

Academy of Certified Archivists

Handbook

for

Archival Certification

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

Published by the:

Academy of Certified Archivists
230 Washington Avenue Extension, Suite 101
Albany, New York 12203-5390
Phone: 518-694-8471
Fax: 518-463-8656
E-Mail: aca@caphill.com
Web Site: www.certifiedarchivists.org

COPYRIGHT © 1998

Revised March 2019

ACADEMY OF CERTIFIED ARCHIVISTS

Table of Contents

PREFACE	1
THE ACADEMY OF CERTIFIED ARCHIVISTS	2
ACA Mission.....	2
ACA Background and History	2
Membership	3
Membership Ombudsman.....	4
ACA Board of Regents.....	4
ACA Administration	5
THE ARCHIVAL CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION	6
How do Archivists Become Certified?	6
When is the Examination Offered?	6
Where is the Examination Offered?	6
Qualifying to Take the Archival Certification Examination	7
Taking the Test	12
Recertification	15
Emeritus Status.....	16
ROLE DELINEATION STATEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL ARCHIVISTS	18
Preamble	19
General Knowledge Statements	19
Domain 1: Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition	21
Domain 2: Arrangement and Description.....	22
Domain 3: Reference Services and Access.....	23
Domain 4: Preservation and Protection	24
Domain 5: Outreach, Advocacy, and Promotion.....	25

Domain 6: Managing Archival Programs	26
Domain 7: Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities	27
ARCHIVAL CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION STUDY GUIDE.....	28
Examination Development and Content	29
General Hints for Taking Multiple Choice Examinations.....	30
Sample Questions and Commentaries	30
SUGGESTED READINGS	39
Archival Classics	39
General Sources: Journals	40
General Sources: Books and Pamphlets	40
Domain 1: Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition	41
Domain 2: Arrangement and Description.....	41
Domain 3: Reference Services and Access	42
Domain 4: Preservation and Protection	42
Domain 5: Outreach, Advocacy, and Promotion.....	43
Domain 6: Managing Archival Programs	43
Domain 7: Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities	44

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 item 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 Statement 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.

The Role Delineation Statement, Suggested Reading List, and sample questions continue to be reviewed periodically and updated by the Exam Development Committee and specialized task forces appointed by the ACA President. The current version of the Role Delineation Statement was prepared in 2014 by a task force headed by Mary Elizabeth Ruwell.

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 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 about which certification candidates would be tested. Using survey and interview techniques, the IBC developed the Role Delineation Statement. 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 activities ("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:

Domain 1: Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition

Domain 2: Arrangement and Description of Documents

Domain 3: Reference Services and Access to Documents

Domain 4: Preservation and Protection of Documents

Domain 5: Outreach, Advocacy, and Promotion of Documentary Collections and Archival Repositories

Domain 6: Managing Archival Programs

Domain 7: 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 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. At that time, 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 Society of American Archivists' Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO 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 ombudsman serves as your first contact and referral point for 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 brochures 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:

Academy of Certified Archivists
1450 Western Avenue, Suite 101
Albany, New York 12203
Ph: 518-694-8471
Fx: 518-463-8656
Email: aca@caphill.com
Web Site: www.certifiedarchivists.org

The Archival Certification Examination

How do Archivists Become Certified?

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

When is the Examination Offered?

The Academy offers the examination during 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 Society of American Archivists' Annual Meeting

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 at the SAA conference in hopes of substantially reducing candidates' travel costs.

At pre-determined sites selected by ACA Officers and Regents

In addition to offering the examination at the SAA conference, 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 "Pick Your Site" locations

The Academy's "Pick Your Site" program allows candidates to petition the Academy to hold the certification examination in 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 "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.

If at least three people who register to take the exam by the 11:59 pm EST "early bird" deadline, February 15, choose the same new site or if at least five people who register by the 11:59 EDT regular deadline, May 31, choose the same new site, we will add that city as a test location.

The Academy will announce petition sites as soon as they are approved, and candidates other than the petitioners may sit for the examination at petition sites. However, due to time constraints associated with petition sites, the Academy cannot be responsible for non-petitioners knowing of sites availability.

