

1 **Society of American Archivists**  
2 **SAA-Developed Standard Review Procedure**

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4 **Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies (GPAS)**  
5 **2016 Recommended Revisions**

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7 **Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies [1]**  
8

9 Archivists systematically identify, select, protect, organize, describe, preserve, and make  
10 available to users archival materials [2] – that is, society’s records and documents broadly  
11 defined, regardless of form or medium. Archivists preserve and transmit society’s cultural and  
12 social heritage, protect the legal rights of individuals and institutions, and aid citizens in holding  
13 their governments and other organizations accountable. Thus, archives and archivists are  
14 essential in a democratic and educated society.

15 Graduate programs in Archival Studies provide students the training and understanding they  
16 need to excel in their professional duties. These programs have a higher duty as well: to keep  
17 archives relevant. In addition to maintaining technical competence, archivists in the future will  
18 have increasing responsibility to engage and educate the public, to diversify the historical record  
19 and the profession, to solve problems and use archival materials creatively, to perform in the  
20 digital realm, to advocate for the profession, and to enhance the public good. Keeping archives  
21 relevant requires graduate programs to prepare archivists to operate in these expanding fields.

22 Archival Studies programs must also prepare emerging professionals to work with the records of  
23 the future as well as those of the past, for graduates will practice in a vast array of institutions  
24 and professional positions. These guidelines define the academic preparation graduates need to  
25 meet these new challenges and identify a common core of archival knowledge that all graduate  
26 programs in archival studies should deliver.

27 Establishing minimum standards in terms of mission, curriculum, faculty, and infrastructure,  
28 these guidelines serve as a benchmark against which graduate programs in archival studies  
29 should measure themselves. The SAA hopes these guidelines will improve the archival  
30 profession by encouraging the continued thoughtful development of more extensive and  
31 comprehensive educational programs. [3]

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33  
34 **I. ARCHIVAL EDUCATION: MISSION AND GOALS**  
35

36 Graduate programs in archival studies must define their mission, goals, and objectives. Some  
37 programs educate generalists with a broad knowledge of records and archives administration

1 while others prepare specialists in areas such as digital materials management, historical  
2 manuscripts, or management of institutional archives. Still others emphasize interdisciplinary  
3 studies that link, for example, archival, library, and museum knowledge. However, to qualify as  
4 an archival studies program (as opposed to a more specialized historical manuscripts program or  
5 a general information science program) the curriculum should focus on core archival knowledge  
6 areas as the foundation of any specialization or interdisciplinary education.  
7

8 Programs should state their mission, goals, and objectives in terms of the educational results they  
9 seek. These should be consistent with the parent institution's mission and culture, and developed  
10 through a broad-based planning process that involves the program's constituencies. [4] The  
11 curriculum should express these program objectives and faculty should review and evaluate them  
12 continually based on evolving professional responsibilities, competencies, and challenges.  
13 Regardless of the organizational setting, master's-level archival studies programs must be  
14 coherent, cohesive, and identifiable.  
15

16 The importance and complexity of archival work require that individuals entering the profession  
17 receive a strong graduate-level archival education based on core archival knowledge  
18 complemented by knowledge drawn from other disciplines such as anthropology, economics,  
19 education, history, law, library and information science, management, museum studies, and  
20 sociology. A fully developed graduate program in archival studies must establish a curriculum  
21 that:  
22

- 23 ● Provides students with a solid foundation in the theory, methodology, and practice of  
24 archival science, and in archival history and scholarship;
- 25 ● Strengthens this foundation by giving students the opportunity to acquire knowledge  
26 from allied and complementary disciplines;
- 27 ● Assists students to develop critical thinking and decision-making skills related to all  
28 forms of records in the context of business, government, public needs, scientific  
29 research, or the protection of cultural heritage;
- 30 ● Prepares students to manage and preserve authentic and trustworthy records as well as  
31 relevant materials regardless of format;
- 32 ● Prepares students to conduct and communicate scholarly research;
- 33 ● Prepares students to teach classes and workshops in archival literacy and the uses of  
34 archival resources; and
- 35 ● Communicates to students the ethical and legal dimensions of their work and  
36 impresses upon them a sense of their professional and social responsibilities for the  
37 public good and serving diverse groups.  
38

39 Graduate education, in contrast to training, is both academic and professional; therefore, it  
40 includes both original research and experiential learning. Ultimately, archival education creates  
41 an intellectual framework that enables students to understand the ideas on which their profession

1 is founded, to engage in the development of archival principles, and to apply this knowledge in a  
2 wide variety of settings. In contrast, archival training focuses on building skills or acquiring  
3 practical knowledge according to a replicable pattern or on developing a specialization in certain  
4 areas.

