Guidelines for Archival Continuing Education (ACE)

Adopted by the Council of the Society of American Archivists, <DATE ACCEPTED>.

Introduction

Archival continuing education (ACE) provides professional archival knowledge beyond the formal credit/hour structure of education institutions. ACE connects with individual archivists in all phases of their careers by delivering basic, intermediate, and advanced courses in the areas of archival knowledge listed below.[1]

These guidelines encourage lifelong learning opportunities within the archival community and specifically apply to providers or sponsors of archival continuing education. Others will find them useful, including practicing archivists, allied professionals, employers, archival educators, accrediting agencies, and those who fund, oversee, support, work with, or use archives or who participate in archival continuing education.

Continuing education is typically focused on applied practice but should be grounded in archival principles, theories, histories, and values. All programs should engage the latest developments, technologies, and best practices in the knowledge areas.

Areas of Archival Knowledge

Archival continuing education programs should address the areas of archival knowledge delineated by the Society of American Archivists Guidelines for Graduate Programs in Archival Studies (GPAS) and the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA):

1. **Nature of Records and Archives**: The theory and history of archives and the archival profession; social and cultural history; the records-keeping models; relationships to allied professions; familiarity with professional standards and best practices; and use of appropriate research methodologies and technological solutions.

2. **Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition**: The theory, policies, and procedures that archivists use to identify, evaluate, acquire, and authenticate archival materials, in all forms, of enduring value.

3. **Arrangement and Description**: The intellectual and physical organization or verification of archival materials in all forms, and the development of descriptive tools and systems that provide both control of and access to collections.

4. **Preservation**: The strategy, practice, and administration of physical and intellectual protection of materials in all forms, in order to ensure their continued accessibility. This

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[1] ACE "courses" is a generic term that includes workshops, seminars, clinics, institutes, short courses, e-learning, recorded programs, and webinars. See Appendix List of Effective Delivery Formats.

includes environmental controls, material stabilization, storage and housing, handling and security, reformatting, and migration.

5. **Reference and Access**: The policies and procedures designed to serve the information needs of various user groups.

6. **Outreach, Instruction, and Advocacy**: The theories and practices that archivists use to identify needs and to develop programs to support individuals and communities. These activities promote understanding of archival materials and methods, increased use, expanded resources, improved and new community relationships, visibility, and support.

7. **Management and Administration**: The principles and practices archivists use to facilitate all aspects of archival work through careful planning and administration of the repository, unit, or program, its institutional resources, and its policy making practices.

8. **Ethical and Legal Responsibilities**: The laws, regulations, institutional policies, and professional standards that apply to the archival community and its users, including intellectual property, sensitivities, and privacy concerns.

Specialized Courses

Courses that address specialized topics such as formats, allied functions, media, or repository type are also appropriate. These can be specialized courses or part of courses addressing the above areas of archival knowledge. Such topics may include:

1. **Digital Materials:** Methods to manage born-digital records and digital surrogates, including means to address the specific nature, issues, and preservation challenges of digital archives.
2. **Collaboration with Allied Professionals**: Methods to work with creators and managers of information, including records managers, rare book librarians, cultural heritage workers, conservators, information technologists, museum professionals, oral historians, public historians, educators, and social and community organization professionals.
3. **Innovative Areas**: Archival practice is informed by and informs a range of influences, including interdisciplinary approaches to research; new and emerging theories, practices, and technologies; and subject specialization.

Delivery Options, Curriculum, Evaluation

Different instructional formats and venue options exist. Matching the needs of participants and topics being taught with the optimum format and venue is important. Courses may include, but are not limited to, workshops, seminars, institutes, in-house training programs, and professional association meetings, as well as emerging distance and online educational delivery mechanisms. Providing low cost, widely available continuing education should be the primary goal.