Qualifying to Take the Archival Certification Examination

Option 1. Master's degree with a concentration in archival administration, plus one year of 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 and (B) at least two years of qualifying professional experience.

Option 3. Provisional Status

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 but (B) without the one year of qualifying work experience. See additional information below.

Option 4. Exam Re-Take/Previously Approved

This option does not require documentation. Exam fee required.

Option 5. Individuals previously declared eligible but had their applications held

Qualified applicants need to submit only a notice of intention to take the exam. No examination fee.

More information about Provisional Status

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, the development and management of archival programs, and the topics outlined in the ACA's "Role Delineation" statement.

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 consists of 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 submit a complete application (including supporting materials) prior to the deadline. Application reviewers need to gain a clear and complete picture of the candidate's education and experience, so it is in the candidate's best interest to submit a full and revealing set of materials. Where questions about the level or type of work conducted, candidates should demonstrate whether the work is professional or non-professional.

Makeup of a Complete Application

A complete application consists of:

Examination Application for Certified Archivist. The application 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.

Applicants must supply the following documents:

Option 1:

- A copy of the applicant's transcript showing the graduate archival courses completed. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable, but the applicant should submit an official transcript when it becomes available.
- A letter from the applicant's supervisor verifying the applicant has worked the required number of hours and briefly describing the applicant's duties. It should be on organizational letterhead.
- An official job description clearly showing the professional archival nature of the work carried out.

Option 2:

- A copy of the applicant's transcript showing the awarding of a master's or doctoral degree. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable, but the applicant should submit an official transcript when it becomes available.
- A letter from the applicant's supervisor verifying the applicant has worked the required number of hours and briefly describing the applicant's duties. It should be on organizational letterhead.
- An official job description clearly showing the professional archival nature of the work carried out.

Option 3:

- A copy of the applicant's transcript showing the awarding of a master's or doctoral degree. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable, but the applicant should submit an official transcript when it becomes available.

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 whose coursework includes titles that do not reflect archival content are encouraged to submit course descriptions.

Applicants whose job titles do not fully reveal the nature of the work they do are asked 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 conducted.

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.

Application Review

The Regent for Examination Administration oversees the review of all applications. The regent is helped by a committee 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 Academy will inform unsuccessful applicants of their disqualification. Judgments 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 an appeal is successful, the candidate will be eligible to take the next examination. Candidates may reapply to take the examination as often as they 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 expenses incurred for evaluating and processing applications.

Applicants can also pay via credit card if they submit their applications online. If paying online, the fee is US\$52, which includes the online processing fee.

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 have demonstrated the necessary experience and qualifications and successfully completed the examination 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.

Provisional members do not 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 sit for the examination will receive printed directions and the exact address and room number of the test site. A positive proof of identity bearing a recent photograph MUST BE PROVIDED to the exam proctor 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. Candidates who cannot produce the required photo identification will not be allowed in the examination room.

Examination Schedule

- 8:30 AM. Report to testing center
- 8:50 - 9:00 AM. Proctor reads instructions and distributes test materials
- 9:00 AM. Examination period begins
- 12:00 PM 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 (see “Pick Your Site” locations on page 7).

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.

Cell phones, tablets, calculators, cameras and other electronic devices are not permitted in 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.

Answers must be marked on the answer sheet. No credit will be given for answers marked in the test booklet. Verify that the number of the question being answered 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.

Special Accommodations

If you have a disability or condition that affects 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 applicants with health-related needs. We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate all such applicants.

Test Results

The test is scored by a professional testing expert. Capitol Hill Management Services (CHMS) will report your test score approximately four to six 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 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 that 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, 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 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. If you wish to retake the examination, contact the ACA secretariat for more information. You must submit a renewal application accompanied by an

application fee each time you apply to take the examination. Members of the Academy may be available as mentors to help with your study.

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 1. Recertification by examination

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

Minimal fuss. 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 “Pick Your Site” program), then you will incur no additional travel expenses.

Minimal paperwork. All Certified Archivists are pre-qualified to sit for the examination and 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.

