

## Part 8. Certified Archivists in the A \* C E N S U S

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### Overview

The A\*CENSUS represents an opportunity to compare those archivists who have earned the Certified Archivist credential with their uncertified peers in ways that have not been possible before. This initial glance at the survey results focuses on a few of the areas in which the members of the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) seem to differ most markedly from other archivists.

A certified archivist is more likely to be male, to be slightly older, and to have been employed somewhat longer in the profession than either the average member of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) or a member of the profession as a whole. In 2004, men constituted 41.7% of the ACA membership, compared with 32.2% of the SAA membership. A certified archivist is an average 2.8 years older than an SAA member, and 1.1 years older than a member of the profession generally, according to the survey. On average, ACA members have been in the profession six years longer than the other two groups. The mean year of respondents' first archival job is 1984 for ACA members and 1990 for SAA members and all respondents to the survey.

ACA members, both men and women, earn higher salaries than SAA members and the profession at large. The mean salaries of ACA members who have been in the profession the longest are generally higher than the salaries of SAA members and all respondents according to the corresponding lengths of time. Overall, the mean salary for certified archivists is higher than that of the other two groups. This is probably due to two factors that seem to be related to higher salary levels: 1) the greater proportion of men; and 2) the longer professional employment represented by ACA members.

Respondents were asked to indicate the strength of their ties to the archival profession by choosing a number from 7 (very strong) to 1 (not strong at all). Forty-three percent of certified archivists indicated that their ties are very strong, compared with 29% of SAA members and 22% of the profession at large.

Compared with their peers, ACA members generally participate more frequently in a wide range of professional activities. For example, 71% of certified archivists reported holding an office or leadership position in a professional

association at some time during the course of their careers, while 51.1% of SAA members and 43.3% of the profession at large reported this type of service.

Certified archivists also participate in archives-related continuing education in proportionately greater numbers than do SAA members and members of the profession generally. On a list of various kinds of continuing education and training, the percentage of ACA members who reported participating ranked highest in thirteen of the seventeen categories, when compared with SAA members and all respondents to the survey.

The greater strength of ties to the profession, higher levels of professional activity, and greater participation in continuing education extend across the range of years of experience, from newly certified archivists to the most experienced. The data do not reveal possible explanations—whether the effort of studying for the examination and maintaining certification engenders these levels of affinity and activity, or if individuals who are already very attached to or involved in the profession are more likely to pursue certification.

Archival managers were asked to rank nine qualifications according to their importance when hiring entry-level archivists, and also mid-level or senior archivists. Certification ranked as the least important of the qualifications for both questions in answers from all respondents, as well as from SAA members and from archival managers who were certified. Here, also, the data do not explain the reasons. Were the managers reflecting their personal opinions? Or do their answers reflect the hiring policies and practices at their institutions, situations over which they may have little or no control?

Future surveys might usefully inquire about the reasons and motivations for respondents' answers.

## **Introduction**

The overwhelming volume of data in the A\*CENSUS will provide the basis for analysis and interpretation of the archival profession for many years to come. For example, the A\*CENSUS represents an opportunity to compare archivists who have earned the CA credential with their uncertified peers in ways that have not been possible before. After a brief account of the development of the archival certification program, this initial glance at the survey results focuses primarily on a few of the areas in which the members of the Academy of Certified Archivists seem to differ most markedly from other archivists.

## **Certification in General**

Certification is the process by which an association or nongovernmental organization recognizes the competency of an individual who has met predetermined

qualifications specified by that association or organization. The term “certification” is usually applied to the evaluation of an individual’s competence; “accreditation” usually refers to a measurement of a program’s or an organization’s performance. Occasionally the terms are used interchangeably, thereby creating some confusion.

Certification refers to a voluntary process. The term “licensing” or “licensure” is used for a governmental system of regulation for the purpose of public protection. Licensure confers upon an individual the legal authority to practice an occupation or profession.

Although certification is voluntary and licensing is a matter of law, the processes and procedures followed in certifying and licensing individual practitioners are quite similar. In the United States, these procedures have been developed over more than a century of experience and honed through court challenges.

The proliferation of professional specialties, a mobile population, and rapid technological development have intensified the demand for nationally recognized methods of identifying competence in a wide range of disciplines. Most certification programs have been developed by national associations, although some have evolved without an existing organizational base. Others have been created within business and industry.

Certification programs usually develop when the leadership in a particular discipline finds the need to articulate standards of performance and assure compliance with these standards to protect the public, assist employers, and increase the credibility of the discipline. Sometimes competition and, occasionally, threat of government intervention or legal action are motivating factors.

Standards have been developed for certification programs and a national organization formed to accredit certifying organizations. A sound certification program must begin with a thorough role study or job analysis of the profession or occupation to be certified. The result is a document that serves as the basis for the examination or the performance measurement system used to certify individuals. There are standards for developing the examination, recommended procedures for establishing the certifying organization, and criteria for undertaking a certification maintenance program, referred to as “recertifying.” The persons involved in developing and conducting the archival certification program have chosen to follow recommended best practices in certification.

### **Archival Certification**

During the 1980s, amid a growing acceptance of the need for standards, intense discussions took place within the Society of American Archivists about the meaning of professionalism as it relates to archival practice. These discussions included consideration of the three means by which the competency of

professional practitioners can be ascertained: accrediting the institutions in which professionals work, accrediting the educational programs in which professionals are trained, and certifying individual practitioners. The first method is undertaken by museum professionals and the second by librarians; teaching and medical professions employ all three.

Various constituencies within SAA debated and investigated how such programs might be applied to archivists. By the end of the decade, the association had acted in some fashion on all three of them.<sup>1</sup>

In 1982, SAA published the booklet, *Evaluation of Archival Institutions: Services, Principles, and Guide to Self-Study*, which outlined a method for examining the goals and plans and offered seven principles for evaluating the performance of an archival institution. An *Archives Assessment and Planning Workbook* (1989) provided a step-by-step guide to conducting the assessment in order to produce information about institutions in a standard form to facilitate comparisons.

