

Research Article

Qualifications Desired by Employers for Entry-Level Archivists in the United States

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Abstract: Archivists occupy positions in a wide variety of agencies and institutions, presenting a broad diversity of professional responsibilities. It is important for employers to be able to identify individuals who possess the appropriate combination of educational preparation and practical training suitable to match the needs of their institutions. The author presents the results of a study designed to identify the qualifications desired by employers for entry-level archivists in the United States.

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AS AN INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE, archives administration today embraces studies in numerous functional areas: records management, which may be defined as that field of general management that deals with the creation, maintenance, and disposal of records; archival buildings and storage facilities; records preservation and rehabilitation; archival arrangement; archival description; reference service, including photoduplication; exhibition, interpretation, and publication of archival collections; and the administration of personal papers.

Archivists are employed by government agencies, colleges, universities, libraries, museums, historical associations, corporations, research firms, medical institutions, professional associations, and religious and fraternal organizations.

Such a broad diversity in both functions and fields of employment creates a complex puzzle in determining the appropriate combination of educational preparation and practical training suitable for an archivist. A master's degree in archival science—comparable to the master's degree in library science as the professional standard for librarians—is not offered in the United States. Instead, a number of archival courses are offered for specialization or certification within history programs or library science programs. However, a long-running controversy continues within the archival profession as to the appropriateness of a history background, a library science background, or a combination of the two. Some argue that, because of the origin and character of archives, the principles and techniques governing their arrangement and description necessarily differ from those generally employed in the classification and cataloging of library materials, yet the requirement of a master's degree in library science frequently appears as a qualification in advertisements for archivist positions.

Two questions—Who is an archivist? and How does a person become an archivist?—continue to plague employers, professional

archival organizations, and aspiring archivists “because at present there is no valid method of proving that one is an archivist unless one is already in a job that requires [the job holder] to do archival work.”¹

Archivists are also not facing an overly optimistic employment outlook. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the employment of archivists is expected to increase at or below the average for all occupations through the end of this century.² It will, therefore, be more important for archivists to be able to identify and develop the employment qualifications desired by employers.

Background of the Study³

Identifying the qualifications desired by employers for entry-level archivists has been a recognized goal of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) for decades. Wayne C. Grover, then-president of SAA, asked Solon J. Buck to chair the Committee on Professional Standards and Training established in 1953. Although the committee met only once in 1954, “Buck did succeed in generating interest in [Margaret Cross] Norton’s plan to discern what qualifications employers of archivists desired.”⁴

Grover succeeded Buck as chair of the Committee on Professional Standards and Training. In his view, one of its principal tasks was formulating guidelines on education for entry-level positions and disseminating them to employers. To obtain

¹Herman Kahn, “Some Comments on the Archival Vocation,” *American Archivist* 34 (January 1971): 4.

²“Archivists and Curators,” in *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, U.S. Department of Labor (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990), 126–28; Martha C. White, “The 1988–89 Job Outlook in Brief,” *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* 32 (Spring 1988): 10–45.

³For a more complete review of the literature, see the author’s doctoral dissertation.

⁴Jacqueline Goggin, “That We Shall Truly Deserve the Title of ‘Profession’: The Training and Education of Archivists, 1930–1960,” *American Archivist* 47 (Summer 1984): 252.

information on the qualifications employers of archivists desired, Grover called on Mary Givens Bryan, state archivist of Georgia and chair of the SAA Committee on State Records.⁵ In response to Grover's letter requesting her assistance in collecting information on the qualifications desired by the employers of archivists, Bryan indicated her somewhat reluctant acceptance of the assignment, adding a disparaging statement recounting the lack of established minimum requirements for the employees of state archives across the nation.⁶ Toward the identification of standard qualifications for archivists, "Grover's committee accomplished very little."⁷ Another attempt, this one by Morris Radoff, who chaired the Committee on Professional Standards and Training in 1956, also proved fruitless. "The committee did not acknowledge or deal with . . . the establishment of standards for the training of archivists in entry-level positions."⁸

Although concerned members have continued to pressure the SAA to define the qualifications for archivists, Frank G. Burke has advocated "that employers, rather than the SAA, should define this work."⁹ Burke's position that employers should define the qualifications for archivists was echoed by William L. Joyce in his presidential address at the 1987 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists:

There is precious little evidence, however, of what the employers of archivists really want in the way of education for prospective archivists. If we be-

lieve in our profession and in its future, we have no more urgent task than to work with the prospective employers of archivists to learn their needs and to make them aware of the purposes and benefits of our education programs. There is little future for a community of the competent if there are no jobs for those designated as competent.¹⁰

Previous Studies and the Purpose of This Study

Published surveys used to determine the education, training, experience, and skills of archivists have been conducted principally by submitting questionnaires to practicing archivists, asking them to describe their qualifications. The results were not necessarily indicative of the qualifications desired by employers for entry-level archivists. Other types of studies to identify the education, training, experience, and skills of archivists have used position advertisements in professional publications as the primary information source. In contrast, this study was designed to identify desired qualifications by surveying the employers of archivists.

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the qualifications desired by employers for entry-level archivists in the United States. The following objectives were of particular concern:

- To identify the preferred level of educational preparation
- To identify the preferred subject area of undergraduate preparation
- To determine which foreign languages, if any, are preferred by employers
- To determine the importance of training in archives conservation and computer automation in relation to the

⁵Goggin, "That We Shall Truly Deserve," 243-54.

⁶Wayne C. Grover to Mary G. Bryan, 3 December 1954, SAA Records, University of Wisconsin; Mary G. Bryan to Wayne C. Grover, 5 January 1955, SAA Records, University of Wisconsin.

⁷Goggin, "That We Shall Truly Deserve," 253.

⁸Goggin, "That We Shall Truly Deserve," 253.