One of the most important benefits 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 2. 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.

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

- honors contributions to the archival profession;
- allows fully active participation in the life of the profession to the desired degree;
- reduces annual dues to US\$10 ; and
- exempts emeritus members from the recertification process.

To qualify as an Emeritus Member, ACA members must be in good standing, fully retired from daily archival work and have recertified at least once. Simply check the box on your annual dues form, noting that you are applying for emeritus status. Return the dues form with a letter stating your retirement date , a copy of your CV, and a check for emeritus dues.

Role Delineation Statement for Professional Archivists

The Role Delineation Statement for Professional Archivists is one of the Academy of Certified Archivists' greatest contributions to the profession. Developed by archivists and archival educators, it defines the knowledge and skills necessary for archival work. The Role Delineation is a unique and valuable contribution to the field because it was created according to rigorous standards under the direction of test-development professionals. The systematic formulation of a statement describing the general responsibilities of professional archivists, and the skills and knowledge that they need to perform those responsibilities, is the foundation upon which to build a viable and sustainable certification examination.

Panels of archivists and archival educators wrote the original Role Delineation Statement under the guidance of test development professionals. These outside experts ensured the objective, impartial, and non-political nature of the drafting process. A random sample of professional archivists then validated the document for fairness, accuracy, and thoroughness. The result was a series of test specifications known as the Role Delineation Statement for Professional Archivists. It encompasses more than one hundred commonly accepted duties and responsibilities that professional archivists perform in the course of their work.

The Academy regularly reviews the Role Delineation Statement to ensure it remains a valid basis for the certification examination. Accordingly, in June 2002 President Leon Miller appointed a Role Delineation Review Task Force consisting of Edie Hedlin (chair), Thomas Brown, Gregory Hunter, Gerrienne Schaad, and Deborah Skaggs. After recommending editing and wording changes to reflect recent changes in the field, the task force concluded that the Role Delineation remained a relevant and valid definition of professional archival practice.

At its meeting in March 2003, the ACA Board accepted the revised Role Delineation Statement, which became the basis for the archival certification examination beginning with the test administered in August 2004. In March 2008, the ACA Board decided that the Role Delineation Statement should be reviewed at least every five years to ensure that it remains a current, relevant, and effective document. Subsequent Role Delineation Review Task Forces have been appointed in 2008 and 2014, and led by Cindy C. Smolovik and Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, respectively.

The Role Delineation Statement encompasses more than 100 commonly accepted duties and responsibilities that professional archivists perform in the course of their work.

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 with regard 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. ACA is aware that rapidly changing information technologies challenge archival principles, practices, and communication protocols, demanding effective leadership from the archives community to access, capture, and preserve records in all formats. The current update of the Role Delineation Statement reflects digital description, access, and outreach.

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 Statement uses the definitions and distinctions found in [*A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*](#) available on the Society of American Archivists website.

General Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and apply knowledge about:

- K-1 the impact of social, cultural, economic, political, and technological factors on the evolution and characteristic of archival materials 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 in the administration of institutional archives, personal papers, and manuscript collections.
- K-5 the physical and technological characteristics of archival materials and how these characteristics influence their appraisal, acquisition, preservation, and use.
- K-6 archival theory, methodology, and practice appropriate for archival materials on all media including working together and with other professionals to ensure the longevity of those materials in analog or digital formats.
- 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 archival materials.
- K-11 the types of institutional settings where archival programs exist and the implications of placement within a particular institution.
- K-12 how the administration of archival programs 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, museum studies, historic preservation, historical editing, and oral history.
- K-13 how archival theory, methodology, and practice are influenced and affected by evolving electronic and other technologies.

