

# Exploring the Current State of North American Graduate Archival Education<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

This article analyzes 65 North American graduate archival education programs' course listings against current professional standards as crystallized in the 2016 *Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies* (GPAS). The study addresses the following research questions: 1) What types of programs list graduate archival education courses?, 2) What types of courses do these graduate archival programs currently list?, 3) To what extent do archival programs' courses conform to GPAS?, and 4) What are the implications of a program's conforming or not conforming to GPAS?

The authors' findings indicate an overriding tendency for graduate archival education programs to be hosted by LIS programs, especially under the auspices of iSchools. They identified a great diversity of graduate archival education programs and course listing combinations. Most important, they analyzed the archival curriculum coverage of 65 graduate archival programs to discern conformance with GPAS curriculum requirements. Although their findings may be used by programs for self-study, they also call into question the overall utility of GPAS and suggest the need for a more flexible approach.

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## KEY WORDS

Archival education, Graduate archival programs, Archival curriculum guidelines, Archival course listings, GPAS curriculum conformance

In 2017, the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) Committee on Education (CoE) established the Graduate Archival Education Subcommittee (GAES). Among other duties, CoE enjoined GAES to "regularly assess the Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies (GPAS), publish appropriate revisions for member comment, and submit to the Standards Committee per the internal approval process."<sup>2</sup> GPAS, according to SAA, represented "the best form of pre-appointment professional education for archivists."<sup>3</sup> As part of its responsibility to assess the GPAS, the subcommittee conducted a systematic review of North American graduate archival programs and course listings between 2017 and 2020.<sup>4</sup>

Built on the GAES's GPAS review data, this article addresses four research questions. First, what types of graduate programs list archival courses? Second, what types of courses do these graduate archival education programs currently list? Third, to what extent do archival education programs' courses conform to GPAS recommendations? Fourth, what are the implications of a program's conforming or not conforming to GPAS?

To address these questions, we analyze the relationship between 65 North American graduate archival education programs' courses and degree requirements and current professional standards as crystallized in the 2016 GPAS. We present data on archival education programs' current course listings. We then classify these listings both by course category and by degree credit hours. After discussing the development and components of GPAS (2016), we juxtapose current archival education programs' course and curriculum data with GPAS recommendations. Next, we discuss the implications of this juxtaposition for research and practice. Finally, we offer conclusions and suggestions for future research.

The health of the archival profession depends largely upon on how its future practitioners are prepared. This study contributes to an understanding of how graduate archival programs are undertaking such preparation.

## Literature Review

Areas of scholarship most relevant to this study include various SAA guidelines issued between 1977 and 2016, the optimal host program for graduate archival education, and course listings and curricula.

### GUIDELINES FOR ARCHIVAL EDUCATION, 1977–2016

SAA broached education and training effectively from its 1936 founding, as historian Samuel Flagg Bemis chaired the Committee on the Training of Archivists (1936–1938).<sup>5</sup> SAA dissolved the Committee on the Training of Archivists in 1943 due to its inefficacy.<sup>6</sup> American University meanwhile began offering archives courses in 1940; SAA endorsed the institution's course of study 15 years later. Despite its

own lack of success in supporting training or education, SAA greeted the emergence of LIS programs training archivists in the late 1960s with ambivalence.<sup>7</sup> Archival courses multiplied during the 1970s, and the Committee for the 1970s underlined the intractable difficulties of accreditation.<sup>8</sup> Rejecting the notion of a separate degree in archival studies, the committee effectively characterized much archival work as nonprofessional in nature.<sup>9</sup> All the same, the committee advocated guidelines for educational programs; qualifications for instructors; standards for courses, curricula, and instructional materials; and even mechanisms for accreditation.<sup>10</sup>

### *SAA Education Guidelines (1977)*

Responding to the Committee for the 1970s' exhortations, SAA created the Committee on Education and Professional Development (CEPD). Between 1972 and 1976, CEPD, under the successive leadership of Maynard Brichford, Mabel Deutrich, and Gerald Ham, developed the inaugural *Guidelines for Graduate Archival Education Programs* (1977).<sup>11</sup> The guidelines seemed straightforward and grounded in existing practice; nearly all programs could meet their stipulations (e.g., a theory course, independent study, and a practicum), and they met many stakeholders' contemporary needs.<sup>12</sup> They also could be used as leverage with administrators to promote archival education programs.<sup>13</sup> In Fredric Miller's view, however, the guidelines endorsed an efficient, minimal program of entry-level training, not genuine education.<sup>14</sup>

### *SAA Education Guidelines (1988)*

In 1985, a Committee on Education and Professional Development subcommittee began revising the 1977 guidelines. The revamped guidelines of 1988 were more extensive and specific; they also promoted a more robust theoretical base.<sup>15</sup> The guidelines were "designed to support such multi-course programs at master's and doctoral levels in related fields or fully independent graduate programs in archival administration."<sup>16</sup> Perhaps most notably, they insisted on the need for each program to include a full-time archival educator.

Although the subcommittee's members thought the three-course sequence inadequate, they concluded that a full MAS degree was unfeasible. Nonetheless, they hoped the guidelines would inspire further maturation of graduate programs.<sup>17</sup> However, the guidelines received considerable criticism and had scant impact either on individual certification or on graduate archival education programs.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Master of Archival Studies (MAS) (1994)*

The Association of Canadian Archivists' 1990 work spurred the CEPD to devote three years solely to developing master's degree guidelines. The result,

“Guidelines for the Development of a Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies Degree (MAS)” (1994) represented SAA’s first formal recognition of archival studies as a discipline as well as the importance of a stand-alone graduate education program.<sup>19</sup> Conceding the inadequacy of a three-course sequence, the MAS guidelines broadened the scope of required knowledge areas. Notably, they called for the presence of at least one full-time archival educator in each program, as well as adequate research resources.<sup>20</sup> But, although the guidelines laid out curriculum content, they failed to describe, much less regulate, course content; accreditation was also ignored.<sup>21</sup>

### SAA Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies (GPAS)

First propagated in 2002, the *Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies* (GPAS) were revised in 2011 and 2016; another revision is pending. The initial GPAS represented a benchmark that advanced “minimum standards for archival education programs in terms of mission, curriculum, faculty, and infrastructure.”<sup>22</sup> Among these were at least one full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty member. GPAS also claimed to encourage “diversity of institutional homes for archival programs as well as variety in the emphases or specializations available within individual programs,” but its demanding minimum standards likely militated against such diversity.<sup>23</sup>

