementary principles of provenance and original order.
- K-202 the history and variety of recordkeeping systems and practices for all media.
- K-203 the role of access and retrieval in making arrangement and description decisions.
- K-204 the concept of hierarchical levels of arrangement.
- K-205 the distinctions and relationships between physical and intellectual control of records and papers.
- K-206 the impact of technology on policies, practices, and methods for archival arrangement and description.
- K-207 the levels, types, and components of finding aids within an overall description program.
- K-208 the applicability of such standards as the MARC format, Encoded Archival Description (EAD), Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR2), and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCHS), SGML, XML, HTML/XHTML, and Dublin Core.
- K-209 the use of descriptive standards for records and papers stored in any form or medium.
- K-210 how the descriptive process may begin at or before records creation and continue throughout the life of the records and papers.

Domain 3: Reference Services and Access

- Task 1 Define the informational needs of users by such techniques as customer surveys, analysis of user requests, and keeping abreast of current research trends and strategies.
- Task 2 Develop policies and procedures designed to serve the information needs of various user groups, based on evaluation of institutional mandates and constituencies, the nature of the collections, relevant laws and ethical considerations, and appropriate technologies.

- Task 3 Make an appropriate response to user requests by:† providing information about records and papers, providing information from records and papers, providing access to records and papers, making copies, referring to other sources, or denying the requests for information.
- Task 4 Create, maintain, and periodically review, for self-evaluation and planning purposes, records of user requests.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

- K-301 issues and elements of archives user services, including policies and procedures governing access, reference services, and reproduction.
- K-302 laws, regulations, and ethical principles governing copyright, freedom of information, privacy, confidentiality, security, and equality of access.
- K-303 research strategies, needs, and past and current research interests and trends of genealogists, scholars, journalists, and other major users of records and papers.
- K-304 reference strategies based on varying holdings, formats, media, and user needs.
- K-305 the subject areas of an institution's holdings, and how they relate to holdings in other repositories.
- K-306 accepted best practices for safeguarding records and papers while in use and accommodating researcher-owned technical equipment in research rooms.
- K-307 techniques for expediting the handling of repeated requests on the same or similar topics through such tools as reference files, reference reports, frequently asked question pages on web sites, or surrogates of actual documents.

Domain 4: Preservation and Protection

- Task 1 Analyze the current physical condition of records and papers, and determine appropriate preservation priorities and actions.
- Task 2 Make and implement decisions about reformatting (e.g., digitization or microfilming), handling techniques, data migration, data conversion, appropriate laboratory treatments, phased conservation, and referral to technical experts.
- Task 3 Ensure the correct long-term storage of records and papers by such techniques as using proper containers and encasements, using acceptable shelving, and maintaining acceptable environmental controls.
- Task 4 Ensure the security of records and papers in all media and formats from damage, destruction, theft, and other forms of loss.
- Task 5 Prepare and implement procedures for disaster prevention, response and recovery.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

- K-401 research on the nature of materials' treatment and current preservation techniques.
- K-402 the causes and consequences of the deterioration of various media and formats.
- K-403 the elements of preservation management and preservation planning, including environmental monitoring, disaster planning, in-house conservation, reformatting, data migration, data conversion, and services available through outside vendors.
- K-404 the elements of security management and risk assessment.
- K-405 when to preserve records and papers in their original format or structure, and when to replace originals with reproductions in the same and/or different media or format.
- K-406 the range of preservation options and the application of each to records and papers on different media.

Domain 5: Outreach, Advocacy, and Promotion

- Task 1 Promote the use of records and papers by identifying potential users and uses, by analyzing and describing the benefits of use, and through public and educational programs.
- Task 2 Develop an understanding of, and support for, the archival program among resource allocators, key constituents, potential donors, allied professionals, and within related functional areas (IT, library, etc.) of the archives' parent organization.
- Task 3 Participate in programs that draw directly on records and papers to support such activities as exhibitions, conferences, publications, and editorial projects.
- Task 4 Participate in efforts to publicize archival collections and repositories through print, electronic, and broadcast media.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

- K-501 the variety of uses of records and papers, the benefits of such uses, and methods of imparting this information to potential users.
- K-502 the range of approaches that might be taken to advance public understanding of archival work and programs, such as news releases, websites, exhibitions, press kits, and curriculum packages.
- K-503 methods of presenting archival records and papers, or information from or about them, in a user-friendly manner that reduces the need for on-site visitation to the repository.
- K-504 methods of articulating to resource allocators the benefits of establishing and supporting the continued operation of an archival program in an organization.