5  
6 The graduate of an archival studies program should have a thorough knowledge and  
7 understanding of archival principles and methods and should be prepared to work independently  
8 in the performance of all basic archival functions. [5] The variety and complexity of institutional  
9 settings and the increasingly digital and hybrid nature of records in our society require a broad  
10 range of skills and knowledge as well as a comprehensive understanding of archival theory and  
11 its practical application to manage and preserve current – as well as future – archival content.

12  
13 By educating students in the attributes of professionalism, a graduate program can cause students  
14 to realize that professional education is a lifelong undertaking, involving questioning accepted  
15 ideas and methods, revising received wisdom, and developing professional standards. Lifelong  
16 learning enables archivists to maintain knowledge and skills and to master new knowledge and  
17 techniques as their profession develops and changes.

18  
19 These guidelines, therefore, focus on the essential elements of master's-level graduate archival  
20 education, independent of institutional placement and degree offered. Different programs offer  
21 different emphases and specializations, ensuring students have a range of options in archival  
22 education. Knowledge from other disciplines brought to bear on the archival studies program  
23 enriches and expands the archival curriculum to meet a wide range of needs and interests.

## 24 25 **II. CURRICULUM**

26  
27 A graduate program in archival studies should provide students with a solid foundation in  
28 archival theory, methodology, and practice augmented by instruction in allied fields. Courses in  
29 complementary areas should be informed by an understanding of the nature of archives and the  
30 ways in which the methods and perspectives of these fields contribute to professional archival  
31 practice. Because archivists have responsibilities to their institutions, to the profession, and to  
32 the public at large, a graduate program in archival studies should also ground its instruction in  
33 matters of archival ethics, professionalism, advocacy, and justice.

34  
35 As stated above, the body of knowledge that a student should master as part of a graduate  
36 archival education comprises a) core archival knowledge and b) complementary knowledge, both  
37 supplemented by ethical and public interest concerns.

- 38  
39 **A. Core archival knowledge** provides the theoretical and practical basis necessary  
40 to work as a professional archivist. This includes knowledge of archival ethics

1 that promote responsibility toward the standards of the profession and the public  
2 good.

- 3 B. **Complementary knowledge** introduces students to other disciplines, knowledge  
4 of which will deepen their understanding of archival work, support its  
5 accomplishment, and teach others how archives function for the public good.  
6 Complementary knowledge also allows students to specialize in specific aspects  
7 of archival work or to function in cross-disciplinary settings.

8 Graduate programs should require eighteen (18) semester credit hours (or equivalent) of core  
9 archival knowledge. Based on the demands of the graduate program's institution and the interests  
10 of the student, the remaining credits may be in complementary knowledge areas. The curriculum  
11 should integrate research throughout, and an important element of any program should be an  
12 original research project resulting in a scholarly paper, thesis, or professional project. The  
13 program should also include practical experience such as a practicum or internship.  
14

## 15 16 A. **CORE ARCHIVAL KNOWLEDGE**

### 17 18 *Rationale:*

19  
20 The identity of a profession is founded on a discrete body of knowledge and on a professional  
21 culture that arises from a common history, a united purpose, a shared vocabulary, and collective  
22 values, norms, and standards. Consequently, core archival knowledge is the heart of an archival  
23 studies program. It should occupy a dominant position in the curriculum and should be taught by  
24 full-time archival educators, professional archivists, or other individuals with a depth of archival  
25 knowledge relevant to the topic. Core archival knowledge embraces three separate but  
26 interrelated facets of archival studies: **Knowledge of Archival Material and Archival**  
27 **Functions** (theory and methodology associated with specific areas of archival work);  
28 **Knowledge of the Profession** (history of the profession and evolution of archival practice); and  
29 **Contextual Knowledge** (the contexts within which records are created, managed, and kept).  
30 Because archival knowledge and professional culture transcend geographical, national, and  
31 social boundaries, each component should incorporate international and multicultural  
32 perspectives.  
33