⁹Trudy H. Peterson, Patrick M. Quinn, and Hugh A. Taylor, "Professional Archival Training," *American Archivist* 40 (July 1977): 319.

¹⁰William L. Joyce, "Archival Education: Two Fables," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter/Spring 1988): 22.

developing trends and priorities in archival institutions

- To identify what effect the Certified Archivist Program, established by the Society of American Archivists, is expected to have on the hiring practices of archival institutions
- To determine whether employers believe there is a need to create a certification program for entry-level archivists
- To determine if there is significant demand for the development of archival science graduate degree programs in the United States
- To quantify the perceived need for additional archivists in the United States

Design of the Study

To identify employers of archivists in the United States, the study used the second edition of the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*, prepared by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, as the source for names and addresses of archival institutions.¹¹ Excluded from consideration were the 330 institutions listed with abbreviated entries in the volume because of their nonreturn of the repository informational questionnaire prepared by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. It was decided that the possible inaccuracy of addresses, as well as the questionable existence of some of these institutions, justified their exclusion from the survey population. Of the 4,298 remaining archival and manuscript repositories, the 2 listed for Puerto Rico and the 3 listed for the Virgin Islands were also eliminated in order to maintain a population of institutions located within the United

States. Two additional repositories were deleted from the population because of descriptive notations in the directory indicating that their collections had been transferred to other repositories. This resulted in a population of 4,291 archival and manuscript repositories.

From this population, a sample of 20 percent, representing 858 archives and manuscript repositories, was chosen by the selection of every fifth entry in the directory. Because the entries in the volume were grouped by state, the selection process uniformly provided an approximate 20 percent sample for each state across the nation.

Following the selection of the sample, address information for each of the 858 repositories was extracted from the directory. At this time, 6 repositories were identified as unsuitable due either to the negligible size of the repository's archival collection or to the repository's being closed during the period in which the survey was to be conducted. In these 6 cases, the repository listed immediately after the unsuitable repository was used as a substitute in the sample.

A preliminary questionnaire was prepared, incorporating questions that appeared to be most relevant to the objectives of this study. The categories representing the types of institutions were modified from those used in the special lists contained in the first edition of the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*.¹² To determine its applicability, readability, and reliability, the instrument was submitted to seven professional archivists for their review. The questionnaire was further refined in response to the constructive comments submitted following the review.

The cover letter, reflecting many of the

¹¹National Historical Publications and Records Commission, *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*, 2d ed. (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1988).

¹²National Historical Publications and Records Commission, *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1978).

practical guidelines suggested by Tyrus Hillway,¹³ explained the purpose of the questionnaire and enumerated the potential uses for the results of the study. While assuring the respondent that all answers would remain anonymous when the results of the study were compiled and reported, the letter stated that the questionnaires had been coded so that follow-up letters could be sent as a reminder for any that were not returned by the requested date. The questionnaire, along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope, was mailed to each of the 858 archives and manuscript repositories at the mailing addresses contained in the second edition of the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*. The envelope containing the questionnaire was addressed to the attention of the "Director of Archives/Manuscripts" for the repository. A unique access code, assigned to each repository in the directory, was printed on each corresponding envelope, questionnaire, and return envelope and would later serve as a tracking device for identifying repositories that did not return their questionnaires.

Four weeks following the date of the first cover letter, the 419 repositories that had not returned their questionnaires were sent a second copy of the questionnaire, along with a follow-up cover letter. Of the questionnaires returned by the post office as undeliverable, alternative addresses were located for 18 of the repositories, and the original questionnaires were mailed to the new addresses.

As the questionnaires were returned, they were sorted according to type of institution, and the data were recorded in spreadsheet fashion. All tabulations of the data were done by hand. Summation statistics regarding archivist positions were presented as subtotals, totals, and means. Responses to

other questions were presented in the form of frequencies and percentages.

Limitations of the Study

For purposes of this study, the population was restricted to archival repositories in the United States which were identified by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Although the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States* may represent the most comprehensive effort to identify archival repositories, its use in designating the population for this study may have distorted the results. In his review of the directory, Paul Conway described what he believed was "an apparent strong regional bias" for the eastern United States and a deficiency in coverage for some types of repositories.¹⁴

Although numerous areas of specialized training for archivists could have been identified, the specific fields of archives conservation and computer automation were selected for study because of the recent emphasis by the Society of American Archivists in providing continuing education programs in these two particular areas.¹⁵

A number of writings and studies generally equate the duties of archivist and manuscript curator, and the term *archivist* is used collectively for both professions.¹⁶

¹⁴Paul Conway, review of *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*, 2d ed., by National Historical Publications and Records Commission, *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989): 102-03.

¹⁵Donn C. Neal, "The Society of American Archivists," *Illinois Libraries* 69 (October 1987): 538-42.

¹⁶Philip C. Brooks, "Archivists and Their Colleagues: Common Denominators," *American Archivist* 14 (January 1951): 33-45; Ruth W. Helmuth, "Education for American Archivists: A View from the Trenches," *American Archivist* 44 (Fall 1981): 295-303; Philip P. Mason, "The Society of American Archivists in the Seventies: Report of the Committee for the 1970's," *American Archivist* 35 (April 1972): 193-217; Nancy E. Peace and Nancy Fisher Chuda-

¹³Tyrus Hillway, *Handbook of Educational Research* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969).

Within the context of this study, *archivist* should be understood to include manuscript curator.

Distribution and Return of Questionnaires¹⁷

Of the 858 questionnaires that were mailed to archival and manuscript repositories, a response of some type was received from 636. This represented a total response rate of 74.1 percent. For purposes of tabulation, the responses were designated as usable, incomplete, returned unanswered, and returned by the post office. A closer examination of the questionnaires representing each of these groups is helpful.