K-505 methods of collaborating with functional units within the archives' parent organization to enhance or further archival work.

Domain 6: Managing Archival Programs

- Task 1 Participate in the development of a strategic vision for an archival program, establish priorities, continually assess progress toward that vision, and make adjustments as environments and resources change.
- Task 2 Assess staffing needs, recruit appropriate personnel, and train staff; support professional development; and ensure that the staff works together to fulfill the archives' mission.
- Task 3 Plan, gain approval of, and administer a budget; assess financial performance; and monitor progress.
- Task 4 Identify facility and equipment needs and prepare and implement plans to meet those needs.
- Task 5 Create policies, standards, and procedures that facilitate the range of activities in archival programs.
- Task 6 Use appropriate technologies to manage an archival program.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

- K-601 planning models and assessment tools and their role in an archival program.
- K-602 institutional structures, cultures, and values; and the role of archival programs within these institutions and structures.
- K-603 basic principles and procedures in human resource management appropriate for an archival program.
- K-604 current archival education standards for graduate and continuing education as well as other professional development options and certification programs.
- K-605 basic financial planning techniques appropriate for an archival program.
- K-606 legal requirements that affect the management of archival programs.
- K-607 space and resource management techniques.
- K-608 the application and impact of evolving technologies and information systems on the overall archival program.
- K-609 methodologies for gathering and evaluating data about archival functions within one's own program and programs at other institutions.
- K-610 sources of professional and technical advice and assistance, internal and external funding agencies, and other forms of potential program assistance.

Domain 7: Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities

- Task 1 Keep abreast of current issues in the field of archival history, theory, and practice through such activities as reading professional literature, attending conferences, and participating in continuing education programs.
- Task 2 Contribute to the development of the archival profession through such means as conducting research, making public presentations, and participating in professional organizations.
- Task 3 Respect all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to records and papers.
- Task 4 Conform to professional standards.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and can apply knowledge about:

- K-701 the variety of international, national, regional, and local organizations whose activities include archival concerns.
- K-702 research and literature relating to archival history, theory, methodology, and practice.
- K-703 the influence of social, cultural, economic, and legal systems upon the responsibilities of archivists.
- K-704 laws, regulations, and ethical considerations governing loans, deposits, exchanges, and gifts to institutions, including tax consequences.
- K-705 laws, regulations, and ethical considerations governing reference services and access to records and papers, including copyright, freedom of information, privacy, confidentiality, security, and equality of access.
- K-706 the uses of records and papers as legal evidence in courts, and the standards applied for legal admissibility.
- K-707 laws and regulations defining public records and governing their retention, accessibility, integrity, and disposition.
- K-708 laws, regulations, and ethical considerations governing personal papers.
- K-709 archival and information professional codes and standards, such as the Code of Ethics of the Society of American Archivists and the SAA/ALA joint statement on Standards for Access to Research Materials in Archival and Manuscript Repositories.

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Section

4

A Study Guide to the Archival Certification Examination

This study guide is composed of three parts:

- a discussion of examination development and content;
- general hints on taking multiple choice exams; and
- sample questions with commentaries.

You should also read carefully the *Role Delineation Document* that appears as Section 3 of this handbook. The *Role Delineation Document* outlines the knowledge and practice areas that define the archival profession, and it is the document on which we base the examination.

Special note: We intend this study guide to be a starting point for preparing for the ACA examination. Following the guide does not guarantee a passing score.

Examination development and content

Examination Development

Primary responsibility for the content of the archival certification examination rests with the ACA's Regent for Examination Development and the Examination Development Committee in cooperation with an external testing service. Committee members draft questions according to a standard format:

- the question or scenario, called the "stem;"
- the correct answer;
- incorrect answers, called "distracters;"
- a reference to the professional literature, including specific page numbers; and
- the "rubric," which is the domain, task, and knowledge statement found in the ACA Role Delineation.

The testing service reviews each question to ensure conformity to psychometric principles, editorial correctness, and clarity. The committee also reviews the questions and answers for content, relevancy, and accuracy, as well as appropriateness to practice and level of difficulty. Questions the committee and test service accepts are added to the "item bank," the body of questions from which examinations are constructed.