The number of archivists teaching in graduate-level programs, including a handful with full-time appointments, increased during the 1980s. These archival educators led the discussions about upgrading and standardizing the curriculum content, as well as about establishing a formal accreditation program on the model of the American Library Association. The immediate outcome was the adoption by the SAA Council in 1988 of "Guidelines for Graduate Archival Education Programs." This document substantially upgraded the program recommended in the earlier "Guidelines for a Graduate Minor or Concentration in Archival Education" (1978).

Arguably, the constituency within SAA that was interested in pursuing a program of certifying individuals was less vocal and less organized than constituencies interested in the other options, certainly less so than the archival educators. Nevertheless, certification was investigated as part of the focus on ways to develop the profession. Although it could issue guidelines and recommendations, SAA did not itself have the authority to establish accrediting programs for university graduate education or for archival institutions. Such programs are generally developed and maintained by the institutions involved, or with their support. However, as an association of individual practitioners, SAA could establish a program for certifying archivists.

### ***Archival Certification: The Beginnings***

To begin, the SAA Council contracted for consultant services with Professional Examination Service (PES), a firm experienced in developing and

<sup>1</sup> Information on the course of these discussions and their results can be found in the *SAA Newsletter*; in reports to the SAA Council from the various committees, boards, and task forces involved; and in the prefatory material of the resulting publications.

managing professional certification programs. With the appointment of the Interim Board for Certification (IBC) in 1987, the Council determined to proceed with archival certification. Acting on the advice of PES, the IBC followed the nationally accepted means of developing a program that included conducting a role study of archival practice and undertaking the initial phases of certification by petition and examination.<sup>2</sup>

In order to secure a sufficient membership and a financial base of support, nearly all new professional certification programs offer initial certification by petition, so-called “grandfathering.” The IBC followed precedent in this regard. For a limited period of time, individuals could apply to become certified by presenting evidence of qualifying education and experience as a professional archivist. The combination of education and experience required for initial archival certification was any one of the following: a master’s degree, including graduate study of archives administration, and a minimum of five years of qualifying professional archival experience; or a master’s degree and six years of qualifying professional archival experience; or a bachelor’s degree and seven years of qualifying professional archival experience. Initial certification by petition was available from October 1, 1988, to September 30, 1989, for those applicants who qualified.

For individuals not having sufficient qualifying experience, an examination was developed. The first certification examination was offered at the 1989 SAA Annual Meeting. Fewer years of experience were required in each of the degree categories for applicants who took the examination, compared with certification by petition.

The initial class of 1989 included 689 individuals who certified by petition and twenty individuals who became certified by passing the examination (out of twenty-one who sat for the exam).

According to plan, at that 1989 SAA Annual Meeting, which took place in St. Louis, the Interim Board for Certification was dissolved. Those present at the meeting who had been certified by petition formed a new association, the Academy of Certified Archivists. This organization, whose membership comprises all currently certified archivists in good standing, is an incorporated, not-for-profit body that is independent of the Society of American Archivists.

Initially the ACA contracted with PES to oversee exam development and provide advice on the continuing development of the certification program, and with the Society of American Archivists for management services, including maintenance of the membership database and publication of a newsletter. In

<sup>2</sup> The beginnings and subsequent development of archival certification can be traced first in the *SAA Newsletter* and then in the *ACA Newsletter*, which until 1995 was published as an insert in the former and distributed to all SAA members. Historical as well as current information about the Academy of Certified Archivists can be found on its website, [www.certifiedarchivists.org](http://www.certifiedarchivists.org). Included on the website are articles about the early years of the academy by three of its early leaders, Gregory Hunter, Maygene Daniels, and Elizabeth Adkins.

1995 the ACA engaged Capitol Hill Management to provide management and psychometric services.

#### ***Initial Certification: Qualifying to Take the Examination***

Since the close of the period of initial certification by petition, everyone seeking to become a certified archivist must pass the examination. Requirements to stand for the exam have changed somewhat. The bachelor's degree has been eliminated. Currently, to take the examination a candidate must present either (1) a master's degree with a concentration in archival administration (at least nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours of graduate coursework), plus one year of qualifying professional archival experience; or (2) a master's degree without a concentration in archival administration, plus two years of qualifying professional archival experience.

A third option is intended for recent graduates of archival education programs. It requires a master's degree with at least nine semester hours or twelve quarter hours of graduate study in archival administration. Individuals who pass the exam under this option may become certified upon presenting evidence of at least one year of qualifying professional archival experience within the following three years.

#### ***Maintaining Certification***

From the beginning, archival certification included a requirement for individuals to maintain their certification by periodically demonstrating that they had kept up with current developments in the field. The ACA adopted specific guidelines for certification maintenance in 1992; the program was implemented in 1997. Academy members must verify their certification maintenance activities every five years to retain the designation of Certified Archivist.

Members may choose to "recertify" (as the process is commonly called) in one of two ways. They may pass the current examination. Or they may recertify by petition, which uses a point system to recognize continuing education, contributions to the profession, and experience during the previous five-year period. The majority of members use the petition method; however, some recertify by examination every year. In 2004, for example, fifty-three individuals submitted petitions, while ten took the exam.

#### ***Previous Surveys of Certified Archivists***

The Academy of Certified Archivists surveyed its members in 1989 and again in 1999. The second survey used the same questions, so as to be able to

compare results, with a few additional ones. For the A\*CENSUS, no attempt was made to duplicate these earlier questions, nor were there any specific questions asked only of ACA members. Even where the questions were similar, such as those on age and salary, the categories for A\*CENSUS responses are not identical to those in the previous ACA surveys. Consequently, direct comparisons among the three sets of responses are difficult for most questions. In a few areas, however, some comparisons are possible and will be attempted here.<sup>3</sup>

In 1989, 709 questionnaires were mailed and 689 were returned, for a response rate of 97%. In 1999, 624 questionnaires were mailed and 444 were returned, for a response rate of 71%. The A\*CENSUS received 593 responses from 765 ACA members, for a response rate of 77.5%.