In 2019, Ed Benoit and Donald Force explored the reception of the 2016 GPAS by surveying 18 archival program directors and coordinators (all of whom worked in programs that offered archival specializations or concentrations).<sup>24</sup> Despite disagreements over some of GPAS’s content, respondents embraced GPAS as a valuable curriculum development and revision tool.<sup>25</sup> The authors suggested jettisoning the notion of SAA as an accrediting body once and for all. Rather, they favored adding an evaluative function to future GPAS revisions and enumerating that evaluation in each program’s “Directory of Archival Education” (DAE) listing.<sup>26</sup>

### THE APPROPRIATE HOST FOR ARCHIVAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Perhaps the oldest debate in the archival education literature focuses on the optimal host program, namely library and information science or history. As early as 1909, Waldo Leland predicted that library schools would help prepare students for archival work.<sup>27</sup> Avatar of the SAA’s first education efforts, historian Samuel Bemis foregrounded historical study, but believed library science instruction potentially useful, albeit in moderation, given what he saw as its unduly mechanistic orientation.<sup>28</sup> By the late 1940s, Karl Trever identified the increasing tendency of library schools to offer archival training.<sup>29</sup> In the late 1960s, T. R. Schellenberg applauded the potential of library science programs to educate archivists, as did John Colson;

Frank Evans offered a similar endorsement in 1972.<sup>30</sup> In a study published that year, however, Evans and Robert Warner learned that 35.5% of their respondents had an MA or an MS, while only 12.1% had an MLS.<sup>31</sup>

In 1977, Evans again broached the issue, noting the “increasing number of library science graduates with both training and experience in retrospective documentary research, and with the liberal education, analytical abilities, and intellectual curiosity essential to the modern archivist.”<sup>32</sup> Daniel Geary argued that library schools were better equipped than history departments to offer archival education given their dual focus on theory and practice and their accreditation process.<sup>33</sup> Rounding out the decade, Lawrence McCrank contended that archival education should embrace both LIS and history, ideally in a dual degree program; neither seemed capable of providing a robust curriculum alone.<sup>34</sup>

Ruth Helmuth was skeptical that LIS programs were the best host for archival education,<sup>35</sup> Lawrence McCrank found archivists ambivalent about LIS or history,<sup>36</sup> and Susan Davis noted concerns that LIS programs were intellectually inferior to history programs.<sup>37</sup> Even so, Tyler Walters saw archivists increasingly adapting LIS education to their needs.<sup>38</sup> By 1993, Gerald Ham and his colleagues pinpointed a “dramatic and swift” change to the LIS master’s degree as opposed to history or social science.<sup>39</sup> Timothy Ericson, however, returned to McCrank’s point and asserted that neither was ideal simply because archival students were not the primary focus in either type of program.<sup>40</sup> In 1994, Roy Schaeffer suggested this “schizophrenic” character of archival education remained.<sup>41</sup>

Testifying to this continuing schizophrenia, ten years after Schaeffer’s article, A\*CENSUS found that 46% of respondents held an MA/MS/MFA and 39% an MLS/MLIS, a sea change for the latter since 1972.<sup>42</sup> The subsequent A\*CENSUS II found this sea change proceeding apace: 60% of respondents had earned an MLS/MLIS and 44% an MA/MS/MFA.<sup>43</sup>

### *iSchools and Archival Studies*

As early as 1993, Frederick Stielow posited that archival studies could bridge the humanities and information science.<sup>44</sup> With the advent of the iSchools in 2005, Stielow seemed prescient. Erecting a rather reductive dichotomy, Richard Cox and Ronald Larsen contended, “we need individuals who are intellectually engaged by the challenges digital technologies are bringing to records and information systems; graduate archival programs situated in iSchools might attract such individuals tomorrow, where the traditional LIS school tended to attract individuals interested in traditional records forms and the cultural and historical aspects of recordkeeping.”<sup>45</sup>

Reflexive faith in iSchools continued; Anne Gilliland and Kelvin White believed iSchools, given their purported multidisciplinary and multimethodological leanings, exerted a salutary influence on archival studies (and vice versa).<sup>46</sup> Greg

Leazer likewise saw archival studies contributing robustly to iSchools, namely in the former's commitment to a fuller cultural record and a full range of media, both published and unpublished, from different cultural contexts over the material's full life cycle, and its expanded conceptions of information use, for example, around marginalized communities, human rights, and cultural identity.<sup>47</sup>

Commenting in 2012 on archival studies' relationship with information science more broadly, Cox rolled back some of his earlier enthusiasm. "Information scientists may see archivists as little more than antiquarian collectors," he noted, but the history of information science had little to say about archives or records management, and archival studies had yet to attain a strong footing in information science programs, whether iSchools or LIS programs.<sup>48</sup> Even so, Cox insisted that archivists and information scientists needed one other. In 2015, however, Cox further retrenched, admitting his optimism about archival studies in iSchools was perhaps unwarranted.<sup>49</sup>

## COURSE AND CURRICULUM COVERAGE

Since its 1973 debut, the Society of American Archivists' "Directory of Archival Education" has facilitated analysis of the current state of graduate archival education.<sup>50</sup> The inaugural SAA "Education Directory" (1973) indicated the quixotic growth of coursework and concomitantly limited development of programs.<sup>51</sup> Twenty schools provided single introductory courses. Although 12 institutions listed multiple courses, Lawrence McCrank noted that this claim made no distinction between full-fledged and ad hoc offerings (readings, directed studies, or practica/internships). The 1975 directory included 42 institutions listing 23 single course programs, 17 multiple course programs, and 9 workshops. The 1976 directory featured 19 multicourse and 19 single course programs. LIS programs hosted 11 of these 38; history departments or local archives hosted another 5.<sup>52</sup> Overall, then, LIS and history programs alike tended to provide a lone introductory course, often coupled with a practicum as part of a minor field in an MA or MLS degree.<sup>53</sup>

The 1978 "Directory of Archival Education" included 30 multicourse programs (history departments hosted 18, LIS 7, and 5 were combined history/LIS programs), offering a total of 100 courses. These courses fell into five categories Timothy Ericson developed: introductory, independent study or seminar, laboratory or practicum, "plausible electives," and "related coursework."<sup>54</sup> Ericson critiqued the latter as unduly diluted.<sup>55</sup> More discouraging in light of SAA's 1977 education guidelines, fewer than half of these 30 programs included the guidelines' three components.