### 34 *Components:*

#### 35 36 1. **Knowledge of Archival Material and Functions**

37  
38 Archival education should teach the fundamental concepts concerning the nature of records and  
39 archives as well as archival functions (archival theory), the techniques for performing archival  
40 functions (archival methodology), and the implementation of theory and method in real  
41 situations (archival practice). Instruction should cover the history of archival theory and methods

1 and their articulation in the professional literature (archival scholarship). The scope of archival  
2 education should encompass all archival functions and current best practices. It should also  
3 address knowledge of project management and archival organizational management.  
4

5 **a) *The Nature of Records and Archives:*** The archival concept of records through time  
6 regardless of form or medium; the characteristics of records and their components, formal  
7 elements, and attributes; the trustworthiness of records and authentication; the perfection of  
8 records; the way records aggregate and their forms of aggregation; the diversity of ways in which  
9 individuals and groups create, maintain, and access records; the concept of archives and its  
10 history; the records tradition versus the manuscripts tradition in the United States; the concept of  
11 papers; the structure of archival bodies of material; and archives as a place and as an institution.  
12

13 **b) *Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition:*** The theory, methods, policies, and procedures used to  
14 identify, evaluate, acquire, and authenticate archival materials, in all forms, which have enduring  
15 value to records creators, institutions, researchers, and society. Appraisal entails, among other  
16 things, understanding what makes organizational records and personal collections authentic,  
17 reliable, and useful to institutions, individuals, legal and financial authorities, and other  
18 constituents. Instruction should go beyond the theoretical to offer techniques that help archivists  
19 manage problems of backlogs and hidden collections they will face when practicing appraisal  
20 and processing. This instruction should also include donor relations, assessing creators, and the  
21 macro approach versus the micro approach to appraisal.  
22

23 **c) *Arrangement and Description:*** The intellectual and physical organization of archival records  
24 and papers in all forms, according to archival principles and institutional considerations, and the  
25 development of descriptive tools and systems that provide both control of and access to  
26 collections. Teaching methods and technology applications should link theory to practice.  
27

28 **d) *Preservation:*** The physical and intellectual protection of records and papers in all forms,  
29 including the activities required to ensure their continuing accessibility, such as digitization,  
30 reformatting, or migration. Preservation knowledge comprises a firm grounding in preservation  
31 history; research into the nature of the materials and treatments; current techniques and  
32 technologies; and administrative studies and management issues.  
33

34 **e) *Reference and Access:*** The policies and procedures designed to serve the information needs  
35 of various user groups, based on institutional mandates and constituencies, the nature of the  
36 materials, relevant laws and ethical considerations, user needs, and appropriate technologies.  
37 Instruction in this area should also include the study of user behavior, discovery and access  
38 techniques and technologies, user-based evaluation techniques, and the interaction between  
39 archivist and user.  
40

1 **f) Outreach, Instruction, and Advocacy:** The theories and practices used to identify archival  
2 constituencies and their needs and to develop programs that promote increased use,  
3 understanding of archival materials and methods, resources, visibility, and support. Includes  
4 primary source and information literacy as well as methods of promoting the value of archives to  
5 the public and other audiences. This component should also articulate the benefits the profession  
6 provides to society beyond competent management of the organizational records and personal  
7 collections in archivists' care.

8  
9 **g) Management and Administration:** The principles and practices used to facilitate all aspects of  
10 archival work through careful planning and administration of the repository, unit, or program, its  
11 institutional resources, and its policy making practices. At all career levels, archivists manage  
12 resources and make decisions, and often must demonstrate programmatic vision and innovation.  
13 Thus graduates should know the fundamental principles related to organizational management  
14 and policies, strategic planning, systems analysis, project and program planning, budgeting,  
15 administrative leadership, human resources management, financial management, resource  
16 allocation, fundraising, grant writing, and the management of buildings, facilities, storage  
17 systems, and other equipment.

18  
19 **h) Records and Information Management:** The principles involved in managing records and  
20 information from creation and for as long as the records will be needed by their creator for the  
21 purposes of its business, functions, or activities. The work of archivists relates closely to the  
22 responsibilities of records and information managers, and in some institutional environments the  
23 duties of each are blended together in a single function. All graduates of archival studies  
24 programs should be able to analyze a creator's structure, decision-making, and recordkeeping  
25 systems and apply that knowledge to decisions regarding other archival functions.