#### **Certified Archivists in the A\*CENSUS**

All members of the Academy of Certified Archivists are certified archivists; all certified archivists are members of the Academy. Whenever the A\*CENSUS data are reported according to membership in professional associations, the figure for ACA membership is the number of respondents who identified themselves as members of ACA. Thus this figure also represents the number of certified archivists who responded to questions on the survey.

The following comparisons of certified archivists with their peers are made using the three categories—ACA members, SAA members, and all respondents. As mentioned above, in the A\*CENSUS survey, 593 individuals indicated membership in ACA, out of the total of 765 on the mailing list of members provided to the A\*CENSUS project, for an overall response rate of 77.5%. For SAA, 2,409 out of 2,913 on the SAA list that was provided for the survey indicated SAA membership, for a response rate of 82.7%. Overall, an official total of 5,620 responding individuals, out of just under 12,000 names compiled from the various membership and mailing lists, took the survey. The official response rate was 47.18% (Table 1.4).

Because not everyone completed the entire survey, the numbers and rates of responses to individual questions differ. When responses to two (or more) questions are combined for analysis, only the answers from those who answered both (or all of the) questions are included in the analysis that follows.

<sup>3</sup> A summary of the 1999 survey, along with some comparisons to the results from 1989, are located on the ACA website. The returns from both surveys are in the ACA archives in the Golda Meir Library at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

### Some Demographic Features

A certified archivist is more likely to be male, to be slightly older, and to have been employed somewhat longer in the profession than either the average SAA member or member of the profession as a whole.

#### Gender

Information on gender available from earlier surveys of SAA members suggests a significant shift over the past fifty years, from 67.0% men in 1956 to 66.9% women in 2004 (Fig. 8.1, SAA gender shift, 1956-2004, at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)). In the past fifteen years, ACA has also seen a gender shift, but less than that of SAA. The first survey of ACA in 1989 revealed a membership almost evenly divided between men (50.0%) and women (49.9%) (Fig. 8.2, ACA gender shift, 1989-2004, at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)). By 2004, the percentage of women was greater (58.3%). Today, the proportion of men among ACA members (41.7%) is approximately 30% greater than among SAA members (32.2%), and about 20% greater than among all respondents to the A\*CENSUS (34.5%).

#### Age and Length of Time in the Profession

An ACA member is an average 2.6 years older than an SAA member, and 1.1 years older than a member of the profession generally. On average, ACA members have been in the profession six years longer than the other two groups. The mean year of respondents' first archival job is 1984 for ACA members, and 1990 for SAA members and all respondents (Table 8.1).

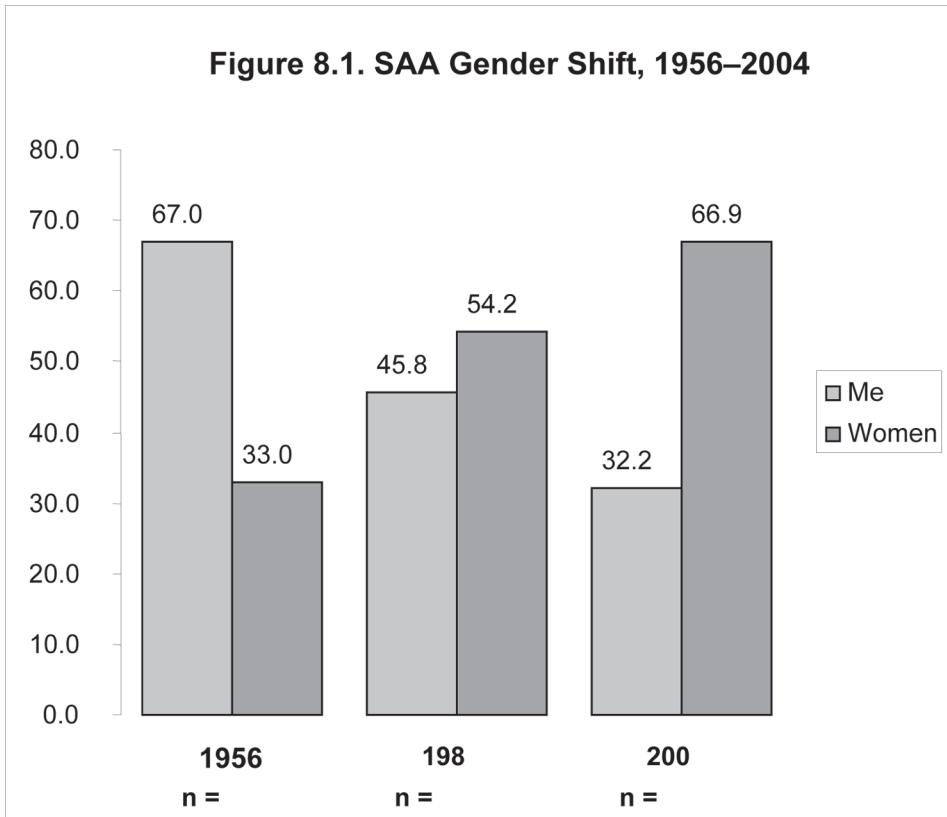
Forty-eight percent of ACA members reported taking their first archival job twenty or more years ago, compared to 30% for SAA members and 28% for all

**Table 8.1.** Approximate mean salaries by gender, mean age, and mean year of first archival job – ACA, SAA, all respondents

Approximate mean* salary by gender, mean age, and mean year of first archival job			
	ACA	SAA	All Respondents
Male	\$60,548	\$57,629	\$54,787
Female	\$51,103	\$47,864	\$46,151
Total	\$55,218	\$51,279	\$49,329
Mean age	49.8 years	47.2 years	48.7 years
Mean year of 1st archival job	1984	1990	1990

Notes: Total n=ACA – 482;SAA – 1,838;All – 3,817. [Figures are from “Salary Data from the A\*CENSUS, Preliminary Report #2,” December 10, 2004. Tables 2, 5, and 6.] \*See Appendix D for process used to calculate approximate means for questions using ranges in the A\*CENSUS.