Revising and Updating the Examination

The item bank is continually reviewed, revised, and refined by the Examination Development Committee and our testing service's professional psychometricians. The latter conduct statistical analyses on each question used in examinations. This includes tracking candidate performance, measuring level of difficulty, and analyzing outlying possibilities such as a greater likelihood of correct answer by a poor performer versus otherwise superior test takers. The committee reviews the item bank regularly, adding new questions and revising or retiring questions that have become dated or have performed poorly according to testing standards.

Examination Content

The examination is composed of 100 multiple-choice questions (or items). Each item is formulated as a problem set that can be resolved by selecting a single appropriate response from among several choices. The seven domains of archival practice outlined in the Role Delineation Statement have equivalent weight on the exam. Each is represented by 14-15 of the 100 test questions

General hints for taking multiple choice examinations

The examination for certified archivist contains multiple-choice questions similar to those on the Graduate Record Examination and exams for admission to graduate professional education in law and medicine. The following techniques for taking such exams can enhance candidates' opportunities for scoring well.

- Pace yourself so that you have time to consider all of the questions in the time allotted.
- There is only one correct choice for each question. If you mark more than one answer, the question will be counted as wrong.
- Use the test booklet as a workbook. First, mark your choices on the test booklet, and then transfer the answers to the answer sheet in groups of 10-15 questions. Why? Moving your eyes back and forth between the test booklet and answer sheet is a waste of time and invites errors in marking the answer sheet. Keeping your eyes focused on the test booklet improves your concentration.
- If the correct answer is not obvious to you, begin by eliminating the choices that are clearly incorrect. Cross them out in the test booklet. If you are uncertain about a choice, write a question mark beside it. Even if you are still not certain of the correct answer, the remaining choices present a better chance for a successful guess.
- Answer every question. There is no penalty for guessing.
- Allow yourself time to double check that the number of each question matches the number on the answer sheet where you recorded your answer.

Sample questions and commentaries

The following sample questions were taken from the ACA item bank and have been retired from the item bank. Each question was used on one or more exams.

The questions test higher-level knowledge. Therefore, the difference between a correct and an incorrect answer may be quite subtle. In addition, some questions ask for the *best* choice or the *first* action to be taken. In these cases, the distracters may be professionally-sound choices, but not the first or best one. A Certified Archivist is expected to know the difference.

For each sample question, we provide the following:

- the question as presented on the examination;
- the correct answer;
- the rubric taken from the ACA Role Delineation Document;
- explanations for correct and incorrect answers; and
- sources for the answer

Questions in the item bank tend to fall into certain categories. We thought it more important to illustrate the categories of questions rather than to try to cover all the domains of archival knowledge. The types of questions we have included are:

straight factual;

situation or scenario requiring the application of knowledge; and

negative questions

Based upon past performance, some questions appear to be easy while others are more difficult. The Examination Development Committee tries to achieve balance across the exam while still differentiating candidates with the required level of knowledge.

We hope that these sample questions are helpful to you as you prepare to take the examination for Certified Archivist.

ACA Sample Question No. 1

“It has been said that ‘The French Revolution mark[ed] the beginning of a new era in archives administration.’ Which of the following developments makes the French Revolution such a watershed in archival history?”

- 1) It was during this time that the principle of the accessibility of archival records to the public was established.
- 2) Beginning in 1789, government offices initiated the practice of permanently retaining both incoming and outgoing copies of official correspondence.
- 3) French archivists from that period established the theory that archival records should be appraised on the basis of evidential and informational value.
- 4) It marked the first time that a government agency codified the different roles of public librarians and archivists who keep public records.

Correct answer: 1

Rubric: Domain 7, Task 1, Knowledge Statement 2

This item is an example of factual questions on the examination. It tests knowledge in a straightforward manner, and selecting the correct answer does not require analysis or interpretation.

The major archival legacy of the French Revolution was the principle that the people should have access to the records of their government. Before this time, records were preserved to meet the administrative needs of the government rather than to offer accountability to the public.

The question's three distracters are plausible if the candidate is unfamiliar with the evolution of the archives profession. Choice 2 is incorrect because the retention of both incoming and outgoing official correspondence predated the French Revolution. Choice 3 was a theory developed at the U.S. National Archives in the mid-20th century. Choice 4 sounds plausible, but really has no relevance to the French Revolution.

On previous examinations, 84% of candidates chose the correct answer. Almost 9% selected choice 3, meaning that many candidates recognized evidential and informational value as an important concept without knowing where it originated. Over 5% selected choice 2, but these candidates on average scored over 20 points lower on the overall exam than did candidates who selected the correct answer. Just under 2% of candidates selected choice 4.