26  
27 **i) Digital Materials Management:** Graduates of archival studies programs should be able to  
28 apply their knowledge to archival materials in all forms. They should have an understanding of  
29 the nature, issues, and preservation challenges of digital organizational records and personal  
30 collections. They should have knowledge of file formats, media types, and complex information  
31 technologies for the creation, maintenance, use, and preservation of all types of records.  
32 Additionally, archival studies programs should teach students to develop management systems  
33 for records and to identify and implement appropriate technological solutions to facilitate all  
34 aspects of archival work. Although a graduate program might offer a distinct course in digital  
35 materials management, consciousness of the application of archival concepts and practices to  
36 digital materials should permeate all archival coursework.

## 37 38 **2. Knowledge of the Profession**

39  
40 Archival education should provide students with an understanding of how the profession has  
41 developed and how its specific practices have evolved. It should teach students about the nature

1 of archival institutions, units and programs; the values and ethics that archivists bring to their  
2 work; and the perspectives that archivists contribute to the information professions.

3  
4 **a) *History of Archives and the Archives Profession:*** A graduate program in archival studies  
5 should teach the historical development of record-making and recordkeeping systems and of  
6 archives in various civilizations. This instruction should cover the structure of the archival  
7 community internationally and in North America in particular; the types of archival repositories  
8 and programs in the United States and Canada, along with their policies and procedures; and the  
9 legislation and regulations governing records, archives, and archival work in the United States  
10 and Canada. Instruction also should address the history of the archival profession; its missions,  
11 roles, and values; and the profession's contemporary concerns.

12  
13 **b) *Records and Cultural Memory:*** Organizational records and personal collections in all forms  
14 constitute the documented memory of individuals and society. They provide the basis for holding  
15 governments and organizations accountable and for protecting the rights of individuals and  
16 groups. However, they are only part of the fabric of cultural memory. Archivists and archives  
17 work in cooperation with other professionals and colleagues (including, but not limited to, those  
18 who work for or on behalf of governments, organizations, historical societies, libraries, and  
19 museums) to preserve and provide access to cultural memory. Students should understand the  
20 interrelationships among archives and other stewards of cultural memory and the ways in which  
21 records complement that heritage and protect communities' documentation and rights.

22  
23 **c) *Ethics and Values:*** Our profession bases its ethics and values on the responsibilities of  
24 archivists to identify, preserve, protect, and make available records and papers. Graduate  
25 programs should make students familiar with the SAA Code of Ethics, its underlying principles  
26 and perspectives, and its relationship to related professions' codes of ethics. Students should  
27 understand how the archival profession's ethics and values inform decisions and how to apply  
28 those ethics and values to their work and to the public good.

### 30 **3. Contextual Knowledge**

31  
32 Graduates of archival studies programs should understand the contexts in which records are  
33 created and kept and the theories and practices of management and technology as they apply to  
34 archival work. This knowledge should be integrated in the core curriculum wherever applicable  
35 to foster a sound working knowledge that graduates can apply to their daily activities. Some of  
36 these areas of knowledge may also be studied more fully as disciplines in their own right;  
37 therefore, they are also listed under **Complementary Knowledge** below.

38  
39 **a) *Social and Cultural Systems:*** Knowledge of social and cultural systems is important for two  
40 reasons. First, graduates must understand the institutional and individual structures and systems  
41 that form the context in which records and papers are created, maintained, and used. They should

1 also understand the recordkeeping implications of social and cultural systems; the diversity of  
2 ways that individuals and groups create, maintain, and access records; and the organizational  
3 structures and procedures used by all types of institutions and organizations to ensure  
4 documentation and accountability. Second, graduates must understand the political, social, and  
5 economic dynamics within their organizational contexts to achieve their goals and objectives.

6  
7 **b) *Legal and Financial Systems:*** Records and papers, and the recordkeeping systems of both  
8 institutions and individuals, result from and, therefore, reflect the legal and financial systems in  
9 which they were created and demonstrate organizational and individual accountability. Archival  
10 core knowledge incorporates the origin, development, structure, and functioning of legal and  
11 financial systems, including federal, state, and local laws as well as the regulatory environment.  
12 This should include both public and private sector jurisdictions. Knowledge of legal issues also  
13 includes privacy rights, freedom of information legislation, and a wide variety of intellectual  
14 property rights, display and performance rights, and literary rights related to recorded material in  
15 all forms.