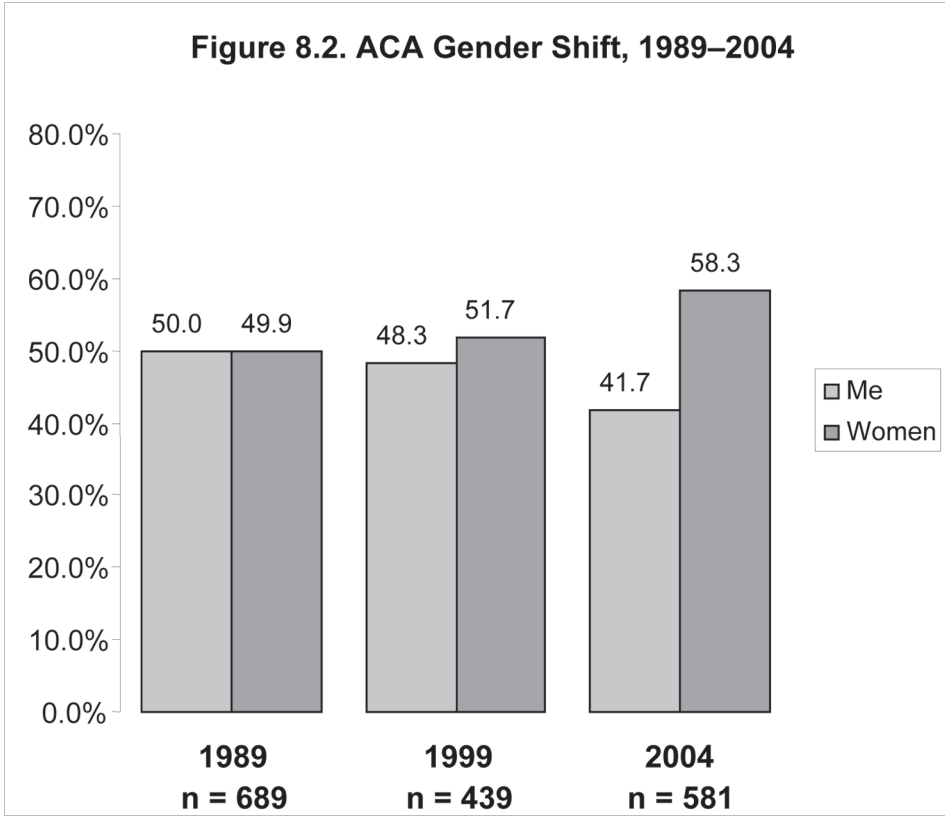
respondents (Fig. 8.3, Year of first archival job – ACA, SAA, all respondents, at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)).

ACA members should be expected to average a somewhat longer time in the profession than their peers, because certification requires at least one or two years of experience. On the A\*CENSUS, 10% of the SAA membership and 9% of all respondents reported less than three years since their first archival job, compared to 1% of certified archivists.

### Salary

ACA members, men and women as well as respondents overall, earn higher salaries than SAA members and the profession at large (Table 8.1).

Salary is related to length of time in the profession. Archivists who indicated that they began their first archival job before 1970 reported the highest salaries. The average salary level declines as the length of time in the profession decreases (Table 8.2, Approximate mean salaries by year of first archival job – ACA, SAA, all respondents, in Appendix L).



Salary level is also related to gender. At every five-year range for year of first archival job, the average salaries of men are greater than those of women (Table 3.6.3, Approximate mean salaries, by year in which respondents started first archival job, all respondents, men, and women, in Appendix H).

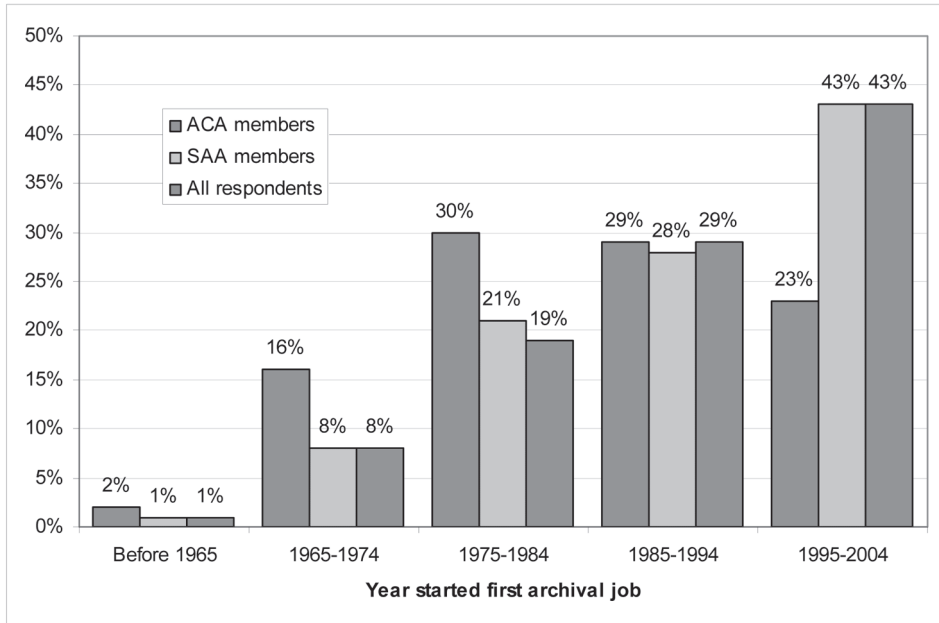
The mean salaries of those ACA members who have been in the profession the longest are generally higher than the salaries of SAA members and all respondents for the corresponding lengths of time. Overall, the mean salary for certified archivists is highest of the three groups (Table 8.2). This could be because there are proportionally more men among ACA members, and because, on average, ACA members took their first archival jobs six years earlier than did their peers (Table 8.1).

