

Archive Service Accreditation Committee Annual Meeting 2019

Bruce Jackson	Committee Chair
Alison Cullingford	Committee Member
Susan Edwards	Committee Member
Mary Ellis	Committee Member
Rachel Hart	Committee Member
Ruth MacLeod	Committee Member
Gillian Mapstone	Committee Member
Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan	Committee Member
Liz Rees	Committee Member
Karen Sampson	Committee Member
Stephen Scarth	Committee Member
Philippa Smith	Committee Member
Jeannette Strickland	Committee Member
Annette French	Accreditation Manager, Arts Council England (Regular Observer)
Melinda Haunton	Programme Manager, The National Archives
Jane Shillaker	Programme Officer, The National Archives
Emma Markiewicz	Head of Archive Sector Development, TNA (Observer)
Sarah Mahurter	Chair, CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Group
Jenny Mitcham	Head of Good Practice and Standards, DPC

Item	
1	Welcome and apologies
	BJ welcomed new members of the Committee. VJ had sent apologies.
2	Minutes and matters arising from 2018 meeting
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
2.2	Item 2.2: BJ note that it was worth raising the role of Accreditation outcomes in influencing CPD and training offer.
2.3	Item 2.3 This would be retained as a rolling item until the review is updated in 2021 with further digital content.
2.4	Item 8: It would be important to continue to build the relationship with Museum Accreditation, with particular reference to archives in museums.
3	Programme Manager's Update 2018-19
	MH had circulated a note regarding other aspects of programme delivery not covered in the substantive agenda. These included:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and training of new assessors in Scotland and Northern Ireland • Launch of ARA-Accreditation resilience indicator in beta version, which was very positively received by the Committee • Development and use of the online community on Knowledge Hub • Development of e-learning • Re-procurement of the application system in 2019-20 • The need to print new certificates
4	Statistical return and reflection on 2018-19
4.1	<p>The annual return was discussed. Trends emerging were relatively consistent: as the programme matured the key issues were becoming more consistent, particularly in digital and analogue collection care.</p> <p>It was noted that the Stakeholders module was less robustly assessed, with far fewer partially or not met requirements. The Committee discussed the possibility of strengthening questions under section 3.2.1. A proposed update to application and guidance will be brought to Committee 2020.</p>
4.2	The record of changes made to assessments by Panels was discussed..
4.3	<p>Trends emerging within the home nations were discussed.</p> <p>England: There had been a significant reduction in numbers of applications since July, post-refresh. The Committee noted that given the breadth of the archive sector in England, setting priorities for the future would be helpful.</p> <p>Northern Ireland: There was a lack of confidence in applying, consistent with some other home nations. Some small institutions were particularly concerned about producing a very high quality application, beyond what would be required, so reassurance and communication was essential here.</p> <p>Scotland: NRS/SCA had been working hard on promoting the programme. A number of services have committed to apply within the next 3 years. Barriers identified by the sector were mainly about resource, particularly with conflicting priorities. The Scottish partners are looking to support services seeing this as a staged long-term approach.</p> <p>Wales: all eligible archive services that had not yet applied had now committed to a timetable. Otherwise, the priority was now supporting services in Wales to develop their digital capacity. Despite many Welsh services being small, the level of successful applications demonstrated an excellent response from the sector, which had been highly collaborative. It was noted that this was a valuable demonstration that smaller services can succeed and something for other home nations to learn from, particularly where there are clusters of archives able to offer mutual support.</p>
4.4	The Committee expressed its thanks to peer reviewers active 2018-2019: Lizzy Baker, Fiona Bourne, Sue Breakell, Andrew George, Vicky Holmes, Stacey Kennedy, Meirian Jump, Jemma Lee, Claire Mayoh, Tim Procter, Louise Ray, Catherine Ross, Adrian Steel, Mari Takayanagi, Tamara Thornhill, Katy Thornton, Matti Watton, Cathy Williams.