Course information and materials must be appropriate to the intended subject, duration, delivery mechanism, and audience.[2] Course developers will create learning materials based on identified

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[2] See Appendix 5: Guidelines for an Ideal Course and Curriculum Development

needs and will incorporate and assess learning outcomes using recognized assessment methods and formal evaluation instruments. Instructors should be qualified in their fields.[3]

Providers should consider accessibility when developing and offering courses and make efforts to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Instructors and students should evaluate specific continuing education courses. Developers and providers of individual courses and multi-class programs should evaluate the total range of courses offered over time to avoid needless duplication or competition.[4]

Appended to these guidelines are materials intended to serve as a general "toolkit" to aid continuing education providers and users in developing and preparing to attend continuing education offerings:

Appendix 1: Evolution of the ACE Guidelines
Appendix 2: Recommended Instructor Qualifications
Appendix 3: List of Effective Delivery Formats
Appendix 4: Guidelines for Evaluating Continuing Education Programs

- Sample Evaluation Form for Individual Program and Instructor
- Sample Reviewer Evaluation Form

Appendix 5: Curriculum Development (Objectives, Work Application, Measurable Outcomes)

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[3] See Appendix 3: Recommended Instructor Qualifications
[4] See Appendix 4: Guidelines for Evaluating Continuing Education Programs and sample evaluation forms.

Appendix 1: Evolution of the ACE Guidelines

A field as complex and rapidly changing as the archival profession requires effective continuing education and training. In 1997, SAA adopted "Guidelines for the Development of Post-Appointment and Continuing Education and Training Programs" (PACE) which had as its basis the Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies (GPAS) guidelines. The ACE Guidelines resulted from a scheduled review and revision of PACE in 2005 – 2006. The ACE Guidelines adopted by the SAA Council in 2006 incorporate information from SAA's 2002 GPAS guidelines and the Academy of Certified Archivists' 2003 Role Delineation Statement Revision.

In 2017, the Committee on Education revised the ACE Guidelines to be in better accordance with a 2016 revision of the Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies. During the 2017 ACE revision, an appendix referencing the 2004-2005 A*CENSUS was removed due to concerns about the census being outdated.

Appendix 2: Recommended Guidelines for Evaluating Instructor Qualifications

Instructors should be experts in their field.

This expertise may be indicated by an appropriate combination of elements such as:

- Experience in archival practice in the given subject matter.
- Publications.
- A record of presentations at conferences.
- Work in related professional associations.
- Formal academic credentials.
- Other demonstrable indications of advanced knowledge.

Instructors should demonstrate an ability to teach effectively. This should be confirmed by a successful teaching record (based on student, peer, or reviewer evaluations).

Another measure of instructor qualification is completion of instructor training geared toward adult education. When evaluating this qualification in an instructor, the provider should consider the wide range of venues and structures that are appropriate for such education. Adult education teaching skills include the ability to conceptualize and deliver course content via distance education and to research and write a formal manual.

Appendix 3: Effective Delivery Formats

There are a variety of face-to-face and distance delivery formats within continuing education. The below provides some examples of these formats and their advantages and limitations.

Face-to-Face Delivery Formats[5]

Course (W): A relatively short-term, intensive, problem-focused learning experience that actively involves participants in the identification and analysis of problems and in the development and evaluation of solutions.

Seminar (S): A session or series of sessions in which a group of experienced people meet with one or more knowledgeable resource persons to discuss a given content area.

Institute (I): A short-term, often residential program that fosters intensive learning on a well-defined topic. New material is presented to add to the knowledge which the participants already have on the subject.

Clinic (C): A short-term program that emphasizes diagnosis and treatment of problems that participants bring to the session. Experts available at the clinic, rather than participants themselves, have primary responsibility for diagnosing problems and prescribing treatment.

Short course (SC): An abbreviated, more focused version of the class typically found in colleges and universities. Designed to update or deepen the knowledge of those in a particular field, the expert dominates the sessions because it focuses on communication and on acquisition of information within a short time.

Advantages of Each Format

- Many people can attend (W/S/SC)
- Very transportable (W/S/I/CS)
- Immediate application of results of problem-solving efforts (W/C)
- People interact in novel ways (W/I)
- Isolation from distractions of day-to-day concerns (W/S/I/SC)
- Problem-solving skills refined (W/C)
- Little need to reorganize facilities and equipment once they are in place (W/S/I)

Limitations of Each Format

- Fatigue and information overload are always possible (W/S)
- Mid-stream corrective action difficult when learner problems occur (W)
- Teacher burnout (W/SC)

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[5] Thomas J. Sork, "The Workshop as a Unique Instructional Format," in *Designing and Implementing Effective Workshops*, ed. Thomas J. Sork (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984), 3-10.