**Professional Membership**

*To what other associations do certified archivists belong?*

In 2004, 79.1% of certified archivists reported belonging to the Society of American Archivists (Table 3.9.13a, Membership overlap among national and

Figure 8.3. Year of first archival job — ACA, SAA, all respondents



regional archival associations, in Appendix H). The 1999 ACA survey results were similar to those in the A\*CENSUS in 2004, with 79% of ACA members also belonging to SAA in the 1999 survey. A question about SAA membership was not asked in the 1989 ACA survey.

In 2004, 22.3% of ACA members were also members of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC); 22.6% belonged to the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC); 20.2% belonged to the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA); and a reported 6.7% belonged to the New England Archivists (NEA) (Table 3.9.13a). Questions and answers on regional membership in previous ACA surveys allow for comparisons involving these four associations (Table 8.3). The figures for membership in the Southwest organization have doubled, while those for the New England group have held fairly steady.

***How many members of other associations are also certified archivists?***

In the A\*CENSUS, 19.5% of SAA members reported belonging to ACA (Table 3.9.13b, Membership overlap among national and regional archival associations, in Appendix H). The two largest regional organizations, MARAC and MAC, show similar results. Participation in the certification program appears

**Table 8.3.** ACA members in certain regional archival associations

ACA members in certain regional archival associations						
ACA members also members of						
	1989 number	%	1999 number	%	2004 number	%
MARAC	139	20.2%	93	20.9%	132	22.6%
MAC	104	15.1%	104	23.4%	134	22.6%
SSA*	72	10.4%	68	15.3%	120	20.2%
NEA	39	05.7%	30	06.8%	40	06.7%

Notes: 1989 – n= 689; 1999 – n= 444; 2004 – n= 593.

\* In the 1989 and 1999 surveys, the area was reported as SWV, but it seems to encompass the area now included in the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA).

strongest among members of organizations in the Southwest, inter-mountain West, and Northwest, and seems weakest in the New England and California groups (Tables 3.9.13a, 3.9.13b, 3.9.13c, and 3.9.13d, in Appendix H).

#### **Participation in Archival Certification Compared with Other Professions**

How do we evaluate the report of 19.5% of SAA members that they are certified archivists? One way is to look at other professions with voluntary certification programs (Table 8.4).

Unfortunately, the others have not recently conducted surveys such as the A\*CENSUS. The figures that are available to allow comparisons among different professions are the total number of certified individuals and the number of individual members of the national professional associations. For the archival profession, the comparable figures are the numbers of members of ACA and SAA, respectively, and not the responses to the A\*CENSUS. For the 2004 survey, the Academy of Certified Archivists submitted a list of 765 members and the Society of American Archivists a list of 2,913. From those figures, the proportion of SAA members who are ACA certified is 26% (Table 8.4).

According to a list of other professional associations and their rates of voluntary certification, it would appear common for voluntary certification programs to encompass far less than a majority of practitioners within a profession. The rates for the group of professions listed in Table 8.4 range from 7% to 32%, with archivists falling somewhere in the middle, at 26%. Although these figures are approximate in some instances, they do give some perspective.

**Table 8.4.** Number certified in selected professions

Number certified in selected professions				
Certification Association	Number Certified	National Professional Association	Number of Members	Proportion Certified to National Membership
Academy of Certified Archivists	765	Society of American Archivists	2913	26%
Institute of Certified Records Managers	692	ARMA International	10,000*	7%
Certified Association Executive Program	3000*	American Society of Association Executives	13,600*	22%
Academy of Health Information Professionals	1155	Medical Library Association	3600	32%
Certified Fund Raising Executives International	4000*	Association of Fundraising Professionals	25,000*	16%
Certified Veterinary Practice Managers	103	Veterinary Hospital Managers Association	1082	10%
Board Certified Entomologists	394	Entomological Society of America	6000	7%

Notes: All of the above are voluntary certification programs for individual professionals. In none of these programs does certification require membership in the national professional association. The membership figures for the Academy of Certified Archivists and the Society of American Archivists are from the data submitted for the A\*CENSUS. The other figures were compiled in December 2004 and January 2005 from websites or personal communications with staff of the various associations. The numbers marked with an asterisk (\*) were identified as estimates.

### Strength of Ties to the Archival Profession

One question on the A\*CENSUS asked respondents to indicate the strength of their ties to the archival profession by choosing a number from 7 (very strong) to 1 (not strong at all). Forty-three percent of certified archivists indicated that their ties are very strong, compared with 29% of SAA members and 22% of the profession at large (Figure 8.4).

The overall mean response of ACA members was 6% greater than the overall SAA mean, and 16% greater than the overall mean for all respondents (Table 8.5a, Strength of ties to the archival profession: ACA compared with SAA by year of first archival job; and Table 8.5b, Strength of ties to the archival profession: ACA compared with all respondents by year of first archival job, both in Appendix L).

Does the fact that ACA members have been in the profession an average of six years longer than their peers (Table 8.1) influence the overall greater strength of their ties? Tables 8.5a and 8.5b show the responses to this question according to the years in which respondents reported beginning their first archival job. The mean responses for ACA members are greater than those for the entire population in every longevity category, and greater than the SAA mean responses in all but one category.