5	Policy and Precedent arising from 2018-19
5.1	<i>Decisions not to award</i> The basis for decisions not to award was reviewed. These were relatively clear-cut examples based on existing precedent or not meeting requirements.
5.2	<i>Change to review stage form</i> Panel 21 Nov 18 had noted there was a need to clarify that reported changes to risk profiling should include information on new/revised use of outstores/commercial storage. This documentation change was approved
5.3	<i>Ability to combine consideration of a move from provisional to full award with consideration of the review stage</i> Panel 21 Nov 18 had noted this was essential and did not require a separate report as all evidence supporting a move from provisional status could be covered in the review form. This procedural precedent was approved.
5.4	<i>Ability to raise the level of an action from improvement to required at the review stage.</i> Panel 7 Mar 19 had made this change. This procedural precedent was approved.
5.5	<i>Experience of external information as part of an assessment</i> Panel had referred a question of external information affecting an assessment. It was noted that this affected not only services under assessment but information regarding Accredited Archive Services, if it materially affected their status and duty to collections in their care.
5.5.1	<i>Policy approach to external information</i> Procedural precedent: The Committee discussed the inclusion of externally-derived information in Accreditation assessments. This was agreed to be appropriate where such information identified and evidenced significant omissions or inaccuracies within a live application, or suggested possible grounds for extraordinary removal of Accreditation from an award holder (as outlined in the Statement on Withdrawal of Accreditation 2015). Information with supporting written evidence could be submitted to the relevant assessor body, or to the central Accreditation Team at accreditation@nationalarchives.gov.uk , and the source of the information would not be disclosed to the applicant. Such evidence could be included within routine assessment of applications, or investigated by the relevant assessor body where it pertains to an existing award-holder. It was reiterated that Archive Service Accreditation did not function as a complaints resolution process and that service-specific delivery issues, charges and customer complaints would not be considered individually. The Committee confirmed that Panels do not receive representations in person from applicants or from other interested parties.
5.5.2	<i>Meeting with staff without management on visits</i> In response to a Panel question regarding practice, assessors had noted that it can be helpful to meet staff individually but it is not always the key

	priority on a visit. They did not consider it should be mandated for every circumstance. The Committee agreed.
5.5.3	<i>Formal adoption of the Nolan principles</i> The Committee confirmed that they worked within the 7 principles of public life and this should be reflected in future recruitment information.
6	Assessor meeting feedback
6.1	<i>Request to consider creating a precedent on volunteer involvement with an archive service.</i> The assessors had requested that Committee formalise a precedent for 1.6 Workforce based on a 2018 assessment. The Committee agreed. Assessment precedent: that Accreditation would not be awarded in cases where volunteers were inappropriately involved in delivering the service. It was recognised that this would vary in line with scaled expectations for different types and sizes of archive service. Professionally-staffed services asking volunteers to identify closure periods for material subject to security clearance had been felt to be inappropriate. Volunteers should also be supported in cases of working with potentially traumatic material.
6.2	<i>Notes on assessor training regarding assessing digital preservation</i> MH had circulated the notes from the 2018 assessor meeting facilitated discussion regarding assessment of digital preservation. These would be shared via the online community.
6.3	The Committee thanked assessors for their hard work in the past year.
7	Implementing retention of award through new applications for existing award holders
7.1	The process and guidance/messaging around this key stage of the programme's development was presented and endorsed. Awards would not lapse for existing award-holders with a live application scheduled. As at review stage, there was some discretion to extend application timescales for individual service circumstances.
7.2	<i>Updates to application form for existing award holders</i> Changes to the form were agreed, reporting on all outstanding actions.
8	Provisional awards
8.1	<i>Proposed reporting template</i> Panel had agreed that a template would be useful to standardise responses. The draft template was agreed for implementation with the aim of active use from 7 Nov 19 Panel.
8.2	<i>Communication of provisional awards</i> There was a discussion about communication of provisional awards and whether these needed to be more clearly signposted, other than the online awards information. The Committee felt that it was not desirable to make a clearer division: provisional award holders are Accredited Archive Services, and all successful services receive actions for the future. The difference is primarily in the timetable on which certain actions are reviewed by Panel.
9	Update from Museum Accreditation

