



Archive Service Accreditation Committee Annual Meeting 2018

Venue: Huntley Room, London Metropolitan Archives, 19 April 2018

Bruce Jackson	Committee Chair
David Brown	Committee Member
Mary Ellis	Committee Member
Rachel Hart	Committee Member
Ruth MacLeod	Committee Member
Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan	Committee Member
Liz Rees	Committee Member
Caroline Sampson	Committee Member
Stephen Scarth	Committee Member
Philippa Smith	Committee Member
Annette French	Accreditation Manager, Arts Council England (Observer)
Melinda Haunton	Programme Manager, The National Archives
Jane Shillaker	Programme Officer, The National Archives

Item	
1	Welcome and apologies
	SE, VJ and VS had sent apologies and comments.
2	Minutes and matters arising from 2017 meeting
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
2.2	Item 5.1 Ongoing discussions with strategic bodies were needed to make use of the evidence base emerging from Accreditation, particularly around sector training and development needs.
2.3	Item 8.2 This would be retained as a rolling item until the review is updated in 2021 with further digital content. .
3	Refresh of Archive Service Accreditation
3.1	<i>Outline of approach and key findings</i> The project to refresh Archive Service Accreditation was presented. The refresh had involved a broad approach to reviewing the programme, partners, written documentation and barriers/benefits. Partners all supported the programme and were happy to sign up for a further term of the programme's delivery. Accreditation was helping partners to make strategic decisions and run programmes such as training and grants.

	<p>Participation in refresh feedback had been excellent across the archive sector, with a good range from private/public and from a range of experiences of participating in the programme. Response formats included workshops, survey comments and a reference group formed of both applicants and non-applicants to look at the redrafted documentation.</p> <p>The overwhelming response was positive. Feedback showed that the standard was pragmatic, meaningful and relevant, and that working towards Archive Service Accreditation was perceived as an improvement process, raising standards and service profile.</p> <p>Issues to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>capacity</i>: applicants felt that the benefits had been worth the resource in applying, but non-applicants questioned whether they could manage an application • confusion on <i>scalability</i> and reluctance to be seen as ‘level 1’ • uncertainty about <i>management of risks</i> vs perfection • concerns about accommodating <i>non-local authority services</i> –these were primarily around perception, rather than detail of the standard • section 3.2 <i>Access planning</i> felt repetitious • <i>communications</i> need to be positive about the development process achieved through undergoing Accreditation. <p>The resulting key changes had been introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adding a friendly introduction to the programme • emphasising the role of risk management • space to talk about future change • question-specific guidance • renumbering for clarity • using language applicable to all services • amended word limits • changes to module 3, particularly 3.2 • scalability calculator (in development) <p>A range of related topics came up which would be useful in the long term and for communications planning.</p>
3.2	<p><i>Approval of the refresh</i></p> <p>The Committee considered three substantive issues proposed for discussion around the refreshed documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The revised <i>Memorandum of Understanding</i> was agreed to be recommended to the partners for signature. It would also be translated into Welsh for the first time. 2) The merger of requirements 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 of the <i>Standard</i>, with amendments to wording of requirement 3.3.1 were agreed to clarify the difference between Access Planning and Access Procedures.

	<p>3) The Committee agreed that the <i>Getting Started</i> introductory document would be presented as a separate guide, rather than as an introduction to the large guidance.</p> <p>The Committee then considered the documents in detail, and made editorial amendments. The refreshed documentation suite was then cleared for translation and publication in due course.</p> <p>Case studies had been useful and were welcomed as supporting the work of the programme and partners.</p>
3.3	<p><i>Options for building on the refresh</i></p> <p>MH had circulated a paper with some suggestions for how to spend the limited remaining budget for the refresh.</p> <p>It was agreed to support a facilitated workshop for assessors considering digital archives applications, and to commission the development of a tool for measuring readiness to undertake Accreditation.</p>
4	Programme manager's update 2017-18
	<p>MH reported on the programme's progress in areas not otherwise on the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Application numbers</i> continued to rise. TNA was considering limiting the number of new applications per round from England now that the initial roll-out was complete, to manage resources. • There had not been a need to <i>re-procure the application system</i> as originally expected. This was now due in 2020. • <i>Applications were now locked</i> in preparation for implementing the refresh. • <i>Communications</i> had been more targeted, reflecting programme needs at this point. Wider comms would support the refresh. • <i>Training</i> had been reduced for the second half of the year as the refresh approached. • ARA had supported a workshop to refresh the skills of <i>peer reviewers</i> in England, which had gained excellent feedback about the value of peer review to professional development. • An introductory workshop had been given to potential applicants in <i>Northern Ireland</i>, and the first application from NI had now been received. Several other services had expressed an interest.
5	Statistical return and reflection on 2017-18
5.1	<p>The preliminary statistical return was presented. As the annual meeting was earlier than usual, this included the statistics but not the analysis which would be circulated in full once complete. Some core trend data was emerging for partners. Capacity to attend training was limited in some areas, a matter of general concern.</p>