Figure 8.4. Strength of ties to the archival profession - ACA, SAA, all respondents



7 (very strong) to 1 (not strong at all)

For all three groups, the mean response is highest among those who have been in the profession the longest. For ACA members who entered the profession before 1970, the mean response is 6.11; it declines to 5.33 for those who began their first job between 2000 and 2004. The comparable figures for SAA members are a range of 6.12 to 5.03, and for all respondents, a range from 5.39 to 4.66 (Tables 8.5a and 8.5b).

Comparing members of the three groups who entered the profession at the same time confirms the overall result of stronger ties to the profession for those respondents who are certified than for others.

Do ACA members report stronger ties because of the effort of studying for and taking the exam and maintaining their certification? Or are people who are already strongly attached to the profession more likely to pursue certification? The data from this survey cannot answer these questions.

The 1989 and 1999 surveys of ACA members asked about their motivations to seek certification. From among six choices, the 1989 respondents were asked to indicate one; in 1999 they could mark all that applied. In both surveys, “desire to make a contribution to the profession” was the most frequently chosen response (1989 - 25% of respondents; 1999 - 57%). A close second in both was “career mobility” (1989 - 24%; 1999 - 55%). No similar question was asked in the A\*CENSUS.

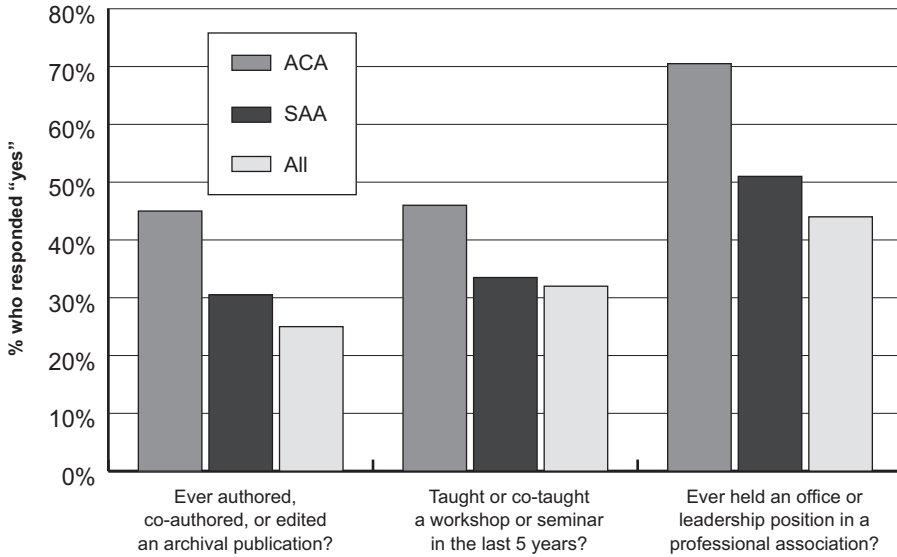
### **Professional Activities**

Compared to their peers, ACA members generally participate more frequently in a wide range of professional activities (Fig. 8.5, Percentage of participation in certain professional activities – ACA, SAA, all respondents).

A substantially greater proportion of certified archivists reported authoring, co-authoring, or editing an archival publication; teaching or co-teaching a workshop or seminar in the past five years or holding an office or leadership position in a professional association at some time during the course of their careers, compared with SAA members and with all respondents.

Table 8.6 summarizes the mean responses to four questions. Three of the questions asked for the number of times in the past five years that the respondent had attended conferences, had given archives-related presentations, and had taught or co-taught a workshop or seminar for each of several different types of sponsoring organizations. Out of a total of sixteen different categories of responses to those three questions, the mean for ACA members was the highest in ten of the categories (shaded in the table). ACA members attended more conferences and taught more workshops for national and regional associations than did their peers in SAA or the profession at large. For every type of organization, ACA members gave more archives-related presentations. In the past five years, they averaged just over four presentations to community or civic

**Figure 8.5. Percentage of participation in certain professional activities – ACA, SAA, all respondents**



organizations and more than three such presentations at events conducted by their employers.

A fourth question summarized in Table 8.6 asked for the number of years during their careers that respondents had held an office or a position of leadership in four types of professional associations. The mean response for ACA members was the highest for national/international, regional, and state professional associations. Only in local professional organizations did SAA members and members of the profession at large hold office for longer periods.

Is the overall greater participation in many professional activities by ACA members a reflection of their greater length of time in the profession? A possible answer is found in Table 8.7a, Individuals giving archives-related presentations in the last five years, by year of first archival job – ACA, SAA, all respondents – national, regional, state associations; and in Table 8.7b, Individuals giving archives-related presentations in the last five years, by year of first archival job - ACA, SAA, all respondents – local associations, employer/civic events, both in Appendix L. Responses to a question on the number of archives-related presentations made in the last five years have been grouped according to the year of first archival job. The percentages represent the number of people who gave presentations from among all who reported their first job in that range of years. For example, among the ACA members who began their first positions in the period



**Table 8.6.** Mean ratings for participation in certain professional activities – ACA, SAA, all respondents

Mean ratings for participation in certain professional activities

Shading indicates categories in which ACA members' means exceed peers' and the profession's means.