	<p>AF had joined the meeting and updated on the review and reopening of Museum Accreditation. The programme was officially relaunched for its 30th anniversary, with celebrations in November 2018. Much of the review work was however behind the scenes, recalibrating the programme to have a clearer focus on core purposes of Accreditation.</p> <p>It was noted that there may be opportunities for crossover with Committee recruitment being needed across both the programmes this year.</p> <p>There was discussion of managing digital objects in museums as a coming challenge, given their role in collections such as photographic collections and digital art.</p>
10	Rare Books and Special Collections Accreditation
	<p>Sarah Mahurter had joined the meeting, and introduced early proposals from CILIP RBSCG regarding an Accreditation programme for Rare Books and Special Collections.</p> <p>The Committee recognised the value of the proposal and particularly welcomed the recognition of the crossover between requirements for effective management of rare books and archives, which meant that co-operation was highly desirable. It was noted that the development of public library Accreditation meant another element to triangulate and that close working would be important in that regard too.</p> <p>Discussion covered the need for effective support for any such programme from key strategic bodies.</p>
11	Digital Preservation Coalition – Head of Good Practice and Standards
	<p>Jenny Mitcham had joined the meeting and introduced her new role at DPC head of Good Practice and Standards. Current areas of development include the revision of NDSA Levels which Committee would need to revisit in 2020 – a decision will be needed on when to adopt these within Accreditation and with how much sector notice.</p> <p>JM invited comment on how existing digital preservation updates to Archive Service Accreditation were embedding and how her role could continue to support the programme. The Committee welcomed this approach. They invited JM to be a regular observer on the annual meeting as an opportunity to update the Committee’s awareness of changes in digital preservation standards.</p>
12	Diversifying archives
12.1	<p>John Chambers had sent a request from ARA Board for an update to Accreditation to develop mandatory requirements regarding diversity of workforce, collections and audiences.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the proposal in detail. It was noted that there was an existing Committee decision against setting specific metrics/targets. The Committee confirmed that they did not aim to move in the direction of setting</p>

	<p>such targets due to the need for scalability and responsiveness to individual service positions.</p> <p>However, the Committee recognised the importance and value of continuing to build diverse workforce, collections and audiences. Potential questions/guidance would be drafted for consideration at the 2020 Committee.</p>
13	Knowledge Transfer during Committee changes
13	A consolidated list of precedents from previous Committees was circulated.
14	Recruitment of new members and thanks to those approaching the end of their terms
14.1	<p><i>Recruitment design and support for new Committee members</i></p> <p>The recruitment and training design was discussed and agreed, with the addition of reference to the Nolan principles. It was also noted that experience of records and information management should be clearly included as eligible.</p>
14.2	<p><i>Exit questionnaires</i></p> <p>AF had kindly supplied example Museum Accreditation Committee exit questionnaires and skills audit forms which could be used. There were some known expertise gaps either currently existing or emerging with the loss of current members, which would be specifically desirable: analogue collection care, digital preservation and experience of a range of local government services of different scales. It would also be welcome to diversify the committee in terms of range of experience and audiences, and to emphasise the CPD value of serving.</p>
14.3	<p><i>Role of the Committee Chair</i></p> <p>The Committee discussed whether there was a need to articulate more clearly the role of the Chair. It was noted that matters arising between meetings may on occasion be resolved through discussion between Chair and Programme Manager, but will be escalated to the next available meeting for information.</p>
15	Update of documentation
	Light revisions to the application form and guidance were agreed for translation.
16	AOB
	MH thanked those Committee members who were coming to the end of their terms. They had been vital to transforming Accreditation from theory into a valued, deliverable standard across the UK.
17	Date of next meeting
	The next Accreditation Panels were 3 July and 7 November 2019. The Committee would meet again 14 May 2020.