

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 17-19, 2025
Chicago
Hybrid**

**Standards Committee: Request for Council Approval of the
Revised *Best Practices for Internships as a Component of
Archival Education***

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PREAMBLE

This is a resubmission of the agenda item not voted on by Council at the August 2025 meeting on the grounds that no track changes version was provided.

Track changes has never been requested by Council for updated standards and is not feasible as clearly articulated by the Graduate Archival Education Subcommittee (GAES):

GAES is not able to provide a 'track changes' version of the revised standard because this document does not exist. Developing the revised standard proposal was a complex process involving many different kinds of documents: notes from meetings where the revision was discussed, marked up versions of the current version of the standard, and drafts of the revision shared to different stakeholder groups for comment and feedback, and subsequent drafts of the revision that incorporated that feedback. This was not a simple process of taking the standard as it currently exists and editing it in one go, but rather the synthesis of much work across diffuse documents. GAES suspects that our complicated process is comparable to processes that other SAA units undertake as they set out to revise standards.

It is also not necessary to provide such a document, as the agenda item provides an overview and explanation of the standard that is intended to allow Council to make an informed decision without needing to closely inspect the details of the standard.

The remainder of this agenda item is unchanged from the version submitted previously.

BACKGROUND

The Graduate Archival Education Subcommittee (GAES) of the SAA Committee on Education has revised the Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Archival Education and is seeking SAA Council approval of the revised standard.

The Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Archival Education (BPI) were originally developed by a subgroup of SAA Council to provide formal guidance to archival educators, graduate students, and professionals serving as site supervisors for internships and were based on similar guidelines developed by the Curriculum and Training Committee of the National Council on Public History for internships in public history. The standard was first endorsed by the SAA Council in 2014. Thereafter, the standard became one of several orphan standards listed on the SAA Standards Portal. Orphan standards were usually created in response to a specific request, but were developed by a task force or other temporary group, and were never assigned for long-term management to a section, component group, committee, or subcommittee.

In 2023, the Standards Committee recommended to the SAA Council that the responsibility for the revision and long-term maintenance of the Best Practices for Internships be assigned to the Graduate Archival Education Subcommittee (GAES) of the Education Committee. The SAA Council approved this recommendation and GAES immediately began to draft a revision. The revision is now complete. It has been approved by the Standards Committee and is here submitted for SAA Council approval.

DISCUSSION

After the SAA Council approved the assignment of the standard to GAES in 2023, members of that group formed a Best Practices for Internships working group to begin developing an action plan for revising the standard. Work on the standard accelerated over the next eighteen months and the process of revision included numerous opportunities for SAA members to provide recommendations and feedback.

In July 2023, GAES' BPI working group distributed a survey to membership on to “gather data about how educators, employers, working archivists, and current and former students use the BPI” with the intent of using this data in revision of the standard. The group used survey data to draft a new version of BPI that included updates and new and essential information in a number of key areas, including the following:

- Fair labor practices/compensation
- Hybrid/remote work
- Accessibility/DEIA concerns
- Health and safety
- Undergraduate, post-graduate, and independent internships
- Orientation, supervision, and communication
- Examples of institutional manuals and other internship-related materials

Between March-May 2024 the working group consulted with 13 SAA component groups to solicit feedback on the current draft of the revised BPI. Among these groups were:

- the Diversity Committee

- the Committee on Education
- the Best Practices for Archival Term Positions Working Group
- the Accessibility and Disability section
- the Archival Educators Section
- the Archives Management Section
- the Archivists and Archives of Color Section
- the Collection Management Section
- the Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section
- the Independent Archivists Section
- the Solo Archivists Section
- the Students and New Professionals (SNAP) Section
- the Women Archivists Section
- the College and University Archives Section

The BPI revision working group also consulted with the Archival Workers Collective, which is unaffiliated with SAA.

In the summer of 2024, the working group incorporated additional feedback from stakeholders into the draft revised standard and presented the draft at the GAES business meeting for additional feedback and discussion. Minor adjustments were made to the draft based on comments from attendees.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SAA Council approves the revision of the *Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Archival Education*.

Support Statement:

Approval of the revision of the *Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Archival Education* will update the standard and ensure that the content of the standard is not outdated or incorrect. This will allow SAA's Graduate Archival Education Subcommittee to bring the *Best Practices* in line with recent directions in archival practice and theory and provide a foundation for future revisions.

Impact on Strategic Priorities:

SAA Council's approval of the revision of the *Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Archival Education* is consistent with Strategic Priorities 2.2 and 3.1:

- 2.2 Provide content, via education and publications, that reflects the latest thinking and best practices in the field.
- 3.1. Identify the need for new standards, guidelines, and best practices and lead or participate in their development.

Fiscal Impact: None