Domain 1: Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition

- Task 1 Identify sources of archival materials by applying knowledge about subjects, individuals, organizations, and others that create, receive, and accumulate archival materials appropriate for acquisition.
- Task 2 Establish, maintain, and keep a record of communication(s) with creators and/or potential donors of archival materials.
- Task 3 In determining the acquisition of archival materials, identify and evaluate record characteristics.
- Task 4 Appraise archival materials for their enduring value and long-term retention.
- Task 5 Implement disposition recommendations or decisions through legal instruments such as retention schedules, deeds of gift, purchase contracts, and deposit agreements.
- Task 6 Promote cooperative acquisition and disposition strategies.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and 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 factors in determining official records or record copy through appraisal techniques and retention scheduling.
- K-105 factors that should be considered when defining collecting or accessioning areas and developing an acquisition or collection policy.
- K-106 solicitation and negotiation techniques, including ways of educating document creators about the importance of preserving archival materials.
- K-107 laws, policies, regulations, procedures, legal instruments, and ethical standards relating to acquisitions and disposition.

- K-108 the evidential, informational, administrative, legal, fiscal, and intrinsic values of archival materials.
- K-109 the past, current, and potential uses of archival materials.
- K-110 appraising, inventorying, retention scheduling, deaccessioning, and disposition techniques.
- K-111 selection, sampling, re-appraisal, weeding, and other volume reduction techniques.
- K-114 selection and appraisal methodologies, including documentation strategy and functional analysis.
- K-115 the characteristics of archival materials 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 archival materials 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 archival materials to promote their accessibility.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and 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 archival materials.

- 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 availability and applicability of descriptive standards.
- K-209 how the descriptive process may begin at or before records creation and continue throughout the life of the archival materials.

Domain 3: Reference Services and Access

- Task 1 Define the informational needs of users and keep 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 Respond appropriately to user requests by providing information about and from archival materials and providing access to archival materials, making copies, referring to other sources, or providing an explanation for denying the request.
- Task 4 Create, maintain, and periodically review records of user requests for self-evaluation and planning purposes.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and apply knowledge about:

- K-301 issues and elements regarding user services, including policies and procedures governing access, reference services, and reproduction.
- K-302 laws, regulations, and ethical principles governing copyright, digital rights, freedom of information, privacy, confidentiality, security, and equality of access.
- K-303 research strategies, current and past interests, and trends of a wide variety of user groups.
- K-304 understanding user needs to frame reference strategies for varying formats and media.

K-305 the subject areas of an institution's holdings, and how they relate to holdings in other repositories.

K-306 developing policies and procedures for safeguarding physical and electronic archival records and materials while in use, based on accepted best practices, which provides security and accommodates reasonable researcher needs within research rooms.

K-307 techniques for effectively handling repeat requests on the same or similar topics using established tools.

K-308 techniques for evaluating the effectiveness of reference services.

Domain 4: Preservation and Protection

Task 1 Analyze the current physical condition of archival materials including the devices and media on which they are preserved to determine appropriate preservation priorities and actions.

Task 2 Develop and adopt strategies and proper technologies for preservation; make and implement appropriate preservation and conservation decisions about reformatting, handling techniques, laboratory treatments, and referrals to technical experts.

Task 3 Apply best practices for long-term storage of archival materials using proper containers, encasements, shelving, storage facilities, and environmental controls.

Task 4 Ensure the security of archival materials regardless of format 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 apply knowledge about:

K-401 the nature of materials' treatment and current preservation techniques.

K-402 the causes and consequences of the deterioration of various media and formats, including the factors that influence the stability and durability of electronic records.

K-403 the elements of preservation management and preservation planning, including environmental monitoring, disaster preparedness, in-house conservation, reformatting, data migration, data conversion, and services available through outside vendors.

- K-404 the elements of security management and risk assessment, including threats and vulnerabilities of electronic records.
- K-405 when to preserve archival materials 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 archival materials on different media.

Domain 5: Outreach, Advocacy, and Promotion

- Task 1 Promote the use of archival materials 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 other internal and external stakeholders to the archives' parent organization.
- Task 3 Develop and participate in programs that draw directly on archival materials to support such activities as exhibitions, conferences, publications, and editorial projects.
- Task 4 Develop and participate in efforts to publicize archival collections and repositories.
- Task 5 Develop relationships with internal and external partners in order to broaden and diversify outreach and promotional activities.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and apply knowledge about:

- K-501 the variety of uses of archival materials, the benefits of such uses, and methods of imparting this information to potential users.
- K-502 the range of approaches to advance public understanding of archival work and programs.
- K-503 methods of presenting archival materials, or information from or about them, in the most effective and efficient manner.
- K-504 methods of articulating to resource allocators the benefits of the establishment and continued support of an archival program in an organization.