The number of graduate archival education programs burgeoned in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The 1980 "Education Directory" listed 47 multicourse

programs in 32 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>56</sup> The 1983 directory also included 47 North American multicourse programs, as well as 24 single-course programs and 7 workshops.<sup>57</sup>

The 1986 directory suggested to Ericson that many graduate archival programs either failed to teach key topics or taught them unsatisfactorily. Seventy-five programs offered a total of 250 courses. Of these courses, Ericson characterized 61 as those that might benefit an archivist, not archival education *per se*.<sup>58</sup> Thus winnowed, Ericson's list stood at 189 courses.

Ericson further classified 65 of these 189 courses as survey courses. He broke down the remaining 124 courses as follows: practica or internship (29); seminars, independent studies, or directed studies (35); and thesis (1). These courses debited, merely 59 courses spread across 75 programs centered on concepts or techniques of archival work. Thirty-two of these 59 focused on conservation or records management; only 27 courses remained to address, for example, appraisal, reference, access, arrangement, and description. Last, 6 courses concentrated on automation, 1 on legal issues, and 1 on reprography. The relative lack of courses on automation Ericson found especially troubling.<sup>59</sup>

The 1991 SAA "Directory of Archival Education" featured 36 multicourse programs (as opposed to 30 in 1978).<sup>60</sup> The 1991 directory featured 228 courses (half in history and one-third in LIS). Notably, graduate programs' average number of courses had increased from more than 3 to more than 6.<sup>61</sup> But the greatest percentage of growth occurred in the "related" course category (from 2 to 27). Conversely, the number of courses on automation increased from 2 to 7; only 1 course in appraisal was offered, moreover, and only 1 in arrangement and description.

Unpacking the 1997–1998 SAA directory, James O'Toole found limited improvement. Like Ericson, he cautioned that progress was rather specious.<sup>62</sup> Thirty-seven institutions in the United States offered a total of 279 courses (versus 228 in 1991). O'Toole drew five conclusions from the data. First, each of the 37 programs listed an introductory course. Second, a dozen programs listed an advanced archival seminar, another modest improvement from 1991. Third, internships and practica still loomed large; 34 programs listed 1.<sup>63</sup> Fourth, more programs offered records management (23 courses) and preservation (26) than in 1991. Fifth, courses in automation and electronic records, topics that O'Toole deemed fundamental, had increased from 6 courses to 11.<sup>64</sup>

O'Toole saw the problems he and Ericson flagged persisting.<sup>65</sup> First, the number of foundational courses remained few. Only 3 courses focused on appraisal, 2 on arrangement and description, 2 on legal issues, 1 on reference, and none on outreach and public programming. Second, so-called related courses still comprised an undue proportion of the curriculum. The 1997–1998 directory included 88 such courses—more, in fact, than Ericson had found. These courses showed similar scatter, too, including public history (10), historical editing (12), museum management



(11), oral history (7), and historic preservation (7). This propensity of related over foundational courses suggested educators sacrificed depth for breadth. Third, the lack of courses on automation or electronic records pointed to a more intractable problem: many educators themselves lacked relevant technological training. O'Toole therefore encouraged the development of continuing education programs for educators.<sup>66</sup>

Following Ericson and O'Toole, in 2001 Richard Cox, Elizabeth Yakel, David Wallace, and Jennifer Marshall examined the websites of 48 ALA-accredited LIS schools.<sup>67</sup> Three-quarters (36 of 48) of these programs listed at least 1 basic or introductory archives course. Thirty-four listed a records management course, 31 listed at least 1 course in preservation management, and 22 listed courses in all three areas.

In a related 2001 study, Cox, Yakel, Wallace, Jeannette Bastian, and Marshall scrutinized the programs listed in SAA's 1999–2000 "Directory of Archival Education" and the courses they offered.<sup>68</sup> LIS programs hosted 20 of 34 archival programs, history departments 13, and 1 was not identifiable. Each of the 20 LIS programs listed at least 3 archival courses, and 11 of the 20 listed 6 or more courses. Cox et al. concluded ambivalently: on the one hand, a few programs listed a wide array of archives courses. On the other, many programs offered archival education that scarcely merited the term.<sup>69</sup>

By 2002, according to Yakel, LIS, history, museum studies program, or liberal studies programs listed more than 60 introductory archives courses. Eleven programs (10 LIS, 1 history) claimed to meet the new (2002) GPAS's 18 credit-hour criteria.<sup>70</sup>

Building upon their earlier work with Cox and others, Bastian and Yakel appraised 76 programs, 62 of which (30 in history, 30 in LIS, 1 in museum studies, and 1 in continuing studies) offered archives courses—a total of 373.<sup>71</sup> Overall, 62 programs listed an introductory course, 52 listed a practicum/field experience/internship, 46 listed preservation, 28 listed records management, 25 listed arrangement and description, 14 listed electronic records, and 8 listed appraisal.<sup>72</sup>

Listing far more courses (224) than history departments (140), LIS programs offered twice as many archival tracks or concentrations as history programs. The continuing prevalence of introductory courses aside, 22 LIS programs offered at least 2 core courses, compared to 6 history departments. Still, few LIS programs offered more than 5 courses. Furthermore, LIS and history programs differed markedly in their course listings. Only LIS schools offered appraisal, archival automation, diplomatics, electronic records, legal issues, reference, and topical seminars. By contrast, only history departments offered historical editing or public history.

Seeking also to define and to measure core archival knowledge, Bastian and Yakel analyzed the 2002 GPAS guidelines.<sup>73</sup> They parsed current courses into 20 categories and designated them as either core or complementary. Mapping of core



knowledge components evidenced differences between LIS and history programs. Although LIS programs instantiated few core components in individual courses, history departments were even more remiss.

Sounding a familiar note, Bastian and Yakel described a spectrum of programs' course listings, the topics they addressed, and their quality.<sup>74</sup> Overall, the increasing number of specialized courses suggested that archival knowledge was both developing and differentiating itself from other professional education. Conversely, the absence of a standardized curriculum undercut the teaching of current students as aspiring professionals and the teaching of aspiring archival educators. These findings in hand, Bastian and Yakel concluded that archival education held a mere foothold in the university.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, Benoit and Force mapped GPAS components to existing archival courses.<sup>76</sup> They examined 27 programs listed in the DAE that offered archival concentrations, including 23 in LIS and 4 in master of arts programs. Nearly two-thirds (507, or 64.7%) of courses offered during the previous three years fell under the class of Core Archival Knowledge (CAK) components and subcomponents. By contrast, the Complementary Knowledge (CK) components included 152 courses, fully 30% of all courses.