Thirty-one questionnaires were returned by the post office because they were undeliverable. These repositories may have been inactive or defunct, may have moved without leaving a forwarding order, or may have moved leaving a forwarding order that had expired.

Of the 79 responses that were returned unanswered, 61 included a statement suggesting that the questionnaire was not appropriate for the repository. The most frequent comments fell into one of four areas: no archivist or manuscript curator on the staff; no archives or manuscript collection; very small archives collection; or, the questionnaire does not apply to the repository.

Except for 2 of the 51 incomplete questionnaires, each contained an indication by the respondent of the type of institution. "Public library" received the most marks, with a total of 21. All but 4 of the questionnaires specified no positions for archi-

vists or manuscript curators. Most of the incomplete questionnaires were not completed beyond the second question.

These three categories of responses—returned by the post office, returned unanswered, and incomplete—represented 161 questionnaires deemed not usable in the analysis of the survey and comprised 18.7 percent of the sample of 858 repositories. One might conclude that these 161 repositories may not have been suitable candidates for the sample. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission was extremely comprehensive in its attempt to identify all collections, regardless of size, in preparation for the second edition of its directory. According to the introduction, there were approximately 1,400 additional entries for repositories that were not included in the 1978 edition.¹⁸ If the sample of 858 repositories had been reduced by the 161 repositories for which the survey may not have been applicable, the 475 usable responses would represent 68.2 percent of an adjusted sample of 697 repositories.

All states except North Dakota were represented in the usable responses. The number of usable responses received from each of the 49 states ranged from 1 to 54 for a total of 475. This translated into usable response rates ranging from 0.0 to 100.0 percent for the individual states, with an aggregate usable response rate of 55.4 percent. The number of responses, categorized by type of institution, is illustrated in Table 1. This breakdown by type of institution was used throughout the study to report the survey results. The type of institution for each repository was generally determined by the respondent, but the investigator reassigned a few questionnaires designated as "other" to categories that more appropriately identified those institutions for the

coff, "Archivists and Librarians: A Common Mission, a Common Education," *American Archivist* 42 (October 1979): 456–62; Mattie U. Russell, "The Influence of Historians on the Archival Profession in the United States," *American Archivist* 46 (Summer 1983): 277–85.

¹⁷For additional statistical data on this topic, see the author's doctoral dissertation.

¹⁸National Historical Publications and Records Commission, *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories*, 2d ed.

Table 1

Types of Institutions Providing Usable Responses to the Questionnaire		
	Number	Percentage
College/University Archives	58	12.2
College/University Department	6	1.3
College/University Library	56	11.8
College/University Research Center	8	1.7
Corporate Archives	7	1.5
Federal Government Agency	21	4.4
Local Government Agency	13	2.7
Local Historical Society	67	14.1
Medical Institution	5	1.1
Museum	79	16.6
Organizational Archives	10	2.1
Public Library	56	11.8
Religious Institution	36	7.6
Special Research Institution	11	2.3
State Archives	12	2.5
State Government Department	5	1.1
State Historical Society	8	1.7
Subject Historical Society	10	2.1
Other	7	1.5
TOTAL	475	100.1*
*Variance due to rounding		

purposes of the study. “Medical institution” and “state government department” each accounted for five responses, the lowest count, representing 1.1 percent of the total usable responses. The largest number of responses accumulated by any category was 79 for “museum,” amounting to 16.6 percent of the total usable responses.

Findings of the Study

Number of positions. The positions for professional archivists/manuscript curators reported by the repositories are illustrated by the total number of positions and by the mean for each type of institution (see Table 2). Further classification of the positions is based on full-time or part-time positions and

on salaried or volunteer positions. Of the 834 full-time positions reported, 808 were salaried, and only 26 were volunteer, resulting in means of 1.70 and 0.05, respectively. Conversely, of the 525 part-time positions, the majority, 317, were volunteer, compared with the 208 that were salaried; means were 0.67 and 0.44, respectively.

“State archives” reported the highest count of full-time salaried positions (189) and by far the highest mean (15.75). “State government department” reported the lowest count of full-time salaried positions (1) and the lowest mean (0.20), just below that of “local historical society.” Whereas “museum” had the largest number of full-time volunteer positions (15), “college/uni-

Table 2

Number of Positions for Professional Archivists/Manuscript Curators								
	Full-time				Part-time			
	Salaried		Volunteer		Salaried		Volunteer	
	No.	Mean	No.	Mean	No.	Mean	No.	Mean
College/University Archives	71	1.22	0	0.00	39	0.67	7	0.12
College/University Department	5	0.83	0	0.00	2	0.33	1	0.17
College/University Library	58	1.04	1	0.02	23	0.41	5	0.09
College/University Research Center	8	1.00	2	0.25	9	1.13	0	0.00
Corporate Archives	29	4.14	0	0.00	2	0.29	0	0.00
Federal Government Agency	158	7.52	0	0.00	11	0.52	78	3.71
Local Government Agency	7	0.54	1	0.08	4	0.31	5	0.38
Local Historical Society	14	0.21	2	0.03	20	0.30	73	1.09
Medical Institution	5	1.00	0	0.00	3	0.60	3	0.60
Museum	33	0.42	15	0.19	24	0.30	80	1.01
Organizational Archives	9	0.90	0	0.00	4	0.40	8	0.80
Public Library	33	0.59	1	0.02	12	0.21	12	0.21
Religious Institution	116	3.22	4	0.11	14	0.39	24	0.67
Special Research Institution	15	1.36	0	0.00	9	0.82	4	0.36
State Archives	189	15.75	0	0.00	21	1.75	0	0.00
State Government Department	1	0.20	0	0.00	2	0.40	0	0.00
State Historical Society	32	4.00	0	0.00	2	0.25	0	0.00
Subject Historical Society	18	1.80	0	0.00	1	0.10	17	1.70
Other	7	1.00	0	0.00	6	0.86	0	0.00
TOTAL	808	1.70	26	0.05	208	0.44	317	0.67

versity research center” achieved the highest mean (0.25). Twelve categories reported having no full-time volunteer positions. “College/university archives” claimed the most part-time salaried positions (39), but

“state archives” reported the highest mean (1.75). With 80, “museum” just topped “federal government agency” for the largest number of part-time volunteer positions; however, “federal government agency” far

outdistanced any other category for the highest mean (3.71). Six categories reported having no part-time volunteer positions.