K-505 methods of collaborating with other units within the archives' parent organization or with other institutions to enhance and promote archival work.

Domain 6: Managing Archival Programs

Task 1 Develop 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 Participate fully in budget processes and assess financial performance.

Task 4 Identify facility and equipment needs, and prepare and implement plans to meet those needs.

Task 5 Create policies, standards, and procedures that define and facilitate the range of activities in archival programs.

Task 6 Use appropriate technologies to manage archival programs and collaborate with the varied departments in parent institutions and other professions to ensure that the archival record is preserved.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and apply knowledge about:

K-601 planning models and assessment tools, and their role in archival programs.

K-602 institutional structures, cultures, and values, and the role of archival programs within institutions.

K-603 management principles and procedures.

K-604 current archival education standards for graduate and continuing education, as well as other professional development opportunities and certification programs.

K-605 budgeting and financial planning techniques.

K-606 legal requirements that affect the management of archival programs.

K-607 facilities, space, personnel, and resource management.

K-608 the application and impact of evolving technologies and information systems on archival programs.

K-609 methodologies for gathering and evaluating data about archival functions within one's own program and programs of other institutions.

K-610 sources of professional and technical advice and assistance.

K-611 internal and external funding sources.

Domain 7: Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities

Task 1 Maintain professional awareness of current issues in the field of archival history, theory, and practice by reading professional literature, attending conferences, and participating in continuing education and professional exchanges.

Task 2 Contribute to the development of the archival profession by research, publishing, presentations, and advocacy.

Task 3 Distinguish between statutory or other legal authorities and standards sponsored by self-governing professional societies and act appropriately with respect to archival materials.

Task 4 Conform to professional and ethical standards and promote best practices.

Knowledge Statements

Archivists know and apply knowledge about:

K-701 international, national, regional, and sub-regional organizations whose activities include archival concerns.

K-702 research and resources relating to archival history, theory, methodology, and best practices.

K-703 social, cultural, economic, political, academic, records management, and legal systems that inform and affect archival work across the records continuum.

K-704 laws, regulations, and ethical considerations governing loans, deposits, exchanges, and gifts to institutions, including tax consequences.

K-705 responsibilities and professional limits with respect to appraising archival materials for tax purposes and property transfers.

- K-706 laws, regulations, and ethical considerations governing reference services and access to archival materials, including but not limited to, copyright, freedom of information, privacy, confidentiality, security, and equality of access.
- K-707 the uses of archival materials as legal evidence in courts, and the standards applied for legal admissibility.
- K-708 responsibilities to ensure archival materials and collections are maintained intact and preserved by appropriate organizations and countries.
- K-709 laws, regulations, and policies defining archival materials and governing their retention, accessibility, integrity, formats, and disposition.
- K-710 archival and information professional codes and standards, including but not limited to the Code of Ethics of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the SAA/ALA¹ joint statement on Standards for Access to Research Materials in Archival and Manuscript Repositories, the ARMA² Code of Professional Conduct, the ICRM³ Code of Ethics, and International Council on Archives (ICA) standards.

Archival Certification Examination Study Guide

This study guide is composed of three parts:

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

You should also read carefully the Role Delineation Statement that appears in this *Handbook*. The Role Delineation Statement 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 Certification Examination. Following the guide does not guarantee a passing score.

¹ ALA = American Library Association

² ARMA = Association of Records Managers and Administrators International

³ ICRM = Institute of Certified Records Managers

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 "distractors";
- 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 Statement.

The Examination Development Committee reviews questions and answers for content, relevancy, and accuracy, as well as appropriateness to practice and level of difficulty. The testing service also reviews each question to ensure conformity to psychometric principles, editorial correctness, and clarity. Questions the committee and test service accepts are added to the ACA's Item Bank, the body of questions from which examinations are constructed.