Two-thirds (18 of 27) of program directors/coordinators responded to Benoit and Force's survey. Fully half either strongly agreed or agreed upon GPAS's relevance to their programs. In fact, none of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed; they appreciated the GPAS as a tool for curriculum development and revision.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, participants expressed considerable concern over GPAS's failure to adumbrate the appropriate content for introductory courses, to indicate what courses should be required, and to specify the areas that required dedicated courses.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps unsurprising given these concerns, more than a third (37%) of archival programs failed to meet the GPAS's recommendation of 18 credit hours in Core Archival Knowledge.<sup>79</sup>

Scholars such as McCrank, Ericson, O'Toole, Wallace, Cox et al., Yakel, Bastian and Yakel, and Benoit and Force provide useful benchmarks for the present study in using the DAE as a data source, in exploring the number of education programs and their hosts, in tabulating the number of courses listed overall and per program, in identifying core and complementary courses (and curriculum foci), in programs' degree of conformance to SAA guidelines, and in tracing the level of standardization across programs.

Overall, scholars found much to lament in the trajectory of graduate archival education. They pointed to the lack of SAA engagement beyond high-level, unenforced guidelines; the challenge of finding a suitable host unit for graduate archival education (LIS and eventually iSchools versus history); the need for full-time faculty; curriculum brevity; desultory course and curriculum coverage; and program turnover.

## Methods

Empirically grounded, exploratory, and abductive, content analysis is a research strategy “for making replicable and valid inferences from texts . . . to the contexts of their use.”<sup>80</sup> Content analysis not only offers increased understanding, it also informs practical action.<sup>81</sup> Course content analysis in this research involved closely examining course titles to group together courses of like content, mapping program course categories to the GPAS curriculum framework, and calculating course category percentage for all programs and credit-hour distribution for each program.

We generated a list of programs that claimed to offer graduate archival education. As of fall 2017, DAE listed 45 graduate archival education providers: 31 library and information science (LIS) programs (including LIS programs hosted in iSchools), 10 history programs, 2 master of archival studies (MAS) programs, 1 liberal studies program, and 1 museum studies program. In addition to these 45 programs, GAES ferreted out 20 other programs listing archives courses. Sixty of those 65 programs listed courses on their websites. Based on the 60 programs’ archival course titles (both required and elective, a total of 683), we developed 21 course categories.<sup>82</sup> These 683 titles denote degree-required courses, archival specialization- or concentration-related courses, and other elective courses that programs recommend for students interested in archival studies.

We mapped these course categories to the GPAS curriculum framework and constructed a curriculum checklist. We then populated the checklist with each program’s course listings and degree credit hours (required and elective). We determined the number of credit hours (or other units) that all 65 programs assigned to each course category by the content (core or complementary) and status (required or elective) of each course. Finally, we divided each program’s total credit hours by course categories to calculate the credit-hour distribution among both archives and supplementary courses and, more important, to find a program’s GPAS conformance in terms of coverage percentage. Our research enables a holistic and granular understanding of the existing graduate archival education curriculum, encourages programs to consider their course listings (and by extension, offerings) in light of GPAS, and promotes discussion about GPAS review, revision, and overall utility.

## Findings

Our findings address the host programs of graduate archival education, programs’ course listings, these listings’ conformance to GPAS, programs’ course category coverage, and program degree coverage.

GRADUATE ARCHIVAL EDUCATION HOST PROGRAMS

Among the 65 programs used in this study, LIS-based programs account for 74% (48); history-based programs come in at a distant second (21.5%, or 14) (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Graduate Archival Education Programs by Program Type (Discipline or Department)**

Program Type	Number (Total: 65)	Percentage (%)
LIS	48	74%
History	14	21.5%
Master of archival studies (MAS)	2	3%
Liberal studies	1	1.5%

Forty-nine of the 65 programs are accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) (as of June 2021), including 37 programs housed in iSchools. Among the 28 non-iSchool programs, only 12 programs are ALA-accredited (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Graduate Archival Education Programs by Institution Type**

Institution Type	Number (Total: 65)	Percentage (%)
iSchool [all ALA accredited]	37	57%
Non-iSchool/ALAaccredited	12	18%
Non-iSchool/non-ALA accredited	16	25%

LIS programs located in iSchools host more than half (57%) of all graduate archival education programs. By contrast, the 16 non-ALA-accredited programs include 14 history programs, 1 MAS program, and 1 liberal studies program. The overall predominance of LIS programs remains an outstanding feature of archival education.

GRADUATE ARCHIVAL COURSES AND THE GPAS CURRICULUM

GAES’s initial work (2017–2018) unearthed 65 graduate archival education programs, 60 of which provided course listing information online. Based on a content analysis of these listings, we developed an analytical framework (see Table 3).

Table 3. Courses by Group and Subgroup (2018 Sample of 60 Programs)

Course Group	Course Subgroup	Course Content
Archival courses	Foundation core courses	Introduction
		Preservation
		Records management
		Arrangement and description
		Appraisal
		Access and use
	Specialized courses	Electronic records and digital archives (electronic records management, digital archives, digital curation, data and digital stewardship, digital preservation, digitization, technology issues in archives, web archiving, etc.)
		Advanced archival topics (advanced seminar, advanced topics, special topics, legal and ethical issues, freedom of information, copyrights, history of records and recordkeeping, diplomatics, history and collective memory, archival research and scholarship, public administration, community archives, international archives, museum archives, etc.)
		Practicum, internship, or capstone
		Special media archives (photographic archives, audiovisual archives, preserving sound and motion, film and media collections, moving image archives, history of media technologies, history of photography, etc.)
Nonarchival courses	Library and information courses	LIS core courses (LIS foundations, information organization, information access and services, information technology, research methods, management, etc.)
		Digital information and collections (databases, web architecture, data management/analysis, digital assets/libraries/humanities, etc.)
		Special collections and cultural heritage (special collections/rare books/history of the book, cultural heritage, museum, oral history, etc.)
		Information science (information environment and landscape, information behavior, ethics and policy, information systems, etc.)
		Cataloging, metadata, indexing
		Other (collection management, history of libraries and information professions, information professionals, special libraries, legal literature, school libraries, children's literature, public libraries, storytelling, scholarly communication, knowledge and information management, copyrights, social justice, etc.)
	History and other liberal arts courses	Historical theory and method
		Public/applied history
		World or local history
		Education
		Cognitive processes and professional writing

We then mapped the framework’s components to those of GPAS. GPAS comprises both Core Knowledge (3 components) and Complementary Knowledge (7 components) (see Table 4).