- Little flexibility if timing is not maintained (W/SC)
- Individual feedback to learners rarely possible (W/S)
- Learners are not always effective participants (W/I/C/SC)
- Costs for travel (W/I/C/SC)

Criteria for Selecting a Format

- Learning objectives emphasize problem solving (W)
- Solving problems that are relatively complex and generalized and that require intensive analysis (W)
- Resources necessary to engage in problem solving are available where they can be effectively incorporated into workshop activities (W)
- Skilled leadership is available (W/S/I/C/SC)
- Participants come with, or can be provided with, the group process skills that they need to engage in effective problem solving (W)
- Important to remove participants from their "natural" environment to bring about the desired changes in capabilities (W/I/C/SC)

Distance Learning Formats

Distance learning is training that takes place with registrants and instructors separated by locations and time zones. Registrants may receive materials and instructions for assignments via their computer or mail and are asked to return completed assignments to their instructor using the same media.

Advantages of the Distance Learning Format

- Allows registrants to take courses where and when they choose
- Alleviates cost, time, and work constraints
- Increases choices for more registrants
- Doesn't require a "brick-and-mortar" classroom
- More suited to the mature adult learner

Limitations of the Distance Learning Format

- Requires more time and work to deliver than does face-to-face training
- Registrants may feel isolated
- Can be more of a challenge due to lack of structure and interaction with others
- Administrative support needed may increase with larger number of registrants
- Necessitates high start-up costs and longer time frame for recouping expense

Criteria for Selecting the Distance Learning Format

- Requires simple and direct writing by the instructor
- Activities and self-assessment exercises must be interspersed throughout, building to the end goal

- Must be able to map a visible path when introducing the course in order to show registrant where he/she is at all times
- Works best when concepts, ideas, and theories are repeated often

Distance learning may be delivered using many techniques and technologies. E-learning is the distance learning form that uses the most "bells and whistles," but there are other successful ways of delivering distance learning. These include the following:

- **E-learning** is delivered via computers using internet technology and programming that allows registrants to interact with the course materials, each other, and the instructor via chat rooms, content management systems, video conferencing, etc., both synchronously and asynchronously. This is a fast-moving field with new products and techniques coming online in rapid succession.

- **Recorded programming** uses a series of pre-recorded programs designed to convey information. Delivery via cable, tape, podcast, or DVD is most common. In some cases the recorded programming includes assessments, or the instructor provides assessments to be completed and returned.

- **Webcasts** use a PC and telephone or VOIP software connection by which instructors present short programs using a PowerPoint presentation and interacting with registrants by voice, online chat, or email. Webcasts are often recorded for later access.

SAA WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

Appendix 4: Guidelines for Evaluating Continuing Education Programs

Feedback from participants, peers, reviewers, and instructors is essential to assess the quality and relevance of the individual class and an entire multi-class program.

Use the course evaluation forms that follow or construct your own to assist the instructor in refining/tweaking the content and presentation. Lengthy evaluation forms typically defeat the purpose as participants are eager to leave – one sheet of paper with questions on both sides appears to yield the greatest results. Include succinct questions and request answers based on a scale of one to five as well as open ended questions encouraging comprehensive responses. Allowing participants to complete evaluations at home and/or online after the program concludes results in a significant decrease in evaluations submitted.

Ask participants about the complete education experience including:
- Objectives
- Learning outcomes
- Content
- Break-out sessions
- Relevance of training
- Skill of Presenter
- Advertised description
- Handouts and materials
- Pre-reading assignments if appropriate
- What was missing?
- Catering if appropriate
- Information provided about location, transportation, parking,
- Comfort and appropriateness of facility
- Other education needs

Evaluations allow instructors and education providers to pin point areas for improvement in course content, presentation, and materials. Both entities should study the numbers, comments, and suggestions/complaints to resolve issues. Pay particular attention to negative comments-even if there are few. Assess their legitimacy and attempt to address the concerns they raise even while keeping positive comments in mind.