## 16 17 **B. COMPLEMENTARY KNOWLEDGE**

### 18 19 ***Rationale:***

20  
21 Archivists must rely on knowledge, methods, and perspectives derived from disciplines beyond  
22 their own. The interdisciplinary nature of archival studies arises from the complexity of archival  
23 materials, the contexts of their creation, the multiplicity of their potential uses, and the many  
24 roles that graduates of archival studies programs fill. Graduates should be knowledgeable about  
25 significant theories, methods, and practices in the following fields.

### 26 27 ***Components:***

#### 28 29 **1. Information Technology**

30  
31 Most contemporary records are created, stored, maintained, used, and preserved in digital form.  
32 Familiarity with networking, hardware, software, and digital systems in general is fundamental  
33 to performing archival functions in the 21st century. Graduates of archival studies programs  
34 should understand human/computer interaction (to design and develop effective systems for  
35 users), the importance of information standards, and how to evaluate systems and related  
36 services effectively. The curriculum could include opportunities to train in database design and  
37 management, spreadsheet applications, information architecture, website design and creation,  
38 desktop publishing, metadata schemas, markup languages, and basic programming skills.

#### 39 40 **2. Conservation**

1 Beyond the core archival knowledge of preservation, appropriate knowledge may be needed in  
2 conservation practices, that is, a range of intervention activities to stabilize materials in their  
3 original format by physical, chemical, or digital means. Graduates should have sufficient  
4 understanding of this discipline to be able to judge the efficacy of conservation treatments and to  
5 evaluate the appropriate conservation treatment for a document or group of documents. For  
6 digital materials, graduates should have sufficient understanding of digital object recovery  
7 techniques and digital security technologies.  
8

### 9 **3. Research Design and Execution**

10  
11 Understanding multiple methods of research design and execution is important to enable  
12 graduates to provide effective service to a wide variety of researchers and to evaluate archival  
13 operations from the perspective of users. Knowledge of and experience with research also allows  
14 graduates to assess the status of research in their own discipline, to undertake new research, and  
15 to blend theoretical and empirical aspects of archival studies into scholarly investigations.  
16 Finally, knowledge of research may allow archivists to use their repositories' collections to  
17 advance their own scholarship and provide enhanced reference and access.  
18  
19

### 20 **4. Organizational Theory**

21  
22 The study of theories of organizational development, management, and culture is important in  
23 archival education because it provides the tools for understanding the evolution, nature, and  
24 structure of organizations that create records and assists students in understanding how to  
25 successfully operate within the institutions that will employ them. Knowledge of different  
26 models of organizational structure, operations, behavior, and institutional culture provides  
27 valuable perspectives for understanding recordkeeping systems and the context of records  
28 creation, management, and use.  
29

### 30 **5. Library and Information Science**

31  
32 Institutions often administratively connect archives, libraries, and special collections.  
33 Departments relating to the information science profession can share physical space, technical  
34 resources, staff, stakeholders, and skill sets. Students in graduate archival education programs  
35 benefit from understanding the similarities and differences in these closely related fields in order  
36 to build collaborative relationships with information science colleagues, as well as  
37 complementary knowledge.  
38

### 39 **6. Liberal Arts and Sciences**

1 Frequently, students beginning archival studies already have a broad background in the liberal  
2 arts. Nonetheless, further graduate work in such disciplines can directly augment archival  
3 knowledge. Especially valuable is education in fields that help explain the context of records  
4 creation and the practice of recordkeeping, including accounting, anthropology, economics, law,  
5 philosophy, political science, and sociology, as well as science and the arts. Because the holdings  
6 of many archival institutions emanate from or concentrate on specific social sectors or  
7 movements, specialized knowledge in one or more humanities, social science, or science  
8 disciplines may be an important asset for appraisal and reference work in some settings.

## 9 10 **7. Allied Professions**

11  
12 The work of archivists and archival institutions intersects with that of other professions and  
13 endeavors involved in the identification, protection, and dissemination of recorded information.  
14 Among these are library and information science, computer science, museum studies, oral  
15 history, historic preservation, historical editing, social and community organizations, and public  
16 history. Archives administration is not a branch of any related profession; however, exposure to  
17 the distinct purposes and methods of allied fields will be advantageous to archives students.