**Table 4. SAA GPAS Curriculum Components and Subcomponents (2016)**

Curriculum Groups	Curriculum Components	Curriculum Subcomponents
Core Archival Knowledge	Knowledge of Material and Functions	Nature of Records and Archives
		Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition
		Arrangement and Description
		Preservation
		Reference and Access
		Outreach, Instruction, and Advocacy
		Management and Administration
		Records and Information Management
		Digital Materials Management
	Knowledge of the Profession	History of Archives and the Archival Profession
		Records and Cultural Memory
		Ethics and Values
	Contextual Knowledge	Social and Cultural Systems
		Legal and Financial Systems
Complementary Knowledge		Information Technology
		Conservation
		Research Design and Execution
		Organizational Theory
		Library and Information Science
		Liberal Arts and Sciences
		Allied Professions

Our initial three categories (A, B, and C) generally conform to the core and complementary components in GPAS (see Table 5). Some GPAS curriculum topics match graduate archival courses exactly. Foundation core courses such as introduction to archives, preservation, records management, arrangement and description, appraisal, and access and outreach map to the GPAS core component, Knowledge of Material and Functions, and its subcategories. Graduate archival education programs often offer stand-alone courses in foundation areas.

Table 5. GPAS Curriculum Framework and Archival Program Courses

GPAS Curriculum Components and Subcomponents (2016)			Graduate Archival Course Categories and Subcategories	
Core	Material and Functions	Nature of Records and Archives	A: Foundation archival courses	Introduction to archives (A1)
		Selection, Appraisal, and Acquisition		Appraisal (A2)
		Arrangement and Description		Arrangement and description (A3)
		Preservation		Preservation (A4)
		Reference and Access		Access and outreach (A5)
		Outreach, Instruction, and Advocacy		Records and information management (A6)
		Management and Administration		
		Records and Information Management		
		Digital Materials Management	B: Advanced/ specialized archival courses	Advanced topic courses (archival history, cultural memory, ethics, etc.) (B1)
	Profession Contextual	History of Archives and Archival Profession		Special media archives (photographic archives, AV archives, etc.) (B2)
Records and Cultural Memory		Electronic records, digital archives, digital curation and preservation, etc. (B3)		
Ethics and Values		Practicum/internship/field work/capstone (B4)		
Social and Cultural Systems				
Legal and Financial Systems				
Complementary		Information Technology	C: Allied profession courses	Library and information science courses (C1)
		Conservation		Information technology, digital libraries / humanities (C2)
		Research Design and Execution		Cultural heritage courses (C3)
		Organizational Theory		History courses/liberal arts courses (C4)
		Library and Information Science		
		Liberal Arts and Sciences		
		Allied Professions		

Other GPAS curriculum topics do not map directly to individual courses. For example, advanced/specialized topic courses (B1) usually cover professional and contextual areas. Similarly, although GPAS overlooks special media archives courses, we include them under advanced/specialized courses (B2). Topics in the GPAS complementary area map to allied profession courses, such as LIS courses (C1) and information technology/digital libraries/humanities courses (C2). Programs rarely offer stand-alone courses on certain topics, for example, conservation, research design and execution, and organizational theory, but these may be integrated into other

courses. Last, cultural heritage courses (C3) map to allied professions, and history/liberal arts courses (C4) map to liberal arts and sciences.

GRADUATE ARCHIVAL COURSE CATEGORY COVERAGE

We applied the framework to updated course listings that encompassed all 65 programs (2019–2020). We generated coverage percentage across all programs for each of our 14 course categories (A1–A6, B1–B4, and C1–C4). Populating a curriculum checklist for each of the 65 programs, we checked off a course category if the program offered one or more courses that matched the content of the category. Appendix A shows the results for all 65 programs (condensed in Table 6).

Table 6. Graduate Archival Program Curriculum Checklist Summary

Category Area	Course Category	Number of Programs (Total 65)	Coverage Percentage
A: Foundation archival courses	A1: Introduction to archives	63	97%
	A2: Appraisal	25	38%
	A3: Arrangement and description	34	52%
	A4: Preservation	48	74%
	A5: Access and outreach	12	18%
	A6: Records and information management	32	49%
B: Advanced archival courses	B1: Advanced topic courses	32	49%
	B2: Special media archives	17	26%
	B3: Electronic records, digital archives	43	66%
	B4: Practicum/internship/field work/capstone	65	100%
C: Allied profession courses	C1: Library and information science courses	51	78%
	C2: Information technology, digital libraries	38	58%
	C3: Cultural heritage courses	49	75%
	C4: History courses/liberal arts courses	18	28%

Table 6 displays the course category codes, the number of programs that cover each category, and the percentage of programs that list courses in each of the 14 categories. Coverage ranges widely, from 18% to 100%. Table 7 lists course category coverage from highest to lowest to find out the most-, medium-, and least-covered course categories in the archival curriculum.



Table 7. Course Category Coverage from Highest to Lowest

Coverage Range	Course Category	Coverage Percentage
Coverage above 90%	A1 (introduction to archives)	97%
	B4 (practicum/internship/field work/capstone)	100%
Coverage in the range of 70%	A4 (preservation)	74%
	C1 (library and information science)	78%
	C3 (cultural heritage)	75%
	B3 (electronic records and digital archives)	66%
Coverage from high 50% to 60%	C2 (information technology and digital libraries/humanities)	58%
Coverage from low 50% to high 40%	A3 (arrangement and description)	52%
	A6 (records and information management)	49%
	B1 (advanced topics)	49%
Coverage from high 30% to high 10%	A2 (appraisal)	38%
	A5 (access and outreach)	18%
	B2 (special media)	26%
	C4 (history/liberal arts)	28%

As shown in Table 7, graduate archival education programs tend to include introductory (97%), practicum (100%), preservation (74%), LIS (78%), and cultural heritage (75%) courses. More than half list technology-related courses (66% and 58%). Programs may list additional archival courses such as arrangement and description (52%), records and information management (49%), and other advanced topic courses (49%), but fewer programs feature dedicated courses on appraisal (38%), access and outreach (18%), or special media archives (26%).