New positions. The 475 repositories reported that they expected to add a total of 108 new full-time positions and 43 new part-time positions during the next five years (see Table 3). Based on the present 808 full-time and 208 part-time salaried positions, this would denote a five-year increase in the number of archivist positions, at 13.4 and 20.7 percent, respectively.

In contrast, however, the vast majority of the repositories (75.4 percent) stated that they did not expect to add any new positions for archivists/manuscript curators during the next five years. Only 7 respondents, or 1.5 percent of the repositories, indicated that they expect to reduce their number of archivist positions during the next five years.

Minimum educational qualification. The repositories were asked to specify both their required and preferred minimum educational qualification for employment as an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript curator. Although the questionnaire asked that only one answer in each category be marked, some respondents marked more than one answer. When multiple answers were for equivalent educational levels (i.e., master's degree in history and master's degree in library science), both answers were tabulated. Otherwise, only the answer denoting the highest educational level was tabulated. The responses to the questions regarding minimum educational qualification are given in Tables 4 and 5, with the most frequent response for each type of institution underlined to highlight any patterns that may emerge. The percentages are based on the total number of answers received in response to each of the two segments of the question.

Among the responses for *required* minimum educational qualification, the choices of bachelor's degree and master's degree in library science dominated the selections

for all types of institutions. In particular, all four types of repositories affiliated with colleges and universities specified the master's degree in library science. The bachelor's degree was the predominant choice with 162 votes (36.7 percent) from the 475 respondents, but the master's degree in library science ran a close second with 136 votes (30.8 percent).

The underlining of the most frequent responses concerning the *preferred* minimum educational qualification in Table 5 illustrates a much more diverse opinion among the respondents. The double master's degree in history and library science (94 votes; 25.8 percent) shows just a slight lead over the master's degree in library science (86 votes; 23.6 percent) and the master's degree in history (83 votes; 22.7 percent). In contrast, the double master's degree in history and library science, which received the highest number of votes (94; 25.8 percent) as the preferred minimum educational qualification received the lowest number of votes (7; 1.6 percent) as the required minimum educational qualification (see Table 4). A graphic comparison of the responses concerning required and preferred minimum educational qualification is presented in Figure 1.

Undergraduate degree.¹⁹ Respondents were asked whether they had a preference for the major subject of an applicant's undergraduate degree and, if so, to specify the subject they preferred. Some respondents specified more than one major subject. All answers given in response to this question were tabulated. Almost half of the respondents (234; 49.3 percent) stated that they had a preference for the major subject of an applicant's undergraduate degree. With one exception, history was the preferred major subject for every type of institution. The exception was science, which was the

¹⁹For additional statistical data on this topic, see the author's doctoral dissertation.

Table 3

New Positions Expected to Be Added During the Next Five Years						
	Number of New Positions		Repositories Expecting No New Positions		Repositories Expecting to Reduce Positions	
	Full-time	Part-time	No.	%	No.	%
College/University Archives	14	5	40	69.0	1	1.7
College/University Department	1	0	5	83.3	0	0.0
College/University Library	11	3	43	76.8	1	1.8
College/University Research Center	1	0	6	75.0	1	12.5
Corporate Archives	3	0	6	85.7	0	0.0
Federal Government Agency	6	3	13	61.9	0	0.0
Local Government Agency	2	2	9	69.2	1	7.7
Local Historical Society	9	11	50	74.6	0	0.0
Medical Institution	1	0	3	60.0	1	20.0
Museum	14	9	62	78.5	0	0.0
Organizational Archives	2	1	8	80.0	0	0.0
Public Library	1	0	55	98.2	0	0.0
Religious Institution	4	5	27	75.0	0	0.0
Special Research Institution	7	1	6	54.6	1	9.1
State Archives	20	2	4	33.3	1	8.3
State Government Department	0	1	4	80.0	0	0.0
State Historical Society	7	0	5	62.5	0	0.0
Subject Historical Society	3	0	7	70.0	0	0.0
Other	2	0	5	71.4	0	0.0
TOTAL	108	43	358	75.4	7	1.5