Revising and Updating the Examination

The ACA 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 each question to determine the likelihood of a correct answer by a poor performer versus otherwise superior test takers. The committee reviews the item bank annually, adding new questions and revising or retiring questions that have become dated, are no longer accepted in the profession as best practices or standards, or have performed poorly according to testing standards.

Examination Content

The examination is composed of 100 multiple-choice questions. 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.

1. Pace yourself so that you have enough time to consider all of the questions in the time allotted.
2. Know that there is only one correct response for each question. If you mark more than one answer on your answer sheet, the question will be counted as wrong.
3. Use the test booklet as a workbook. Mark your choices on the test booklet, and then transfer your responses to the answer sheet in groups of 10-15 questions. Why? Moving your eyes back and forth between the test booklet and answer sheet wastes time and invites errors. Keeping your eyes focused on the test booklet improves your concentration.
4. 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.
5. Answer every question. There is no penalty for guessing.
6. Mark all responses on the answer sheet. Questions answered in the test booklet do not count toward or against your score.
7. 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 developed by the Examination Development Committee. They have either been retired from the ACA Item Bank or developed for the Handbook based on existing items.

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 distractors 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 written for the examination;
- the correct answer and incorrect distractors;
- the rubric taken from the ACA Role Delineation Statement;
- 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; situational or scenario-based and requiring the demonstration of applicable knowledge; and negative questions.

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 [marked] 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 702

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 distractors 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 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 F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader* (Washington: National Archives and Records Administration, 1984), pp. 5-6.

T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 4-5.

James O'Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), p. 29.

ACA Sample Question No. 2

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

- 1)Judicial branch.
- 2)Executive branch
- 3)Legislative branch
- 4)All records of the federal government.

Correct answer: 2

Rubric: Domain 7, Task 3, Knowledge Statement 703

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 distractor #4 as your answer, you have a great deal of company. According to our statistics, the majority of test takers have incorrectly responded 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 distractor #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* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1985).

Menzi Behrnd-Klodt, *Navigating Legal Issues in Archives* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009).

ACA Sample Question No. 3

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.

ACA Sample Question No. 4

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 502

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 distractor, 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, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), 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. 5

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 Broadsides 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 201

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 comingled 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 Kathleen Roe, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, Society of American Archivists, 2005), pp. 15-17.

ACA Sample Question No. 6

An acquisition policy serves as a basic document to:

- 1) determine cooperative digital projects and repositories with similar collections.
- 2) plan preservation priorities by determining areas of importance to the repository.
- 3) assess potential donations and inform donors looking for a suitable repository for their records.
- 4) develop public programming and prepare long-term strategic planning.

Correct answer: 3

Rubric: Domain 1, Task 2, Knowledge Statement 105

An archivist needs to understand the purpose of the acquisition policy. The policy defines what an organization collects both for the archives and for outsiders. Although an acquisition policy might help with cooperative projects, preservation priorities, and public programming, that is not the purpose of the policy, so all the alternative choices would be wrong.

Although there is much discussion of acquisition policy in the literature, the source cited for this question is [A Glossary of Archival & Records Terminology](#).

ACA Sample Question No. 7

What type of photographic negative should never be frozen while attempting to stabilize water damage?

- 1) Gelatin dry plates
- 2) Collodion wet plates
- 3) Acetate
- 4) Nitrate

Correct answer: 2

Rubric: Domain 4, Task 5, Knowledge Statement 406

This question does ask for a fairly detailed knowledge of both preservation and photographic history, as well as some knowledge of disaster preparedness. It is an important piece of knowledge if confronted with a disaster. The correct answer, even if a person is unfamiliar with

collodion plates, should be intuitive since freezing a wet plate creates damage, while freezing or soaking in water can be recommended techniques for preserving acetate, nitrate, and gelatin.

Reference: Johanna Welheiser and Jude Scott, *An Ounce of Preservation: Integrated Disaster Planning for Archives, Libraries, and Record Centers* (Lanham, Maryland, and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), p. 171.