Further categorical analysis of course coverage data provides more insight into the archival curriculum. Table 8 displays the coverage percentages from highest to lowest in each category area. Most programs offer at least 1 course category in each of the 3 category areas. In the A category area, the dominant course category is introduction to archives (97%), in B, it is practicum/internship/field work/capstone (100%), and in C, it is likely that LIS programs offer library and information science courses (78%) and that history programs offer history/liberal arts courses (28%). If we expand our scope to include two or three course categories in each category area, however, the percentage of programs that cover those course categories declines to between 50% and 70%. In other words, the more categories in each area that are required, the fewer the number of programs that can meet the requirements. The coverage percentage over the number of course categories provides important

information not only for considering programs’ conformance to GPAS, but also for weighing GPAS’s overall utility.

**Table 8. Coverage Percentage from Highest to Lowest in Each Category Area**

Category Area	Course Category	Coverage Percentage
A: Foundation archival courses	Introduction to archives (A1)	97%
	Preservation (A4)	74%
	Arrangement and description (A3)	52%
	Records and information management (A6)	49%
	Appraisal (A2)	38%
	Access and outreach (A5)	18%
B: Advanced/specialized archival courses	Practicum/internship/field work/capstone (B4)	100%
	Electronic records, digital archives, digital curation and preservation, etc. (B3)	66%
	Advanced topic courses (archival history, cultural memory, ethics, etc.) (B1)	49%
	Special media archives (photographic archives, AV archives, etc.) (B2)	26%
C: Allied profession courses	Library and information science courses (C1)	78%
	Cultural heritage courses (C3)	75%
	Information technology, data science (C2)	58%
	History courses/liberal arts courses (C4)	28%

GRADUATE ARCHIVAL EDUCATION CURRICULA AND PROGRAM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Though suggestive, course category information does not present a complete picture of each program’s archival curriculum. Therefore, we calculated the credit-hour coverage of the courses in each category (see Table 9). This way, we present each program’s archival curriculum not only in the context of course categories, but also in the context of overall degree credit requirements.

Thirty-five programs (54%) require students to complete 36 credit hours. The rest of the programs represent about 20 types of requirements: credit hours range from 39 (6 programs) to 48 (4 programs) to 30 (3 programs) to 40 (2 programs) to 31, 32, 37, 38, 45, 46, 52, 54, 56, and 63 (1 program each); 42 and 72 units (1 program each); 8.0 FCEs (1 program), 30 s.h. (1 program), and 58 quarter hours (1 program).

Table 9. Master’s Degree Credit-Hour Requirements

Degree Requirements	Number of Programs (Total: 65)
36 credit hours	35 programs
39 credit hours	6 programs
48 credit hours	4 programs
30 credit hours	3 programs
40 credit hours	2 programs
Credit hours: 31, 32, 37, 38, 45, 46, 52, 54, 56, and 63; units 42 and 72; 8.0 FCEs; 30 s.h.; 58 quarter hours	1 program each (15 in total)

We broke down each program’s total required credit hours into course categories as follows. First, key archival courses are counted in the archival curriculum as degree requirements. Second, the number of credit hours for required core courses are recorded as many as each program requires. Third, credit hours for other categories are recorded as needed to account for the total degree credit hours (or other units). The desideratum is to provide a balanced distribution of credit hours across the three categories that highlights the degree requirements (total credits plus core course credits) as well as archival curriculum requirements (foundation archival courses plus advanced/specialized archival courses).

Credit-hour distribution across the checklist course categories helps clarify the attributes of each program’s archival curriculum. However, the credit-hour numbers supplied in each category are program specific. To enable cross-program comparison, we calculated the percentage of each program’s coverage (in credit hours) of categories A, B, and C. Table 10 displays each program’s total credit hours (second column), category credit hours in number (third column), and category credit hours as percentages (fourth column).

Differing percentages between Category A (foundation archival courses) and Category B (advanced/specialized archival courses) reveal variation among programs. Thirty-one programs (48%) offer more credit hours in A than in B, 17 programs (26%) offer an equal number of credit hours in A and B, and 17 programs (26%) offer more credit hours in B than in A. Category C, finally, covers supplementary/allied professions courses; it suggests broader curriculum differences among the programs.

According to the percentage calculation data, the 65 programs are almost exactly divided in Category C (i.e., nonarchival courses): 32 programs devote 50% or fewer credit hours to nonarchives courses, and 33 programs devote more than 50% (see Table 11). For comparative purposes, Table 11 also shows the coverage of nonarchival credit-hour coverage for all programs.

Table 10. Program Degree Credit Coverage by Number and by Percentage

Program #	Degree Credits	Category Credit Hours by Number			Category Credit Hours by Percentage		
		A	B	C	A (%)	B (%)	C (%)
1	36	15	9	12	42	25	33
2	31	9	4	18	29	13	58
3	36	6	15	15	17	41.5	41.5
4	48	18	30	0	38	62	0
5	42 units	9	12	21	21	29	50
6	72 units	16	32	24	22	44	34
7	40	10	6	24	25	15	60
8	58 quarter hours	6	9	43	10	16	74
9	36	9	6	21	25	17	58
10	39	3	9	27	8	23	69
11	36	18	18	0	50	50	0
12	39	12	12	15	31	31	38
13	36	9	9	18	25	25	50
14	54	9	9	36	17	17	66
15	40	16	16	8	40	40	20
16	36	9	3	24	25	8	67
17	39	9	9	21	23	23	54
18	36	6	9	21	17	25	58
19	36	12	3	21	34	8	58
20	36	3	6	27	8	17	75
21	36	15	3	18	42	8	50
22	36	18	9	9	50	25	25
23	30	6	9	15	20	30	50
24	36	15	9	12	42	25	33
25	48	6	18	24	12	38	50
26	36	9	9	18	25	25	50
27	36	6	6	24	17	17	66
28	36	6	5	25	17	14	69
29	39	9	6	24	23	15	62
30	36	9	9	18	25	25	50
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
31	30 s.h.	6	6	18	20	20	60
32	36	12	3	21	33	9	58