The French Revolution is discussed in the following sources: Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader*, pp. 5-6; T. R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, pp. 4-5; and James M. O'Toole, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*, p. 29.

ACA Sample Question No. 2

“Which type of microfilm has the longest life expectancy?”

- 1) Vesicular
- 2) Silver halide
- 3) Thermoplastic
- 4) Diazo

Correct answer: 2

Rubric: Domain 4, Task 2, Knowledge Statement 5

This question was created to test the applicant's understanding of reformatting collections onto microfilm as a preservation measure. The microfilm with the longest life expectancy is silver halide (also known as silver gelatin) film, the only truly archival film. If properly processed and stored, silver halide microfilm has a life expectancy of 500 years.

Diazo and vesicular film have shorter life expectancies. They are appropriate for user (service) copies made from the original silver halide microfilm. Thermoplastic film is used in some of the “updatable microfiche” systems and has a very short life expectancy.

Several preservation manuals recommend that film produced as a preservation format should have a silver halide master negative. User positive and negative copies may be produced on either diazo or vesicular film.

This is a “you know it or you don’t” type of question. Over 71% of exam takers chose vesicular film, almost 10% chose thermoplastic, and 5% chose diazo - all incorrect answers. Only 13% chose silver halide, the correct answer - but these candidates scored higher on the overall exam than the candidates who selected the incorrect answers.

A source is Lisa Fox, *Preservation Microfilming*, pp. 171-72.

ACA Sample Question No. 3

“Which one of the following categories of records is expressly covered by the United States Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?”

- 1) Records of the judicial branch of the federal government.
- 2) Records of the executive branch of the federal government.
- 3) Records of the legislative branch of the federal government.
- 4) All records of the federal government.

Correct answer: 2

Rubric: Domain 7, Task 3, Knowledge Statement 3

This item was developed because federal and state governments all have FOIA statutes covering some portion of government records; archivists should be familiar with the federal law as well as state statutes that may apply to them.

The question is purely factual, and no interpretation is involved. FOIA only applies to the records of the executive branch of the federal government. The law does not apply to Supreme Court and other judicial records (#1), or to Congressional records (#3), and therefore does not apply to all records of the federal government (#4).

If you selected distracter #4 as your answer, you have a great deal of company. According to our statistics, the majority of test takers have incorrectly thought that FOIA applied to all federal records. The question has been used in exams involving 80 candidates, and just 23% have answered it correctly. That select group scored an average of nearly eight points higher on the exam than the sizable group that incorrectly selected distracter #4, making the question a valid one from a testing standpoint.

This question comes from Gary M. Peterson and Trudy Huskamp Peterson, *Archives and Manuscripts: Law*, a source especially noted in the ACA Selected Reading List.

ACA Sample Question No. 4

“The newly hired archivist of a local historical society in a town of 10,000 people wishes to raise funds for publicity and outreach. The first step is to:”

- 1) send a letter of appeal to members of the community.
- 2) set up an advisory board.
- 3) assess the institution’s mission and goals.
- 4) submit a grant proposal to a government agency or local foundation.

Correct answer: 3

Rubric: Domain 6, Task 1, Knowledge Statement 1

This question was constructed to test the applicant’s understanding of management issues, particularly planning. It is an example of a situation requiring the application of knowledge.

All four answers are steps that might and should be taken to raise funds and to garner publicity for the society; however, the correct answer (#3) is the one that should be accomplished *first*.

A new archivist needs to understand the mission and goals of his/her institution in order to put together a focused appeal for funds. One must be able to clearly define why the funds are needed and how they will be used to further the goals of the institution. The campaign has a greater chance of success if it is framed within the mission of the organization. Thus mission and goals should be assessed even before an advisory board is created, an appeal is mailed, or a grant proposal is submitted.

97% of candidates answered this question correctly. Only 2% selected choice 4 and 1% selected choice 1. Finch’s *Advocating Archives*, pp. 25-26, discusses these issues.

ACA Sample Question No. 5

“Which of the following information files maintained by archives should NOT be made available to the public unless required by law?”

- 1) User statistics
- 2) Acquisition lists
- 3) User call slips
- 4) Shelf lists

Correct answer: 3

Rubric: Domain 3, Task 3, Knowledge Statement 2

This is an example of a negative question—one that uses “not” in the stem—which we try to keep to a minimum as a test technique.

Names, addresses, and research topics should not be released to the public. Researchers have a right to privacy that archivists respect from an ethical as well as legal perspective.