SAA WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM
Workshop Title: **NAME**

Date: **DATE**   Location: **LOCATION**

I. Assess the workshop from the standpoint of what you gained from the experience:
How well did the workshop meet the following stated objectives?

	Not at all				On target
Understand the basic elements of an electronic records program, including file formats, authenticity, and management strategies;	1	2	3	4	5
Know strategies for working with records creators ranging from university employees to donors of personal papers; and	1	2	3	4	5
Have a basic understanding of the open source tools available for ingest and management of electronic records.	1	2	3	4	5

	Very little			Substantial	
New knowledge/skills acquired	1	2	3	4	5

	Not likely			Very likely	
Likelihood of applying concepts to your work	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all			On target	
Expectations met per advertising	1	2	3	4	5

II. Rate the methods and materials relative to their value in accomplishing the workshop:

	NA	Poor				Outstanding
Clarity of participant handouts	0	1	2	3	4	5
Content of participant handouts	0	1	2	3	4	5
Pre course readings	0	1	2	3	4	5
Exercises/group discussions	0	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of audio-visual aids	0	1	2	3	4	5
Content of audio-visual aids	0	1	2	3	4	5

III. What aspect of the workshop methods/materials was most valuable to you? Why?

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_____

IV. What aspect of the workshop methods/materials would you change? Why?

_____

_____

Continued on reverse side

SAA WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

V.   How would you rate the individual instructor(s)?

Instructor: NAME

	Poor				Outstanding
Knowledge of topic	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to handle questions	1	2	3	4	5
Presentation skills	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments for Tim:

_____

_____

Instructor: NAME (if applicable)

	Poor				Outstanding
Knowledge of topic	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to handle questions	1	2	3	4	5
Presentation skills	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments for Seth:

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_____

VI. May we use your evaluation and name for testimonials? ___Yes   ___No

Name (optional): _____

VII. What other workshop topics do you need for your continuing education and where would you like to see them held?

_____

_____

VIII. How did find out about this workshop? Please circle all that apply:

Archival Outlook   In the Loop   Email Blast   Listserv Announcement

Twitter   Facebook   SAA Website   Postcard   Other (*Please Specify*)_____

Thank you in advance for completing this evaluation. The Committee on Education of the Society of American Archivists appreciates your assistance to help it maintain the highest standard of archival continuing education. Please complete this form and return it to the instructor at the conclusion of the course, or return it via mail or fax to:
Society of American Archivists; 17 North State Street, Suite #1425; Chicago, IL 60602;
Voice 312/606.0722—Fax 312/606.0728

Appendix 5: Guidelines for an Ideal Course and Curriculum Development

As an archival continuing education provider, you have decided on the topic for your course or program based on research and feedback from various sources that point to the need for a presentation on this topic.

Consider listing the following for the single course or multi-course curriculum:

- Goals. What do you intend to accomplish? Create an overview. Each goal/purpose should be stated relative to the rationale behind the content.

- Learning objectives. Use verbs that convey measurable behavioral objectives (e.g., registrants will be able to define [knowledge], classify [comprehension], calculate [application], appraise [analysis], assemble [synthesis], or determine [evaluation]). Each learning objective may be broken into subcategories that detail what will be discussed and what activities will take place.

- Outcomes. These should clearly identify how learning can be applied in the workplace.

- Intended audience (introductory, intermediate, advanced, seasoned, etc.).

- Secondary audience who would benefit from attending, if appropriate.

- Required or recommended prerequisite knowledge, skills, or behaviors.

- Schedule/outline.

- Which techniques – lecture, discussion, simulation, or case study – do you intend to use for each component?

- Describe the exercises and case studies that you plan to incorporate. For case studies, it is best to use cases based on personal experience wherever possible. Personal experience is much more compelling in an instructional situation than are generic examples, and instructors are strongly encouraged to bring their own case studies to the classroom.

- Pre-course readings you may want to assign.

- Audiovisual requirements to present what you have in mind.

- Delivery format and reason for this choice.