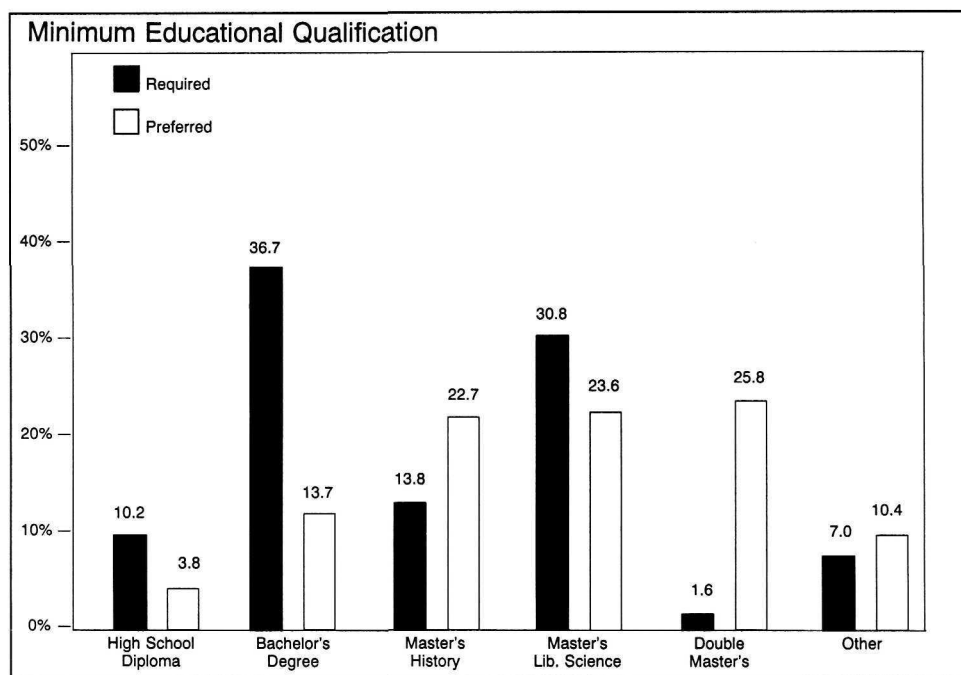
Table 4

Minimum Educational Qualification: Required												
	Hi. Sch. Diploma		Bachelor's		Master's History		Master's Lib. Sci.		Double Master's		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
College/University Archives	0	0.0	12	20.3	14	23.7	27	45.8	1	1.6	5	8.5
College/University Department	0	0.0	1	16.7	1	16.7	4	66.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
College/University Library	2	3.2	11	17.7	6	9.7	30	48.4	5	8.1	8	12.9
College/University Research Center	0	0.0	2	25.0	2	25.0	3	37.5	0	0.0	1	12.5
Corporate Archives	1	16.7	3	50.0	1	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	16.7
Federal Government Agency	2	10.0	9	45.0	7	35.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Local Government Agency	2	15.4	10	76.9	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Local Historical Society	11	23.4	27	57.5	5	10.6	2	4.3	0	0.0	2	4.3
Medical Institution	1	16.7	2	33.3	1	16.7	2	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Museum	13	18.8	32	46.4	6	8.7	11	15.9	1	1.5	6	8.7
Organizational Archives	2	20.0	3	30.0	1	10.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	1	10.0
Public Library	6	11.8	5	9.8	4	7.8	35	68.6	0	0.0	1	2.0
Religious Institution	3	10.0	18	60.0	3	10.0	4	13.3	0	0.0	2	6.7
Special Research Institution	1	9.1	5	45.5	4	36.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	9.1
State Archives	0	0.0	10	76.9	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	7.7
State Government Department	0	0.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	3	60.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
State Historical Society	0	0.0	4	44.4	2	22.2	3	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Subject Historical Society	1	10.0	4	40.0	2	20.0	2	20.0	0	0.0	1	10.0
Other	0	0.0	2	28.6	1	14.3	3	42.9	0	0.0	1	14.3
TOTAL	45	10.2	162	36.7	61	13.8	136	30.8	7	1.6	31	7.0

Table 5

Minimum Educational Qualification: Preferred											
	Hi. Sch. Diploma	Bachelor's		Master's History		Master's Lib. Sci.		Double Master's		Other	
	No. %	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
College/University Archives	0 0.0	1	2.4	7	17.1	8	19.5	21	51.2	4	9.8
College/ University Department	0 0.0	0	0.0	1	16.7	2	33.3	1	16.7	2	33.3
College/ University Library	0 0.0	1	2.2	6	13.3	11	24.4	21	46.7	6	13.3
College/ University Research Center	0 0.0	0	0.0	2	28.6	0	0.0	4	57.1	1	14.3
Corporate Archives	0 0.0	3	50.0	1	16.7	1	16.7	1	16.7	0	0.0
Federal Government Agency	0 0.0	4	25.0	8	50.0	1	6.3	3	18.8	0	0.0
Local Government Agency	1 10.0	3	27.3	5	45.5	2	18.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Local Historical Society	6 11.5	12	23.1	13	25.0	12	23.1	7	13.5	2	3.9
Medical Institution	0 0.0	0	0.0	3	60.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	20.0
Museum	5 8.2	15	24.6	11	18.0	13	21.3	10	16.4	7	11.5
Organizational Archives	1 14.3	2	28.6	0	0.0	3	42.9	1	14.3	0	0.0
Public Library	0 0.0	4	11.4	3	8.6	13	37.1	11	31.4	4	11.4
Religious Institution	1 3.7	2	7.4	11	40.7	5	18.5	4	14.8	4	14.8
Special Research Institution	0 0.0	0	0.0	2	22.2	3	33.3	3	33.3	1	11.1
State Archives	0 0.0	2	14.3	5	35.7	3	21.4	2	14.3	2	14.3
State Government Department	0 0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0.0
State Historical Society	0 0.0	1	12.5	4	50.0	1	12.5	1	12.5	1	12.5
Subject Historical Society	0 0.0	0	0.0	1	14.3	4	57.1	1	14.3	1	14.3
Other	0 0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	2	40.0
TOTAL	14 3.8	50	13.7	83	22.7	86	23.6	94	25.8	38	10.4

Figure 1



first choice for “state government department”; however, because only one respondent from that category specified a preferred major subject, this exception is not significant. Although the second choice of preferred major subject varied among the different types of institutions, the second choice from the 309 specified subjects was library science. The most notable aspect in comparing the top two choices is the difference between the number of votes for history and for library science, 202 (65.4 percent) and 21 (6.8 percent), respectively.

Foreign language qualification.²⁰ The repositories were asked to specify both their required and preferred foreign language qualification for employment as an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript cu-

rator. Respondents were instructed to mark as many answers as appropriate for each segment of the question.

In response to the *required* foreign language qualification for employment as an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript curator, 397 respondents (83.6 percent) stated that no foreign language ability is required. For the repositories that do require a foreign language, modern European languages accounted for the top three choices—French (9), German (9), and Spanish (8). Other required languages that received a total of five votes were Swedish, Norwegian, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.