According to our statistics, candidates have answered this question correctly 100% of the time. It is surprising that “acquisitions lists” (No. 2) is not a better distracter, since there could be an assumption that they contain donor information, which is usually confidential. Shelf lists (No. 4) distributed to the public might present a security risk and therefore might be restricted. Neither answer, however, would be as good as No. 3. User statistics (No. 1) generally contain no information that must be withheld from the public for privacy reasons.

Although the reference for this question is Mary Jo Pugh’s *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*, the question does require some juxtaposition of knowledge. In order to answer the question correctly, a candidate would need to know what information is contained on a call slip (p. 74) and what information should not be distributed to the public (p. 57).

ACA Sample Question No. 6

“A university archivist receives from a professor a carton of correspondence, news clippings, broadsides, and annotated Faculty Senate reports, all concerning campus unrest during the Vietnam War era. The archives already holds materials on this subject in the personal papers of another professor and in a series of records titled ‘Student Protests’ in the President’s Office record group. The preferred procedure would be to”:

- 1) arrange and describe the new materials as a separate collection.
- 2) combine all the materials relating to student protests into one collection.
- 3) combine the papers of both professors, weeding out duplicate items for the vertical file.
- 4) place the broadsides in the Broadside Collection, add the Faculty Senate reports to the Faculty Senate record group, and then process the remaining papers as a separate collection.

Correct Answer: 1

Rubric: Domain 2, Task 2, Knowledge Statement 1

This question calls for the application of a general principle to a specific situation. Provenance, a fundamental principle of archival practice, requires that the records of one records creator not be mingled with those of another. The principle applies to the papers of individuals as well as to the records of organizations. Thus, number 1 is the correct answer. It was selected by nearly 79% of those who answered this question.

No one selected number 2, a choice that is clearly in violation of the principle of provenance. Number 3 was the response given by approximately 3.5% of test takers. Although weeding out duplicate items is an accepted practice, combining the papers of two records creators is not. Because part of the answer is incorrect, this choice is wrong.

Eighteen percent chose number 4, which violates the principle of provenance with regard to portions of the newly acquired collection. Adding the professor’s annotated copies of reports to the Faculty Senate record group is clearly inappropriate; therefore the answer is incorrect. If

we assume that the Broadsides Collection is an artificial one established for convenience, the university archivist might add material from this recent acquisition, leaving a “separation sheet” in the professor’s papers. Even if this portion of the answer is correct, the other half is wrong

The principle of provenance, which supports the correct answer to this question, is discussed in Fredric Miller, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, pp. 25-6; and in the Bellardos’ *Glossary*, p. 27.

ACA Sample Question No. 7

“Which of the following is the MOST accurate definition of MARC AMC?”

- 1) It is a set of fields that can be used in either manual or automated systems to record information about archival and manuscript collections.
- 2) It is an automated system used for inputting and processing information about archival and manuscript collections.
- 3) It is an automated method used to catalog archival and manuscript collections, cartographic records, and visual materials.
- 4) It is a software program that is widely used in the arrangement and description of archival and manuscript collections.

Correct answer: 1

Rubric: Domain 2, Task 3, Knowledge Statement 8

This question is a tricky one that tests whether or not the candidate really understands MARC AMC or is just associating it with “computers.” MARC AMC stands for “Machine Readable Cataloging, Archives and Manuscript Control.” It is a format that ensures that descriptions of records are standardized and facilitates information exchange. It does not even have to be used in an automated system, but can be done on worksheets or some other manual system. Only 41% of candidates selected the correct answer, number 1.

While the other choices contain elements of truth, no other answer is as accurate as the first. Choice 2 limits MARC AMC to automated systems. Granted, most archivists used MARC AMC as part of information systems, but this is not a requirement of the format. Over 14% of candidates selected this answer.

Choice 3 is incorrect because MARC AMC is for only one type of material: archives and manuscripts. Other types of materials, like visual materials, had their own MARC formats. The Library of Congress, the developer of MARC, is moving to one format that is applicable to all types of materials. This format, called USMARC, will supersede MARC AMC. Over 41% of candidates selected this choice, though those candidates scored almost 10 points lower on the exam than candidates who selected the correct choice.

Choice 4 is incorrect because MARC AMC is a *format for information exchange* rather than a software program. While there are various software programs that incorporate MARC AMC, the format need not be linked to a software package. Just fewer than 4% of candidates selected this choice.