	<i>Means</i>		
	ACA members	SAA members	All respondents
<b>Attended conferences/meetings in the last 5 years</b>			
National/international professional assoc	3.35	2.96	2.44
Regional professional assoc	2.78	2.44	2.10
State professional assoc	0.91	1.69	0.76
Local professional assoc	1.05	3.19	1.27
Employer-sponsored	1.13	2.29	1.20
<b>Gave archives-related presentations in the last 5 years</b>			
National/international professional assoc	1.20	0.95	0.69
Regional professional assoc	0.96	0.68	0.52
State professional assoc	0.70	0.47	0.46
Local professional assoc	0.64	0.55	0.58
Employer-sponsored	3.25	2.68	2.47
Community event or civic organization	4.01	2.68	2.74
<b>Taught or co-taught workshop or seminar in the last 5 years</b>			
National/international professional assoc	0.68	0.67	0.56
Regional professional assoc	0.49	0.48	0.48
State professional assoc	0.68	0.61	0.72
Local professional assoc	0.69	0.66	0.84
Employer-sponsored	4.17	3.95	4.18
<b>Number of years held office or leadership position</b>			
National/international professional assoc	3.02	2.46	2.15
Regional professional assoc	2.23	1.62	1.44
State professional assoc	2.03	1.50	1.71
Local professional assoc	1.37	1.44	1.59

Notes: n=ACA – 595; SAA – 2409; All – 5620; source questions: 42, 44, 47, 49

1975-79, forty-nine of them made presentations at national or international professional associations in the last five years. The forty-nine presenters represent 59.0% of all ACA-member respondents who began their first job in 1975-79.

The overall figures for each type of association show that a significantly higher percentage of ACA members made presentations in the past five years than their peers in SAA and in the profession generally.

Tables 8.7a and 8.7b also show that senior members of the profession have tended to give presentations to a greater degree than have the younger ones. Thus, of the ACA members who entered the profession in 1965-69, 72.7% have made at least one presentation at a national/international professional association in the last five years. This figure declines to 13.9% for those who began their first archival job in 2000-04. The comparable figures for SAA are 59.5% and 10.1%, and for all respondents, the figures are 48.1% and 8.6%.

As with strength of ties to the profession, responses from ACA members, SAA members, and all respondents can be compared across the same range of

years to see if the higher overall average of presentations by ACA members is due to the overall higher average length of time in the profession. Here, the highest percentages are registered by ACA members in forty-three of fifty-four total categories for all age ranges and all types of organizations (shaded in the two tables, 8.7a and 8.7b). Many categories in which ACA does not show the highest percentage represent some of the more senior members. Although numbers of individuals in some categories are too few to be significant in themselves, the trend suggests that a longer average tenure in the profession for ACA members is not the reason for the overall higher percentage of professional presentations by certified archivists.

If not length of time in the profession, what might be the reason? Continuing participation in these kinds of professional activities is required to maintain ACA certification. Does the level of activity for ACA members reflect the requirements of recertification? Or does certification attract individuals who otherwise would be very active professionally? As with the strength of ties to the profession, the data from this survey do not answer these questions.

### **Continuing Education**

Certified archivists participate in archives-related continuing education in proportionately greater numbers than do SAA members and members of the profession generally (Figure 8.6a, Percentage of participation in archives-related workshops – ACA, SAA, all respondents; and Figure 8.6b, Percentage of participation in other archives-related continuing education – ACA, SAA, all respondents, both in Appendix L). The survey asked if respondents had ever participated in several kinds of continuing education and training. The percentage of ACA members responding affirmatively was the highest in thirteen of the seventeen types of educational opportunities listed; for the remaining four, the ACA percentage was equal to one or both of the other groups' percentages.

Recertification by means of petition requires evidence of education and training. Workshops, institutes, nondegree coursework, and mentoring would all earn some form of qualifying points. How recertification requirements affect ACA members' rates of participation in these programs is not clear. However, certified archivists do seem to participate in large numbers in other educational activities that would *not* generate credits toward recertification.

### **Importance of Certain Qualifications in Hiring**

Only twice in the A\*CENSUS is certification specifically mentioned. A question asked if respondents' responsibilities included managing or supervising

**Table 8.8a.** Mean importance of qualifications when hiring a full-time ENTRY-LEVEL archivist – ACA, SAA, all respondents

Importance of qualifications when hiring a full-time ENTRY-LEVEL archivist			
<i>Mean Ratings</i>			
1 = not at all important <====> 7 = very important			
<i>Qualifications</i>	ACA Members	SAA Members	All Respondents
Experience	4.41	4.58	4.51
Degrees held	5.41	5.33	5.16
Postgraduate continuing education and training	4.54	4.61	4.52
References	5.97	5.95	5.92
Involvement in professional assoc.	4.01	3.89	3.70
Certification	3.58	2.58	2.47
Graduate archival courses	5.20	5.29	5.05
Technical skills	5.66	5.73	5.63
Other skills such as interpersonal and communications	6.10	6.17	6.14

Notes: n=ACA – 154; SAA – 408; All - 654

**Table 8.8b.** Mean importance of qualifications when hiring a full-time MID-LEVEL or SENIOR archivist – ACA, SAA, all respondents

Importance of qualifications when hiring a full-time MID-LEVEL or SENIOR archivist			
<i>Mean Ratings</i>			
1 = not at all important <====> 7 = very important			
<i>Qualifications</i>	ACA Members	SAA Members	All Respondents
Experience	6.60	6.48	6.42
Degrees held	5.43	5.38	5.15
Postgraduate continuing education and training	5.37	5.20	5.04
References	5.03	4.94	5.92
Involvement in professional assoc.	4.93	4.67	4.47
Certification	4.72	3.04	3.00
Graduate archival courses	5.43	5.30	5.10
Technical skills	6.06	5.99	5.97
Other skills such as interpersonal and communications	6.40	6.41	6.38

Notes: n=ACA – 154; SAA – 408; All – 654

archivists, including hiring and firing. Those who answered "yes" were then asked an additional series of questions. Two of those called for rating the importance of each of nine qualifications, including ACA certification, on a scale of from 7 (very important) to 1 (not at all important). One question regarded hiring a full-time, entry-level archivist and the other a full-time mid-level or senior archivist.

