

Archive Service Accreditation Committee: third meeting
20 November 2014

Committee Present: David Brown, Susan Edwards, Mary Ellis, Rachel Hart, Bruce Jackson (Chair), Nick Kingsley, Ruth MacLeod, Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan, Caroline Peach, Liz Rees, Caroline Sampson, Philippa Smith
Apologies: Stephen Scarth, Vicky Stretch

Secretariat: Melinda Haunton, Jane Shillaker

1	Programme update and statistical return															
1.1	<p><i>Programme Manager's update.</i> MH reported a range of activity including:</p> <p>Communications: a range of partner promotional work had been undertaken, especially the APPG event in October for all the newly Accredited Archive Services and for the partners, which had been very well attended and successful. The meeting thanked ARA for the event, and the speakers for their contributions. The Committee asked about progress on developing a plaque for Accredited services, and suggested it might be possible to secure sponsorship for the plaques.</p> <p>Training: applicant training with ARA had been offered in Manchester in July, and was planned for York (February) and Oxford (April). Focus was now on specialist groups to bring the standard to a wider audience, beginning with autumn sessions delivered at the Section for Specialist Repositories and Business Archives Council conference. Team to pursue options for engagement in other areas including charity archives, and support regional events.</p> <p>Assessor training: a template for training was in place, and the handbook was being updated with precedents.</p> <p>Peer reviewers: the Committee expressed its thanks to ARA for supporting peer review training, and to those peer reviewers who have acted in 2014 as part of the assessment teams in England:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Thomas Barnes</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Kate Jarman</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Mike Rogers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sue Breakell</td> <td>Hannah Jones</td> <td>Lorraine Screene</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fiona Bourne</td> <td>Alison Mason</td> <td>Adrian Steel</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alison Cullingford</td> <td>Louise Ray</td> <td>Charlene Taylor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Allie Dillon</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Partners: all assessor partners had conducted at least one assessment in 2014. The meeting discussed the possibility of broadening the scheme to involve other archive bodies from the island of Ireland, an option for the future as the scheme matures.</p>	Thomas Barnes	Kate Jarman	Mike Rogers	Sue Breakell	Hannah Jones	Lorraine Screene	Fiona Bourne	Alison Mason	Adrian Steel	Alison Cullingford	Louise Ray	Charlene Taylor	Allie Dillon		
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1.2	<i>Internal audit report</i>															

	<p>An internal audit report on The National Archives' administration of the scheme had given the programme a very clean bill of health. One required action (to request feedback from applicants post-award), had been acted on immediately.</p> <p>A Committee decision was required on the auditor's recommendation that provisional approvals should be so marked on the website. The Committee agreed with the recommendation to mark up provisional accreditations.</p>
1.3	<p><i>Statistical return</i></p> <p>The application and assessment system allows data extracts such that we can produce an annual overview of the scheme and of applicants. An initial draft was circulated for information and Committee was asked to review the kind of content which would be useful. A more formal report would be produced for the May 2015 Committee onwards and for publication.</p> <p>The Committee felt that the report was useful both for effective programme management and for wider information, and could be developed over time.</p>
2	Policy issues from 2013-14 Panels
	<p>Two issues were noted.</p> <p><u>a) Collections care and conservation (section 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3)</u></p> <p>Repositories which had lower than PD5454:2012-standard storage for much of their holdings had been Accredited in a number of cases.</p> <p><u>Policy notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic and effective identification, mitigation and management of risk was key to being able to accredit in these circumstances. Risks unidentified by the service would have made it impossible. • Some areas of collections care and conservation should always be assessed as 'partially met' if the storage gives rise to significant concerns, to underline the work required before the standard is reached. • Always record a required action to continue to monitor and/or improve storage – the details of what is required will depend on individual cases, but this must be mandatory to underline the paramount need to ensure survival of collections. <p><u>b) Workforce (1.6) and eligibility criterion</u></p> <p>Small size repositories with a single long-serving core professional meeting 'equivalent experience' had been accredited.</p> <p><u>Policy notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely allied professional qualification held was a factor, as was a clear explanation of the additional training undertaken to acquire the skills to manage archives alongside other unique materials. • 'Equivalent experience' had to include employer support to acquire essential archive professional experience, recognising the needs of collections formally rather than relying on individual initiative. • Action set to reflect the requirement for professional archive expertise

	<p>in future job descriptions: the current arrangement would not be acceptable when seeking to recruit or replace staff.</p> <p>It was agreed that in future policy precedents should be reflected in three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Committee minutes, including published version of minutes b) Assessor handbook c) Precedents section added to relevant application guidance sections for ready reference. This should outline principles of decisions, not full detail of every case.
3	Assessor feedback from annual meeting
	<p>The assessors had met for the first annual feedback and training session. The minutes were circulated for information, including a note the assessors welcomed the Panel's decision they should discuss with assessors any changes to outcomes and set actions; a note regarding policy precedents. A suggestion the programme should contact all Accredited services annually was felt to be unnecessary.</p>
4	Mid-point review form for Accredited Archive Services
	<p>The revised version of the form was circulated for approval. With small drafting changes, the form was approved for publication and translation.</p> <p>It was agreed as routine that the form would be sent out 2.5 years after Accreditation was awarded, to submit within 6 months of receipt.</p>
5	Withdrawal of Accreditation
	<p>The revised statement on Withdrawal of Accreditation was circulated for approval alongside a new piece of guidance from The National Archives on deaccessioning, showing how such a statement could be used to support policy making.</p> <p>MH requested Committee approval of the single change to the statement, on the advice of Arts Council England: extraordinary removal of Accreditation would last for 5 years, at the discretion of the Committee. This was approved. With some further small amends, the statement was approved for publication and translation.</p>
6	Guidance updates
6.1	Routine updates to the main guidance document were approved.
6.2	<p>MH had circulated for discussion a suggestion from assessors that the wording of four questions in Section 3 of the application form be tweaked in response to applicant feedback.</p> <p>Clarification of the questions was approved, to be translated and published in the new year.</p>
7	Approach to accreditation of digital-only repositories
	The Committee considered a proposed approach to developing the Standard

	<p>and programme to allow digital-only repositories to become accredited, working with partners to identify and develop an existing standard to the point where it maps to Accreditation.</p> <p>It was agreed that this was a useful first approach to the question. It was further agreed to invite a DPC representative to the next Committee meeting to pursue in more detail and identify a way forward.</p>
8	AOB
	<p>MH asked whether any Committee member was interested in becoming part of discussions on a group looking at ethical disposal. PS volunteered herself or a colleague from London Metropolitan Archives.</p>
9	Dates of next meetings
	<p>The next meeting of the Accreditation Committee will be 8 May 2015.</p>