Table 10. (continued)

Program #	Degree Credits	Category Credit Hours by Number			Category Credit Hours by Percentage		
		A	B	C	A (%)	B (%)	C (%)
33	48	15	6	27	31	13	56
34	36	6	6	24	17	17	66
35	36	9	6	21	25	17	58
36	36	12	9	15	33	25	42
37	32	12	12	8	37.5	37.5	25
38	36	9	9	18	25	25	50
39	36	12	6	18	33	17	50
40	36	6	3	27	17	8	75
41	36	12	6	18	33	17	50
42	36	6	3	27	17	8	75
43	36	6	3	27	17	8	75
44	37	12	10	15	32	27	41
45	38	9	5	24	24	13	63
46	36	15	3	18	42	8	50
47	8.0 FCEs	3.0	3.0	2.0	37.5	37.5	25
48	36	12	3	21	33.5	8.5	58
49	45	6	6	33	13.5	13.5	73
50	36	12	6	18	33	17	50
51	30	3	9	18	10	30	60
52	30	3	6	21	10	20	70
53	48	9	15	24	19	31	50
54	52	12	22	18	23	42	35
55	36	6	3	27	17	8	75
56	46	12	9	25	26	20	54
57	36	9	6	21	25	17	58
58	36	15	3	18	42	8	50
59	39	9	9	21	23	23	54
60	36	6	6	24	17	17	66
61	36	9	18	9	25	50	25
62	63	6	13	44	10	20	70
63	56	24	16	16	42	29	29
64	39	12	13	14	31	33	36
65	36	18	6	12	50	16	34

Table 11. Nonarchival Credit Hour Coverage

Nonarchival Credit-Hour Coverage (%)	Number of Programs and Percentage (%)		Nonarchival Credit-Hour Coverage (%)
50% or lower	32 (49%)	2 (3%)	0%
		6 (9%)	20%–30%
		10 (15%)	30%–40%
		14 (22%)	50%
Higher than 50%	33 (51%)	12 (18.5%)	Low to high 50%
		12 (18.5%)	Low to high 60%
		9 (14%)	Low to mid 70%

For the 32 programs that offer 50% or fewer nonarchival courses, 2 programs (4, 11), both master of archival studies (MAS) degrees, offer no credit-hour coverage in Category C (supplementary/allied). In other words, all required credit hours can be satisfied through foundation or specialized archives courses.

Six programs (15, 22, 37, 47, 61, 63<sup>83</sup>) offer less than one-third of their total credit hours in Category C. These programs feature robust course coverage in both A and B (foundation and advanced/specialized courses). Four of them are affiliated with LIS programs with required LIS core courses, and 2 of them are affiliated with history programs with required or elective history courses.

Ten programs (1, 3, 6, 12, 24, 36, 44, 54, 64, 65) offer more than one-third but less than half of their credit hours in nonarchival courses. All except 1 are associated with LIS programs (the outlier is associated with an information science program). These programs generally maintain a balanced archival curriculum with archival credit coverage (Categories A and B) higher than nonarchival courses. At the same time, they leave a greater number of credit hours for allied profession (Category C) courses.

Finally, 14 programs (5, 13, 21, 23, 25, 26, 30, 38, 39, 41, 46, 50, 53, 58) split their course credit coverage equally between archival and nonarchival courses. In other words, after all archival course credits are satisfied, the curriculum still has room for half of its degree credit hours to cover Category C (allied profession) courses. All but two are affiliated with LIS programs.

For the 33 programs that dedicate more than 50% of their degree credits to nonarchival courses, coverage ranges from 54% to 75%. Twelve programs fall in the range of low to high 50%, 12 programs in the range of low to high 60%, and 9 programs in the range of low to mid 70%. Of these 33 programs, two-thirds (22 programs) are affiliated with library and information science programs, and one-third are affiliated with history (10) or liberal studies (1) programs. The more course credit hours devoted to Category C courses, the fewer that remain for archival

foundation or specialized courses. For some programs, this limitation may stem from many credit hours for required core courses, which are usually not archival. Paradoxically, then, although some programs list more archival courses in their curriculum, to meet degree requirements, students must take required core courses that leave them few credit hours to take those archival courses.

## Discussion

This research examined the host programs for graduate archival education, the types of courses programs listed, those courses' conformance with GPAS, the implications of programs' conforming or failing to conform to GPAS, and the potential uses of our checklist as a self-study tool.

### HOST PROGRAMS FOR GRADUATE ARCHIVAL EDUCATION

LIS programs host nearly three-quarters (74%; 48 of 65) of graduate archival education programs. History programs host another 21.5% (14). Therefore, just as Wallace and Cox et al. noted in 2000 and 2001, respectively, so does graduate archival education remain deeply embedded in library and information science two decades later—unprecedentedly so.<sup>84</sup> LIS programs housed in iSchools (57%; 37 of 65) dominate the graduate archival education landscape.

### TYPES OF COURSES CURRENTLY LISTED BY GRADUATE ARCHIVAL PROGRAMS

It remains difficult to compare findings across studies given their inconsistent sampling methods and often unspecified coding procedures. Adding to this, program turnover remains considerable. The 1997–1998 “Directory of Archival Education” listed 42 programs; the 2022 DAE listed 68 (10 programs were dropped since 1997–1998, and 36 were added) (see Appendix B). Because of these factors, conclusions about changes in course listings over time must remain provisional.

All the same, our findings may fruitfully be juxtaposed with those of O'Toole and of Bastian and Yakel.<sup>85</sup> First, nearly all programs in our study (97%) list an introduction to archives (A1) course. All 37 programs examined by O'Toole listed an introductory course, as did all 62 of those examined by Bastian and Yakel. Second, 38% of our sample's programs address appraisal (A2). This is a remarkable increase from both O'Toole (8.1%) and Bastian and Yakel (12.9%). Third, more than half (52%) of our sample's programs list arrangement and description (A3). This, too, marks a substantial increase from O'Toole (5.4%) or Bastian and Yakel (40.3%). Fourth, nearly three-quarters (74%) of our sample's programs list preservation



(A4). This accords with O'Toole (70.3%) and Bastian and Yakel (74.2%). Fifth, less than one-fifth (18%) of our sample's programs list access and outreach (A5). This nonetheless represents a marked increase over O'Toole (0%). Sixth, nearly half of our sample's programs (49%) list records and information management (A6). This contrasts with O'Toole (62.2%) but represents an increase over Bastian and Yakel (45.3%). Seventh, nearly two-thirds of our sample's programs (66%) list electronic records and digital archives (B3). Given the concern voiced by earlier scholars over this area, our findings, which indicate a marked increase in coverage since O'Toole (automation or electronic records [29.7%]) and Bastian and Yakel (electronic records [22.6%]), appear propitious. Eighth, all 65 programs list an experiential learning component (practicum, field experience, internship, or capstone project) (B4). This represents an increase since O'Toole (91.9%) and Bastian and Yakel (83.9%).