A reference is Fredric Miller’s *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, p. 111.

ACA Sample Question No. 8

“The principle that archives of a given records creator must NOT be intermingled with those of other records creators is called:”

- 1) provenance
- 2) continuous custody
- 3) evidential value
- 4) original order

Correct answer: 1

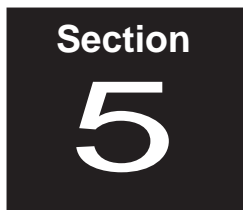
Rubric: Domain 2, Task 1, Knowledge Statement 1

This is a straight forward question that requires the candidate to recognize and understand two bedrock principles of archival arrangement: provenance and original order

Almost 88% of candidates correctly selected provenance as the answer. The principle of provenance states that the archives of a given records creator must not be intermingled with those of other records creators. One in ten of the candidates, however, confused provenance with original order, the principle which calls for the archivist to retain the arrangement established by the creator of the records. Candidates who selected numbers 1 and 4 scored virtually the same on the overall examination.

The remaining two choices were such obvious incorrect choices that few candidates selected them. Evidential value relates to appraisal, not arrangement and description. Surprisingly, the 1.2% who selected this answer scored almost as highly on the overall exam as candidates who knew the correct answer. The 1.2% who selected continuous custody scored almost 25 points lower on the exam than candidates who knew the correct answer.

A concise explanation of the principles of provenance and original order, and the difference between them, is found in James M. O’Toole’s *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*, pp. 55-58.



Selected Readings

We have compiled this list of selected readings to assist you in preparing for the Academy of Certified Archivists examination.

You should note this list of sources is by no means a complete bibliography of archival works. It contains only the most traditional and widely available publications. For a more extensive list of current archival references, we advise you to consult the notes and bibliographies of the books and journals listed.

In compiling this reading list, we intended to provide candidates with a significant—but not overwhelming—list from which to study. In providing this list, we cannot guarantee passage of the examination; however, candidates should have an idea of the types of sources from which the vast majority of questions were selected.

Archival classics

Archival literature builds from a list of “classics.” These set the tone for much of the development of the field in the twentieth century and are integral to our professional identity.

Candidates should be at least aware of such contributions and their authors.

- *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson*. Edited by Robert Ellis, Peter Waine with a new introduction by Terence M. Eastwood. SAA Archival Classics Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003.
- Muller, Samuel, J. A. Feith, and R. Fruin. *A Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1898, 1968. SAA Archival Classics Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003.
- Norton, Margaret Cross. *Norton on Archives*, Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975. SAA Archival Classics Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003.
- Posner, Ernst. *Archives in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972. SAA Archival Classics Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003.
- Schellenberg, Theodore R. *The Appraisal of Modern Public Records*, Washington: National Archives and Records Service, 1956.
- Schellenberg, Theodore R. *Management of Archives*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1965. Reprinted 1981.

- Schellenberg, Theodore R. *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956. SAA Archival Classics Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003.

General sources: journals

Journal articles are at the heart of the modern development of archival theory and practice.

Candidates should be aware of the leading archival periodicals and as professionals will be expected to keep abreast of this literature.

- *American Archivist*; published semi-annually by the Society of American Archivists, Chicago, Illinois. Examination candidates should be especially familiar with the articles published over the past ten years in the *American Archivist*.

Other essential journals include:

- *Archival Issues*, semi-annual journal published by the Midwest Archives Conference.
- *Archivaria*, semi-annual journal published by the Association of Canadian Archivists.
- *Provenance*, annual journal published by the Society of Georgia Archivists.

General sources: books and pamphlets

As demonstrated by the growing quality of the submissions for the SAA's annual Waldo Gifford Leland Award, American archival monographs are entering a renaissance. Candidates will want to be aware of this growth, especially in relation to newer electronic arenas. These general sources cover more than one domain. The general readership charge obviously continues as part and parcel of your professional careers.

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Domain 1: Selection, Appraisal and Acquisition

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Domain 2: Arrangement and Description

- *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004.
- Fox, Michael J. and Peter Wilkerson. *Introduction to Archival Organization and Description: Access to Cultural Heritage*, Los Angeles: Getty Information Institute, 1998. Available at: http://www.schistory.org/getty/about_index.html.

- Miller, Fredric M. *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990.
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- Stephens, and Roderick C. Wallace. *Electronic Records Retention: New Strategies for Data Life Cycle Management*. Lenexa, KA: ARMA International, 2003.
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