Table 8.8a, Mean importance of qualifications when hiring a full time ENTRY-LEVEL archivist – ACA, SAA, all respondents; and Table 8.8b, Mean importance of qualifications when hiring a MID-LEVEL or SENIOR archivist

– ACA, SAA, all respondents, both at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org), show the mean ratings for each qualification from the responses to each question by archival managers who are ACA members, those who are SAA members, and by all respondents. Table 8.9 (Mean importance of certification as a qualification when hiring an archivist, at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)) highlights the mean ratings specifically for the qualification of certification. Tables 8.10 (Order of importance of qualifications when hiring a full-time, ENTRY-LEVEL archivist – ACA, SAA, all respondents) and 8.11 (Order of importance of qualifications when hiring a full-time MID-LEVEL or SENIOR archivist – ACA, SAA, all respondents), both at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org), list the qualifications in rank order as derived from the mean ratings.

Certification ranks as the least important of the nine qualifications listed for both questions for all three groups—including the archival managers who are certified. ACA members did, however, give higher mean values to certification than did SAA members or members of the profession at large (Table 8.9). For entry-level positions, the ACA members' mean figure is 39% higher than SAA members' value and 45% higher than the rating by all respondents. For mid-level and senior positions, the ACA members' mean rating is 55% higher than that of SAA members and 57% higher than the figure from all respondents.

All three groups rated certification more important in hiring a mid-level or senior archivist than an entry-level one. For an entry-level position, the responses of all three groups agree on the rank order of the nine qualifications listed in Table 8.10. For a mid-level or senior level position, all three move “Experience” from a rank of seventh to first (Table 8.11).

While certification ranks lowest, at ninth in importance, as a qualification in hiring, “involvement in professional associations” ranks eighth in all of the lists and “postgraduate training and education” appears just above that. Interestingly, professional involvement and participation in continuing education and training are two areas in which certified archivists are more active than SAA members and all respondents, according to the results of this survey. Might there be a relationship in the low rankings of the three qualifications? Or is this simply a coincidence?

These data do not explain why certification ranks so low. Were managers reflecting personal opinions? Or were their answers influenced by the hiring policies and practices at their institutions, situations over which they may have little or no control? Is it of any consequence that there are relatively few certified archivists compared to the number of employed archivists, thus suggesting that it might be difficult to find certified individuals to hire?

## Conclusions

The A\*CENSUS has shown that certified archivists are more likely to be male and have been in the profession somewhat longer than their colleagues.

**Table 8.9.** Mean importance of certification as a qualification when hiring an archivist

Mean importance of certification as a qualification when hiring an archivist			
<i>Mean Ratings</i>			
1 = not at all important <====> 7 = very important			
	ACA Members	SAA Members	All Respondents
Experience	4.41	4.58	4.51
ENTRY LEVEL	3.58	2.58	2.47
MID-LEVEL or SENIOR	4.72	3.04	3.00

Notes: n=ACA – 154; SAA – 408; All - 654

**Table 8.10.** Order of importance of qualifications when hiring archivists – ACA, SAA, all respondents

Order of importance of qualifications when hiring full-time ENTRY-LEVEL archivists	
ACA Members, SAA Members, All Respondents (Same rank order for all 3 groups)	
ACA n = 154 / SAA n = 408 / All n = 654	
1.	Other skills such as interpersonal and communications
2.	References
3.	Technical skills
4.	Degrees held*
5.	Graduate archival courses*
6.	Postgraduate continuing education and training
7.	Experience
8.	Involvement in professional associations
9.	Certification

Source question: M17 (entry-level archivist hiring qualifications);

Q36a=1 (ACA member); Q36a=8 (SAA member)

Notes: Rank order was determined by calculating means for responses on a Likert scale.

\* The mean ratings by ACA members for these two qualifications were equal.

**Table 8.11.** Order of importance of qualifications when hiring mid-level or senior archivists – ACA, SAA, all respondents

Order of importance of qualifications when hiring full-time MID-LEVEL or SENIOR archivists	
ACA Members/SAA Members (similar rank order)	All Respondents
ACA n = 154 / SAA n = 408	All n = 654
1. Experience	1. Experience
2. Other skills such as interpersonal and communications	2. Other skills such as interpersonal and communications
3. Technical skills	3. Technical Skills
4. Degrees held	4. References
5. Graduate archival courses	5. Degrees held
6. Postgraduate continuing education and training	6. Graduate archival courses
7. References	7. Postgraduate continuing education and training
8. Involvement in professional associations	8. Involvement in professional associations
9. Certification	9. Certification

Source question: M13 (mid-level/senior archivist hiring qualifications); Q36a=1 (ACA member); Q36a=8 (SAA member)

These two characteristics are likely the reasons for the higher overall salary level reported by ACA members.

Certified archivists participate in professional activities and undertake continuing education and training to a greater degree than their peers. Further, these increased levels of activity extend across the range of years of experience, from newly certified archivists to the most experienced.

These results suggest that developers and providers of continuing education and training should consider certified archivists a principal audience. Nominating committees and conference program committees of professional archival associations might look to the ACA membership list to help meet their needs. Research on the professional development of archivists would benefit by an examination of certified individuals as a group.

Results from this survey have also shown that archival managers—even the certified archivists among them—do not consider certification an important qualification in hiring. While this finding may be disappointing to advocates of certification, it will come as no surprise to anyone who has even so much as skimmed the employment opportunities sections of archival association newsletters. Anyone seeking to change this situation, especially within the ACA, might seek lessons from the experiences of other professions that conduct voluntary certification programs.

Future surveys should include specific questions for certified archivists, especially questions from the 1989 and 1999 ACA surveys, in order to allow for comparisons over time.

The A\*CENSUS has provided a great deal of information about the “whats,” but little about the “whys.” It would be useful for future data collection to ask respondents for their reasons and motivations. Thus, for example, we might be able to learn if ACA members are more professionally active as a requirement of maintaining their certification, or if, instead, those individuals who are generally very active tend to seek certification as one more type of professional involvement. We might also learn the reasons for managers’ low ranking of certification in hiring decisions.