ACA Sample Question No. 8

An archivist would post thumbnail images of photographic collections primarily to:

- 1) save money.
- 2) protect privacy.
- 3) minimize drive storage space.
- 4) control copyright.

Correct answer: 4

Rubric: Domain 4, Task 1, Knowledge Statement 403

This question tests across domains since it includes reference, management, and knowledge of legal issues. Thumbnail images have lower resolution and are not of publishable quality, so they are used to protect copyright and provide control to the posting institution. Although thumbnail images also save space on a storage drive and can also save money, those would not be a primary reason to choose the thumbnail format. Archival guidelines and practice encourage a high resolution scan, from which a thumbnail is later derived, so there should not be cost savings. A thumbnail does not protect privacy since the image is being made widely available on a website.

Source: Fred Stielow, ed. *Creating a Virtual Library* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1999), p. 102.

Suggested Readings

We have compiled this list of suggested readings to assist you in preparing for the Academy of Certified Archivists Certification Examination.

You should note this list of sources is by no means a complete bibliography of archival works. It only contains resources that we believe will be useful as you prepare for the examination.

In compiling the suggested readings, we intend to provide candidates with a significant — but not overwhelming — list of the most traditional and widely available resources. In providing this list, we cannot guarantee passage of the examination; however, candidates should understand the types of sources used to develop the Certification Examination.

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.

- Daniels, Maygene and Timothy Walch, editors. *A Modern Archives Reader*. Washington: National Archives and Records Administration, 1984.
- 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 Records*. *Bulletins of the National Archives*, Number 8 (October 1956). <http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/appraisal-of-records.html>
- 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. Examination candidates should be especially familiar with the articles published over the past ten years. <http://www2.archivists.org/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.
- *Journal of Archival Organization*, quarterly journal published by Routledge.
- *Provenance*, annual journal published by the Society of Georgia Archivists.

General Sources: Books and Pamphlets

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

- Bettington, Jackie, editor. *Keeping Archives*, 3rd ed. Port Melbourne: D. W. Thorpe and Society of Australian Archivists, 2008. First and second editions edited by Judith Ellis.
- Dollar, Charles M. *Authentic Electronic Records: Strategies for Long-Term Access*. Chicago, IL: Cohasset Associates, 1999.
- *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Archival Fundamentals Series II). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005. <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary>
- Hunter, Gregory S. *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives: A How-To-Do-It Manual*, 2nd ed. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2003.
- Jimerson, Randall C., editor. *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000.
- Millar, Laura. *Archives: Principles and Practices*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2010.

- O'Toole, James M. and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Archival Fundamentals Series II). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006.
- Prom, Christopher and Ellen Swain. *College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice*. Chicago, Society of American Archivists, 2008.
- Saffady, William. *Managing Electronic Records*, 4th ed. Prairie Village, KS: Association of Records Managers and Administrators, 2009.
- Society of American Archivists
 - [DAS Curriculum Suggested Reading List, by Tier](#)
 - [Position Statements & Resolutions](#)
 - [Standards Portal](#)
- Wythe, Deborah, editor. *Museum Archives: An Introduction*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004.
- Yakel, Elizabeth. *Starting an Archives*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 1994.

Domain 1: Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition

- Boles, Frank. *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Archival Fundamentals Series II). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.
- Fleckner, John A. *Archives and Manuscripts: Surveys*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977.
- Ham, F. Gerald. *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1993.

Domain 2: Arrangement and Description

- *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*, 2nd ed. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2013.
- Feith, Samuel, et. al. *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003.
- Fox, Michael J. and Peter Wilkerson. *Introduction to Archival Organization and Description: Access to Cultural Heritage*. Los Angeles: Getty Information Institute, 1998.
- Hackbart-Dean, Pam and Elizabeth Slomba. *How to Manage Processing in Archives and Special Collections*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2012.
- Hamill, Lois. *Archives for the Lay Person: A Guide to Managing Historical Collections*. Lanham, MD. AltaMira Press, 2013.