5.2	<p>JS presented the record of changes made to assessments by Panels, which built on the paper presented last year.</p> <p>It was noted that Panels tend to focus on toughening assessments (moving to partially met, increasing required actions), which suggested they were focusing on key risk areas and on maximum impact.</p>
5.4	<p>The Panel minuted thanks to peer reviewers active 2017-18: Sarah Aitchison, Lizzy Baker, Pamela Birch, Sue Breakell, Fiona Bourne, Maria Castrillo, Victoria Cranna, Alison Cullingford, Allie Dillon, Andrew George, Claire Harrington, Kate Jarman, Jo Klett, Erin Lee, Jemma Lee, Alison Mason, Claire Mayoh, Tim Procter, Louise Ray, Catherine Ross, Clare Sexton, Gillian Sheldrick, Paul Sillitoe, Adrian Steel, Mari Takayanagi, Charlene Taylor, Tamara Thornhill, Matti Watton, Sarah Wickham</p>
6	Policy and precedent arising from 2017-18 Panels
	Four elements raised by Panels were discussed.
6.1	<p><i>Decisions not to award.</i> One precedent was agreed for addition to the guidance under 1.4 Spaces:</p> <p>Precedent: Services which did not plan effectively to manage a lack of expansion capacity against expected levels of acquisition had not been Accredited. It was noted that lack of space for adding to collections was a frequent challenge for archive services, and that those which planned effectively and had mitigation in action would still be Accreditable.</p> <p>Other reasons for awards not being made were more service-specific. However, it was useful to identify common threads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archives within a larger organisation, particularly with other cultural/heritage functions, not being sufficiently visible within policy and planning to give assurance about the institutional approach • Archives applying without having sought advice/support from the assessor body, and lacking professional input • Archives not being coherently managed across an organisation, with different provision for institutional vs collected archives • Reliance on volunteers to deliver key and sensitive areas of service (within the context of a substantial organisation)
6.2	<p><i>Digital preservation actions</i> The March 2018 Panel had agreed that in view of the imminent refresh and increased digital preservation content for the standard that all <i>developmental digital preservation actions</i> should become required from that point on. This was agreed to be appropriate for the urgency of the situation and the development of Accreditation.</p>
6.3	<i>Offsite storage</i>

	<p>Panels had discussed cases where substantial proportions of material were stored offsite, and it was agreed that a consistent approach was needed.</p> <p>The Committee agreed the following statement:</p> <p>“The Committee recognises that there may be compelling reasons why a significant proportion of collections should be housed away from an archive service’s primary site, either for a temporary period or as a long term arrangement. This is not a barrier to achieving Accreditation if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the risks associated with transfer of material for access are well managed; • the length of time for material to be produced for research access is reasonable within the circumstances of the service, its community and the collections concerned; • there is clear provision for appropriate collections management activity to be undertaken on the outstored collections.” <p>These was incorporated into the refreshed guidance in the appropriate sections.</p>
6.4	<p><i>Discretion of assessor bodies in timetabling</i></p> <p>It was noted that the discretion offered to assessor bodies to postpone the review stage should be up to one full year when local circumstances warrant it but that after this the Committee should consider the application if possible or otherwise consider removal of the award.</p>
7	Partnership issues
7.1	<p>The ARA CEO had requested the Committee consider a communications issue in consistently referencing the Accreditation partnership.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that it was appropriate to reference the partnership in all communications. Award/application outcome letters would be amended to include a full listing of the partners.</p>
8	Update from Museum Accreditation
	<p>AF updated on the museum accreditation review, which had received excellent response from across the museums sector with 800 responses received. It had also been a chance to reconnect with partners.</p> <p>The programme would have an autumn relaunch focusing on 30 years of museum accreditation and celebration of the programme, as we;; as delivering change.</p>
9	Farewell to Committee members stepping down
9.1	<p>The Committee thanked Caroline Peach and Caroline Sampson for their considerable contributions to the work of Accreditation since 2013.</p>

9.2	<p>MH introduced the recruitment design circulated, which was heavily based on 2013. Applications would open in the summer, with interviews in September and attendance at the November Panel supported by a 'buddy'.</p> <p>It was noted that a significant number of the Committee would be standing down in November 2019, and that a phased/staggered approach would be helpful.</p>
10	Date of next meeting
	<p>The next meetings of Accreditation Panels would be on 5 July and 21 November 2018.</p> <p>Committee meeting 2019 will be on 9 May 2019.</p>
14	AOB
	There was no other business.