When asked which foreign languages were *preferred* for employment as an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript curator, 43.2 percent of the respondents (205) still indicated that no foreign language ability was preferred. Once again, among repositories that preferred a foreign language,

²⁰For additional statistical data on this topic, see the author's doctoral dissertation.

modern European languages were ranked at the top of the list—German (84), French (70), and Spanish (70). Other preferred languages that received a total of 25 votes included Swedish, Yiddish, Korean, Greek, Danish, Dutch, Sioux, Norwegian, Catalan, Finnish, Portuguese, Alaskan native languages, classical languages, Native American languages, Pennsylvania Dutch dialects, and Southeast Asian dialects.

Training in archives conservation.²¹ To determine whether a trend could be identified, the questionnaire asked respondents to specify how important training in archives conservation is for an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript curator now and how important they expect it to be in five years.

Although the most frequent responses for the present importance of training in archives conservation ranged from “not important” to “very important,” the majority of the categories of respondents chose “of some importance” as their most frequent response. Of the 455 total responses, 125 (27.5 percent) chose “of some importance,” making it the most frequent response overall.

Expectations of the importance of training in archives conservation in five years were considerably different. Only one category, “subject historical society,” reported a most frequent response as low as “of some importance,” whereas the most frequent response for sixteen categories was “very important.” Of the 449 total responses, 185 (41.2 percent) chose “very important,” making it the most frequent response overall. A graphic comparison of how important training in archives conservation for an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript curator is now and how

important it is expected to be in five years is presented in Figure 2.

Training in computer automation.²² To determine if a trend could be identified, respondents were asked to specify how important training in computer automation is for an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript curator now and how important they expect it to be in five years.

Whereas the most frequent responses for the importance of training in computer automation now ranged from “not important” to “very important,” the majority of the categories of respondents indicated “fairly important” as the most frequent response. Of the 456 total responses, 128 (28.1 percent) chose “fairly important,” making it the most frequent response overall.

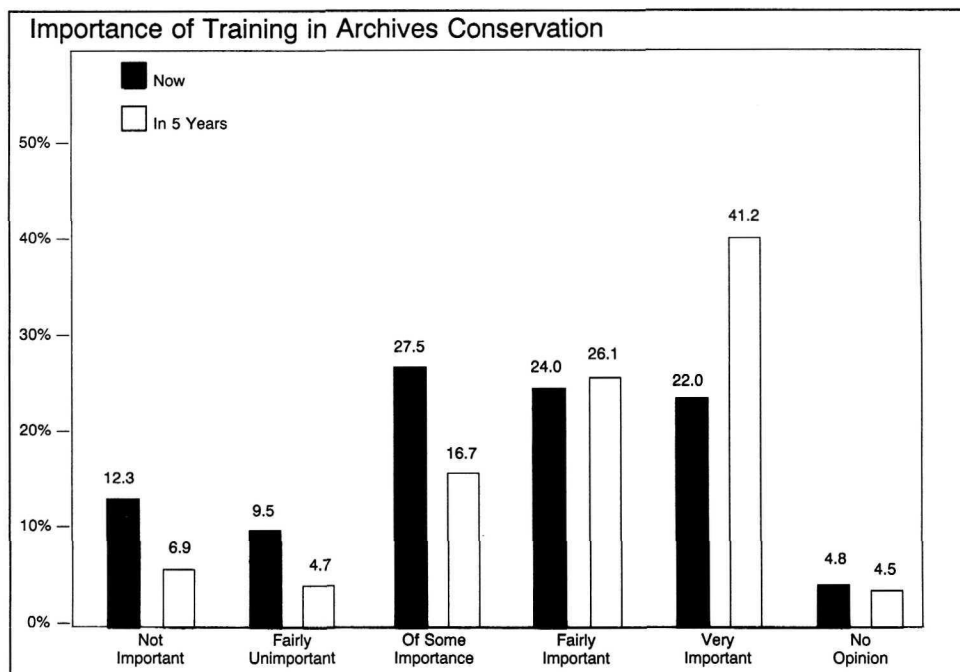
Expectations of the importance of training in computer automation in five years were considerably different. Only one category of respondents, “subject historical society,” reported a most frequent response as low as “of some importance”; the most frequent response for seventeen categories was “very important.” Of the 453 total responses, 237 (52.3 percent) chose “very important,” making it the most frequent response overall. A graphic comparison of how important training in computer automation is now for an entry-level professional archivist/manuscript curator and how important it is expected to be in five years is presented in Figure 3.

Effect of certification of archivists on hiring practices. Repositories were asked how they expected the program for the certification of archivists implemented by the Society of American Archivists in 1988 to affect their hiring practices regarding all archivist positions in general. The responses to the question are given in Table 6, with the most frequent response for each type of

²¹For additional statistical data on this topic, see the author's doctoral dissertation.

²²For additional statistical data on this topic, see the author's doctoral dissertation.

Figure 2



institution underlined in order to highlight any patterns that may emerge. The percentages are based on the total number of answers received in response to the question.