- Pitti, Daniel V. and Wendy M. Duff, *Encoded Archival Description on the Internet*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press, 2001.
- Roe, Kathleen. *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Archival Fundamentals Series II). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.
- Official websites:
 - Encoded Archival Context website: <http://eac.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>
 - Encoded Archival Description Version 2002 Official Site: <http://www.loc.gov/ead/>

Domain 3: Reference Services and Access

- Pugh, Mary Jo. *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts* (Archives Fundamentals Series II). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

Domain 4: Preservation and Protection

- Cloonan, Michele Valerie., ed. *Preserving Our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2015. The Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, NASA. *Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS), Recommended Practice Issue 2*. <http://public.ccsds.org/publications/archive/650x0m2.pdf>.
- Davidson, Steven and Gregory Lukow. *The Administration of Television Newsfilm and Videotape Collections*. Los Angeles: American Film Institute, 1997.
- Digital Preservation Coalition. [*Digital Preservation Handbook*](#), 2nd edition.
- Fox, Lisa. *Preservation Microfilming: A Guide for Librarians and Archivists*, 2nd ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1996.
- Marks, Steve. *Becoming a Trusted Digital Repository*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2015. Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). [*Preservation Leaflets*](#).
- Reilly, James M. *Storage for Color Photographic Materials*. Albany: University of the State of New York, New York State Education Department, New York State Library, New York State Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials, 1998.
- Ritzenthaler, Mary. *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts* (Archival Fundamentals, Series II). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2010.
- Ritzenthaler, Mary Lynn and Diane Vogt-O'Connor. *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006.

- Trinkaus-Randall, Gregor. *Protecting Your Collections: A Manual of Archival Security*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1995.
- Wilhelm, Henry. *The Permanence and Care of Color Photographs: Traditional and Digital Color Prints, Color Negatives, Slides, and Motion Pictures*. Grinnell, IA: Preservation Publishing Co., 1993.

Domain 5: Outreach, Advocacy, and Promotion

- Finch, Elsie Freeman. *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists*. Metuchen, NJ: The Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003.
- James, Russell D. and Peter J. Wosh. *Public Relations and Marketing for Archives*. Chicago: Neal-Schuman, 2011.
- Jimerson, Randall C. *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability and Social Justice*. Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2009.
- Kalfatovic, Martin R. *Creating a Winning Online Exhibition: A Guide for Libraries, Archives, and Museums*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2002.
- Theimer, Kate. *Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2009.
- Whitaker, Beth M. and Lynne M. Thomas. *Special Collections 2.0: New Technologies for Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Archival Collections*. Libraries Unlimited, 2009.

Domain 6: Managing Archival Programs

- Dearstyne, Bruce. *Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2008.
- Dearstyne, Bruce. *The Management of Local Government Records*. Nashville: AASLH, 1988.
- Kurtz, Michael J. *Managing Archival & Manuscript Repositories* (Archival Fundamentals Series II). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004.
- Pacifico, Michele F. and Thomas P. Wilsted. *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009.
- Purcell, Aaron D. *Academic Archives: Managing the Next Generation of College and University Archives, Records, and Special Collections*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2012.

Domain 7: Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities

- Behrnd-Klodt, Menzi. *Navigating Legal Issues in Archives*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008.
- Behrnd-Klodt, Menzi and Peter J. Wosh. *Privacy and Confidentiality Perspectives: Archivists and Archival Records*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.
- Crews, Kenneth. *Copyright Law for Librarians and Educators: Creative Strategies and Practical Solutions*, 3rd ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 2012.
- Danielson, Elena S. *The Ethical Archivist*. Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2010.
- Hirtle, Peter, Emily Hudson, and Andrew T. Kenyon. *Copyright & Cultural Institutions: Guidelines for Digitization for U.S. Libraries, Archives & Museums*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library, 2009.
- Lipinski, Tomas A. *Libraries, Museums, and Archives: Legal Issues and Ethical Challenges in the New Information Age*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Pres, Inc., 2002.
- Peterson, Trudy Huskamp and Gary Peterson. [*Archives and Manuscripts: Law*](#). Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1985.
- Official websites:
 - U.S. Copyright Office: <http://www.copyright.gov>