## 18 19 20 **III. ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### 21 22 **A. Faculty**

23  
24 Graduate programs in archival studies must have a faculty capable of accomplishing program  
25 objectives. Faculty should have a deep understanding of the profession and archival work, strong  
26 ties to both the academic and professional communities, technological knowledge and skills, and  
27 a record of research and publishing within the field. They should be effective teachers and active  
28 participants in professional organizations. To meet these guidelines, a program must have a  
29 minimum of one full-time, tenure-track faculty member. Full-time faculty members must be  
30 eligible for appointment to the graduate faculty within the parent institution (in virtually all cases  
31 this equates, at minimum, to holding a doctoral degree) and must demonstrate expertise by  
32 contributions to archival knowledge through publications and professional service. The faculty  
33 must be sufficient in number and in diversity of specialties to carry out the major share of the  
34 teaching, research, and service activities required for the program and to deliver the core  
35 knowledge of archival studies to give stability to the program. In many instances, additional full-  
36 or part-time faculty will be required to fulfill program objectives. Part-time or adjunct faculty,  
37 when appointed, should balance and complement the teaching competencies of the full-time  
38 faculty. Programs are enhanced when adjunct or part-time faculty have extensive practical  
39 experience, demonstrated expertise through contributions to professional knowledge through  
40 publication and professional service, and excellent teaching credentials. In the interests of  
41 diversifying the historical record and the profession, it is incumbent upon graduate programs to

1 diversify their faculties and student bodies. Diversity in faculty, students, professionals,  
2 viewpoints, and experience is increasingly important to maintaining the relevance of archives.

### 3 4 **B. Program Duration**

5  
6 The appropriate duration of a graduate program in archival studies should be consistent with that  
7 of all graduate programs in the hosting school or university in which it is situated. To cover the  
8 curriculum components outlined above adequately, however, a master's-level archival program  
9 should have a minimum of eighteen (18) semester hours or equivalent devoted exclusively to  
10 core archival knowledge, including practical experience. Remaining credits can be in areas of  
11 complementary knowledge or electives.

### 12 13 **C. Structure of the Learning Process**

14  
15 Graduate education in archival studies requires several modes of instruction and learning.  
16 Coursework provides the best method of presenting archival theory, principles, and  
17 methodology, as well as many areas of interdisciplinary knowledge. Practical experience is  
18 necessary to apply theory to workplace settings and to provide experiential learning. Scholarly  
19 research enables students to explore dimensions of the field in greater depth and to contribute  
20 original research to the professional discourse.

#### 21 22 **1. Coursework**

23  
24 Coursework is the basic venue for graduate-level archival education, and course format (e.g.,  
25 lecture, seminar, web-based, distance education) will vary. Coursework should also include  
26 opportunities for building an open, inclusive, and collaborative environment with fellow students  
27 and colleagues through group and/or outreach projects.

#### 28 29 **2. Practical Experience**

30  
31 Experiential learning in the workplace will enhance knowledge acquired in coursework. In the  
32 context of master's-level archival education, practical experience is not an exercise to discover  
33 theory and methods empirically; rather, it allows students to verify their understanding of  
34 archival principles by applying them in real-life situations and to understand how to make  
35 adjustments so that archival principles fit archival practice. Practical experience also provides  
36 students with structured feedback on their applied archival skills and with mentoring by records  
37 professionals working in the field.

38  
39 Any form of experiential learning must primarily serve the student's educational goals, even if a  
40 host institution or organization ultimately benefits from the work accomplished by the student.  
41 Any practical experience with a host institution or organization should be a structured program

1 related to the student's program of study. Faculty in collaboration with the designated host's  
2 internship supervisor should design the program and include provisions for regular feedback and  
3 evaluation.

### 4 5 **3. Scholarly Research**

6  
7 Scholarly research is an essential component of the archival studies curriculum because it  
8 enhances students' ability to think critically and rigorously about archival issues and strengthens  
9 their competence to analyze, critically review, and engage with the literature. Research also has  
10 the potential to provide original contributions to the archival literature and thus helps to  
11 invigorate the profession. Archival research can take many forms and borrow methodologies  
12 from a variety of fields in the humanities and social sciences. Although much archival research  
13 has been the result of an individual effort, education programs should introduce students to  
14 collaborative, creative research and encourage it within and outside their own discipline.