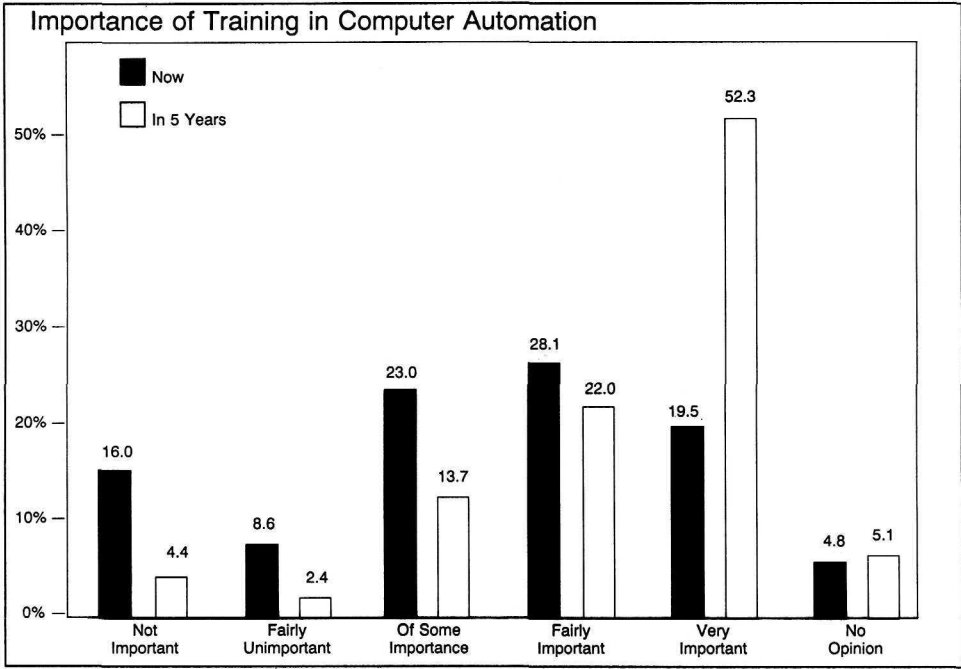
The most frequent choice of a majority of the nineteen categories of respondents was that certification probably will not have any effect on their hiring practices regarding all archivist positions in general. Of the 468 total responses represented by Table 6, 175 respondents (37.4 percent) appear to support this attitude toward the expected effect of certification on hiring practices. Only 24 respondents (5.1 percent) provided what one might consider a positive response for acceptance by employers of the certification of archivists by indicating that certification may be specified as a required qualification in position announcements. It was not ascertained whether unawareness of the details of the certification program may have played a more significant role in

determining the answers to this question than may be apparent from the 83 respondents (17.8 percent) who acknowledged their lack of information on the topic.

Certification for entry-level archivists.

Of all the questions presented by the survey, the question of whether there is a need to create a certification program for entry-level archivists was the most indeterminate. The responses to this question are given in Table 7, with the most frequent response for each type of institution being underlined in order to highlight any patterns that may emerge. The percentages are based on the total number of answers received in response to the question. Although the responses that favored a certification program for entry-level archivists outnumbered those that opposed such a program, 161 (35.1 percent) to 130 (28.3 percent), respectively, both were exceeded by the 168 respondents (36.6 percent) who specified "no opinion."

Figure 3



Graduate degree program in archival science. Respondents were asked how they felt about the establishment in the United States of a college graduate degree program specifically in archival science. The responses to the question are given in Table 8 and, again, the most frequent response for each type of institution is underlined in order to highlight any patterns that may emerge. The percentages are based on the total number of answers received in response to the question.

Almost half (225; 48.5 percent) of the 464 total responses indicated that the establishment of a graduate program in archival science in the United States would probably be beneficial in some positions but would not be essential for the profession. Representing a quarter of the responses (24.6 percent), 114 respondents felt that the establishment of a graduate program in archival science in the United States is essential for the advancement of the

profession. Only 41 respondents (8.8 percent) did not endorse the establishment of such a graduate program, indicating instead that the current educational programs in the United States provide a sufficient number of adequately trained archivists/manuscript curators.

Conclusions of the Study

Based on the responses from the archival and manuscript repositories surveyed in relation to the objectives of the study, the following conclusions were reached.

In spite of the fact that three-fourths of the repositories indicated that they did not expect to add any new positions during the next five years, the remaining repositories said that they would expect to add 108 new full-time positions. Based on the 20 percent sample in this study, one could infer from the 13.4 percent anticipated increase that more than 500 new full-time positions for

Table 6

Effect of Certification of Archivists on Hiring Practices										
	Response									
	A		B		C		D		E	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
College/University Archives	<u>26</u>	<u>46.4</u>	19	33.9	4	7.1	2	3.6	5	8.9
College/University Department	1	16.7	<u>3</u>	<u>50.0</u>	0	0.0	2	33.3	0	0.0
College/University Library	<u>20</u>	<u>37.7</u>	17	32.1	5	9.4	9	17.0	2	3.8
College/University Research Center	<u>4</u>	<u>50.0</u>	3	37.5	0	0.0	1	12.5	0	0.0
Corporate Archives	<u>3</u>	<u>50.0</u>	0	0.0	1	16.7	2	33.3	0	0.0
Federal Government Agency	<u>11</u>	<u>52.4</u>	6	28.6	1	4.8	2	9.5	1	4.8
Local Government Agency	<u>4</u>	<u>30.8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>30.8</u>	0	0.0	<u>4</u>	<u>30.8</u>	1	7.8
Local Historical Society	<u>26</u>	<u>38.2</u>	18	26.5	2	2.9	13	19.1	9	13.2
Medical Institution	<u>3</u>	<u>60.0</u>	2	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Museum	18	22.8	<u>23</u>	<u>29.1</u>	4	5.1	21	26.6	13	16.5
Organizational Archives	<u>5</u>	<u>50.0</u>	0	0.0	1	10.0	1	10.0	3	30.0
Public Library	<u>20</u>	<u>37.0</u>	11	20.4	3	5.6	7	13.0	13	24.1
Religious Institution	<u>17</u>	<u>47.2</u>	9	25.0	1	2.8	6	16.7	3	8.3
Special Research Institution	3	27.3	<u>4</u>	<u>36.4</u>	0	0.0	<u>4</u>	<u>36.4</u>	0	0.0
State Archives	3	25.0	<u>8</u>	<u>66.7</u>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	8.3
State Government Department	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	<u>3</u>	<u>60.0</u>	1	20.0
State Historical Society	<u>5</u>	<u>62.5</u>	2	25.0	1	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Subject Historical Society	<u>4</u>	<u>40.0</u>	1	10.0	0	0.0	3	30.0	2	20.0
Other	1	14.3	1	14.3	1	14.3	<u>3</u>	<u>42.9</u>	1	14.3
TOTAL	<u>175</u>	<u>37.4</u>	131	28.0	24	5.1	83	17.7	55	11.8
A: Certification probably will not have any effect on our hiring practices.										
B: Certification may be considered in evaluating applicants although it will not be specified as a qualification.										
C: Certification may be specified as a required qualification in position announcements.										
D: I am not aware of the details of the certification program.										
E: No opinion.										

