

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
May 12-13, 2020  
Virtual Meeting**

**Digital Archives Specialist Subcommittee:  
Increasing Number of Subcommittee Members  
(Prepared by Alice Prael)**

**BACKGROUND**

At the subcommittee meeting held on December 16, 2019, the chair of the Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Subcommittee initiated discussion and has since received unanimous support in favor of increasing the number of individual members on the DAS Subcommittee. The DAS Subcommittee also recommends changing the requirement that DAS Subcommittee members must have the DAS certificate to a recommendation that may be excused on a case-by-case basis.

**DISCUSSION**

There are two primary motivations for increasing the number of members on the DAS Subcommittee. First, the number of courses the DAS Subcommittee manages has grown significantly, overtaxing the existing members of the subcommittee. We developed 5 new courses in 2019 and we plan to develop additional online courses in order to make the program more accessible and fill gaps in the existing curriculum. The subcommittee currently manages 46 courses, which requires that each subcommittee member must serve as liaison to 5-6 courses. Previously, subcommittee members were expected to serve as a liaison for only 3-4 courses at one time.

The second motivation is to address the workload of managing the comprehensive exam. We no longer employ a psychometrician to analyze exam questions so the work of analyzing and creating new exam questions has fallen to subcommittee members supported by SAA staff. Increasing the membership of the DAS subcommittee will help us manage the comprehensive exam and respond to SAA member complaints about exam questions.

The DAS Subcommittee also recommends that exceptions be made to the requirement that all DAS Subcommittee members must hold the DAS certificate. It is important that a majority of DAS Subcommittee members hold the certificate in order to provide support for the comprehensive exam, but including archivists with extensive digital knowledge regardless of certificate status allows for the subcommittee to be more inclusive. Subcommittee members who do not hold the certificate will be excluded from discussions regarding the comprehensive exam in the interest of fairness.

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT the following revisions to the Digital Archives Specialist Subcommittee description be approved:**

### II. Committee Selection, Size, and Length of Terms

The Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Subcommittee consists of ~~eight~~ **ten** members (including a chair) appointed by the SAA Vice President for staggered four-year terms. Each year, a vice chair will be appointed from among the upcoming second-year members and will serve as vice chair in the second year, as chair in the third year, and as past chair in the fourth year of her/his term. The subcommittee chair serves as an ex officio member of the Committee on Education. The SAA Education Director serves as an ex officio member of the subcommittee.

The membership of the subcommittee shall comprise a mix of practicing archivists with e-records/digital experience and or knowledge, teaching experience, technical skills, expertise covering the archival spectrum, and administrative or supervisory experience. Ideally, the subcommittee as a whole will reflect individual and institutional diversity. **The majority of members must have a DAS certificate to serve on the subcommittee. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.**

Outgoing committee members will be granted a two-year grace period to allow adequate time for the necessary requirements to maintain and renew their DAS Certificate. Courses for which a committee member serves as a course shepherd (i.e. liaison) do not apply toward DAS Certificate renewal.

Members can expect to spend four to five hours per month on subcommittee work.

**Support Statement:** Increasing the number of individual members on the subcommittee reflects current operational reality as well as reflecting the goals and priorities of the DAS program.

**Relevance to Strategic Priorities:** Addresses Strategic Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth; Goal 3: Advancing the Field; and Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs.

**Fiscal Impact:** No direct expense in the short or long term. Estimated 2 hours of staff time to address this change.