#### 15 16 **D. Resources and Facilities**

17  
18 Instructional and research resources and facilities for meeting the needs of students and faculty  
19 include access to core archival literature, library and multimedia resources and services,  
20 computers and information technologies, and accommodations for independent and group study.  
21 Facilities should be appropriately staffed, convenient, and fully accessible to users of varying  
22 needs. Students should develop skills in using digitized primary resources and digital  
23 repositories, and should have regular and frequent access to physical archives and manuscript  
24 repositories. Repository access can take the form of class visits, research assignments in the  
25 repositories, and opportunities for internships and other types of practical experience. It is  
26 particularly important for a program to have strong relationships with area repositories.

#### 27 28 **E. Administration, Placement, and Financial Support**

29  
30 The graduate program in archival studies must identify a program director or administrator who  
31 is responsible for making certain that the program achieves its mission, goals, and objectives.  
32 The program director must be one of the full-time tenure-track members of the faculty or staff of  
33 the home department. Depending on the scope and placement of the program, he or she may  
34 have the title of director, chairperson, or dean.

35  
36 Programs must provide career counseling and vigorous placement support for students. Career  
37 counseling is essential because students will encounter a variety of potential employment venues  
38 as well as numerous institutional and functional specializations. Vigorous placement support also  
39 is essential for students as they enter the job market because of the variety of ways in which  
40 employment opportunities are advertised or announced. Programs should also emphasize the  
41 importance of professional recommendations in the successful job search.

1  
2 The parent institution must provide the program with continuing financial support that is  
3 sufficient to develop and maintain it. The level of support must provide a reasonable expectation  
4 of financial viability and must consider the number of faculty, administrative and support staff,  
5 instructional resources, library and information services, and facilities needed to carry out the  
6 archival education program's mission, goals, and objectives.  
7

### 8 **III. CONCLUSION**

9

10 These guidelines define the minimum requirements for a graduate program in archival studies  
11 that is coherent, autonomous, and based on core archival knowledge. Within the guidelines,  
12 higher education institutions may create a wide variety of programs offering master's degrees.  
13 This range of options provides students with choices of direction and emphasis and ultimately  
14 enriches the profession by promoting diverse educational offerings around a common core of  
15 knowledge. These guidelines define the academic education needed to meet the challenges of  
16 serving as an archivist in the 21st century and provide a strong common basis for graduate  
17 archival education regardless of any program's institutional affiliation.  
18

19 [1] The "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies" (GPAS) were approved by the  
20 Society of American Archivists (SAA) Council in January 2002 and revised by the Committee  
21 on Education in 2005, 2011, and 2015. GPAS replaced the "Guidelines for the Development of a  
22 Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies Degree," adopted by the Council in 1994. By  
23 means of these guidelines, the Society of American Archivists endorses the development of  
24 coherent and independent graduate programs in archival studies. SAA believes that programs of  
25 the extent and nature outlined in these guidelines are the best form of pre-appointment  
26 professional education for archivists. For this reason, these guidelines supersede prior documents  
27 on archival education issued in 1977, 1988, and 1994.  
28

29 [2] Archival materials are recorded information, regardless of physical format or type of creator  
30 (public or private), that are created or received by an individual or organization carrying out its  
31 activities and that is set aside for preservation and future use. Archival records and papers are  
32 instrumental for evidence and accountability as well as for social and cultural memory. In these  
33 guidelines, the phrase "records and papers" will be used to encompass documentary evidence  
34 produced by organizations and individuals in all media (paper, digital, audio, and visual) and in  
35 any format.  
36

37 [3] For information about archival education programs in North America, including a directory  
38 of such programs, see the SAA website at <http://www2.archivists.org/gpas>.  
39

40 [4] The interdisciplinary character of archival education makes it possible to place a program in a  
41 variety of settings, such as a school of library and information science, a department of history, a

1 school of public administration, a law school, or a school of business administration. Two  
2 departments may also administer a program jointly, thereby emphasizing the interdisciplinary  
3 nature of the archival field.

4

5 [5] The Academy of Certified Archivists has developed a useful list of domains of archival  
6 knowledge. See the "Role Delineation" section of the Handbook for Archival Certification  
7 (found within the "Exam Handbook") online at <http://www.certifiedarchivists.org>.