Table 7

Need for Certification Program for Entry-Level Archivists						
	No		Yes		No Opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
College/University Archives	24	42.1	17	29.8	16	28.1
College/University Department	4	80.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
College/University Library	20	38.5	21	40.4	11	21.2
College/University Research Center	4	50.0	2	25.0	2	25.0
Corporate Archives	2	28.6	2	28.6	3	42.9
Federal Government Agency	10	47.6	3	14.3	8	38.1
Local Government Agency	2	15.4	5	38.5	6	46.2
Local Historical Society	13	21.0	23	37.1	26	41.9
Medical Institution	2	40.0	1	20.0	2	40.0
Museum	13	16.9	42	54.6	22	28.6
Organizational Archives	2	20.0	5	50.0	3	30.0
Public Library	8	14.6	16	29.1	31	56.4
Religious Institution	14	40.0	5	14.3	16	45.7
Special Research Institution	0	0.0	5	45.5	6	54.6
State Archives	4	36.4	3	27.3	4	36.4
State Government Department	0	0.0	3	60.0	2	40.0
State Historical Society	5	62.5	1	12.5	2	25.0
Subject Historical Society	3	30.0	1	10.0	6	60.0
Other	0	0.0	5	71.4	2	28.6
TOTAL	130	28.3	161	35.1	168	36.6

archivists in the United States can be expected within five years.

A bachelor's degree appears to satisfy the minimum educational qualification for employment in institutions outside the college/university community. For an individual planning to pursue an archivist position as an employee of a college or university, a master's degree in library science would be advisable. To attain a higher level of employability and mobility within the archival profession, one should look to a master's degree in history, library science, or, preferably, both.

Almost half of the respondents stated that they had a preference for the major subject of an applicant's undergraduate degree. History was by far the predominant choice for the preferred major subject, with library

science ranking a distant second. Regardless of the subject of the master's degree, it would appear that an individual would be more employable in the archives field with an undergraduate degree in history.

Foreign language ability does not appear to be a highly sought qualification for entry-level archivists. For those who are planning to develop their language skills in anticipation of joining the archival profession, attention to the modern European languages would be suggested.

The expected changes in the importance of archives conservation and computer automation over the next five years demonstrate the need for training in both areas for practicing as well as potential archivists. The availability of funds and/or equipment in support of these activities, and its influ-

Table 8

Need to Establish a Graduate Degree Program in Archival Science								
	Response							
	A		B		C		D	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
College/University Archives	8	14.0	23	40.4	20	35.1	6	10.5
College/University Department	0	0.0	5	83.3	0	0.0	1	16.7
College/University Library	6	11.5	25	48.1	18	34.6	3	5.8
College/University Research Center	0	0.0	4	50.0	3	37.5	1	12.5
Corporate Archives	0	0.0	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3
Federal Government Agency	5	25.0	7	35.0	4	20.0	4	20.0
Local Government Agency	1	7.7	4	30.8	3	23.1	5	38.5
Local Historical Society	8	12.5	37	57.8	6	9.4	13	20.3
Medical Institution	1	20.0	2	40.0	2	40.0	0	0.0
Museum	5	6.3	34	43.0	23	29.1	17	21.5
Organizational Archives	0	0.0	5	50.0	3	30.0	2	20.0
Public Library	1	1.9	26	48.2	10	18.5	17	31.5
Religious Institution	1	2.8	23	63.9	5	13.9	7	19.4
Special Research Institution	1	9.1	8	72.7	2	18.2	0	0.0
State Archives	0	0.0	7	58.3	5	41.7	0	0.0
State Government Department	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	60.0	2	40.0
State Historical Society	1	12.5	5	62.5	2	25.0	0	0.0
Subject Historical Society	3	30.0	4	40.0	0	0.0	3	30.0
Other	0	0.0	1	14.3	4	57.1	2	28.6
TOTAL	41	8.8	225	48.5	114	24.6	84	18.1
A: Current educational programs in the United States provide a sufficient number of adequately trained archivists/manuscript curators.								
B: The establishment of a graduate program in archival science in the United States would probably be beneficial in some positions but would not be essential for the profession.								
C: The establishment of a graduate program in archival science in the United States is essential for advancement of the profession.								
D: No opinion.								

ence on the responses regarding these two specialized areas of training, were not determined in this study.

The fact that 37.4 percent of the respondents stated that the program for the certification of archivists probably will have no effect on their hiring practices should be of concern to the Academy of Certified Archivists and to the individuals who may consider certification as a viable option for professional enhancement.

The indecisiveness of the respondents in regard to the question of creating a certification program for entry-level archivists may reflect their dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with the present certification program.

Although almost half of the respondents said that the establishment of a graduate degree program in archival science in the United States would probably be beneficial in some positions but would not be essential for the profession, one quarter claimed that the establishment of such a program is essential for the advancement of the profession. Consideration of this data suggests that, since the Society of American Archivists has already developed guidelines for graduate archival education programs, a graduate degree program in archival science be scrutinized as a possible alternative to the SAA certification program.

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