Overall, our analysis suggests notable graduate archival education curriculum progress in appraisal, arrangement and description, and electronic records and digital archives coverage.

## COURSES' CONFORMANCE WITH GPAS AND IMPLICATIONS

SAA guidelines for graduate archival curricula evolved from a three-course model in 1977 to a full master's program model. As a purportedly community-based professional standard, the most recent version of GPAS (2016) reflects this increased prescriptiveness. GPAS sets forth "minimum standards in terms of mission, curriculum, faculty, and infrastructure," even though it lacks enforcement mechanisms and provides no resources for programs seeking to comply.<sup>86</sup>

Our data indicate varied degrees of GPAS conformance. The GPAS curriculum centers core and complementary archival knowledge.<sup>87</sup> To ensure adequate coverage, GPAS specifies that "a master's-level archival program should have a minimum of eighteen (18) semester hours or equivalent devoted exclusively to core archival knowledge, including practical experience. Remaining credits can be in areas of complementary knowledge or electives."<sup>88</sup> Since many programs reviewed in this study require 36 credit hours, 18 semester hours equal fully half of the necessary credit hours.

Considered in the aggregate, existing graduate archival course listings conform well to GPAS. This perhaps speaks for the value of GPAS as an overall community-based framework. More important, however, individual programs' conformance to GPAS varies greatly. Fewer than half of the programs in our sample conform to GPAS's curriculum recommendations. Of the 65 programs analyzed, only 2 offer a full master of archival studies degree. Instead, most of the programs offer diverse library and information science degrees, and some of them offer history or liberal arts degrees. In practice, archival curriculum GPAS conformance rates vary from 25% to 100%.

Our findings echo Ericson, who found that fewer than half the programs he examined in 1978 met SAA's 1977 guidelines, and Benoit and Force, who determined that 37% of the archival programs they scrutinized failed to meet the GPAS's recommendation of 18 credit hours.<sup>89</sup> This raises serious concerns not only about the alignment of GPAS with individual programs' archival curricula, but about the usefulness of GPAS overall.

Each conformance level, though, may represent a uniquely situated archival curriculum model with its own merits and demerits. For example, full archival coverage programs offer most foundation archival courses; they also cover most advanced/specialized courses. But such curricula provide few options for students to take allied profession courses (defined in GPAS as supplementary to the archival profession). Programs affiliated with LIS or history may provide students with a broad range of professional skills but require nonarchival core courses, which effectively reduces credit hours for archival courses. GPAS may therefore need to articulate flexible, multilevel conformance guidelines. In other words, the sheer variety of graduate programs that offer archival education calls into question the use of a single, rigid curriculum model such as the current version of GPAS.

Our data show GPAS conformance in terms of course category or credit-hour coverage. In each of the course category areas (A: foundation archival courses; B: advanced/specialized archival courses; C: allied profession courses), most programs cover 1 or 2 course categories. If, for example, GPAS stipulated only 1 course in each of the 3 areas, nearly all programs would meet the requirement (97% for Category A, 100% for Category B, and 100% [both LIS and history programs] for Category C). In contrast, if 2 course categories are required, between two-thirds and three-quarters of programs (74% for Category A, 66% for Category B, and 75% for Category C) meet the requirement. In terms of credit hours, moreover, if 50% of program credit hours are allocated to archival courses (Categories A and B), almost half of the programs (49%) meet the requirement. The number of programs would increase to 67% if the credit-hour requirement decreased to 40%, and to 86% if the credit-hour requirement decreased to 30%.

Ultimately, our research identifies the archival programs that, on the one hand, fulfill GPAS desiderata and, on the other hand, fall short. The number of programs that cover all GPAS components remains tiny (2 out of 65), which implies that very few graduate archival programs can adopt a full MAS model. Rather, most programs in this study encompass diverse core (foundation plus advanced/specialized) and supplementary course combinations. Many range between 30% and 70% conformance.

Not only do most programs in this study show a highly variable degree of conformance, but more than half fail to meet the GPAS's stipulation of 18 credit hours. This variability allows flexible curriculum models but also calls into question GPAS's relevance and usefulness. That is, these programs' failure to meet GPAS's

standards does not necessarily indicate any shortcoming(s) on their part. Rather, we may need to question the relevance and utility of the current iteration of GPAS as a professional tool. To this point, in 2016, the Committee on Education claimed, “To ensure that all perspectives are taken into account as revisions are presented for approval, the CoE will add to its standard procedure a distribution to all members with a call for comment.”<sup>90</sup> But the 2016 draft earned only 2 comments, 1 from a practitioner and 1 from an educator. This apparent lack of broad input from educators and practitioners hardly inspires confidence in GPAS’s validity.

### THE CURRICULUM CHECKLIST AS A SELF-STUDY TOOL

Our reservations about GPAS’s utility aside, our framework facilitates comparison of programs with GPAS curriculum requirements, other programs’ course listings, and program degree credit-hour requirements. The checklist template populates the first 2 columns with categorical information (3 category areas and 14 course categories) and leaves the third column for programs to complete based on their course listings and degree requirements (see Table 12). By placing a check in the third column if one or more courses are listed in a given category, each program may assess its course listings against GPAS curriculum components and other programs’ category coverage percentages. Appendix C provides checklists for 2 programs. Based on course category coverages, one program lists a more robust archival curriculum and the other program offers more cultural heritage courses, even though both are affiliated with LIS programs.

In the second column, the curriculum checklist includes the course category coverage in terms of percentage. Since this percentage reveals how many programs offer courses for each category, programs can leverage this information for self-assessment. For instance, if a program offers an introductory archival course, it is among the vast majority (97%) of programs that do so. If a program offers an audiovisual archival course, by contrast, it is but one of a quarter of programs (26%) to do so.

The third column of the checklist records a program’s total credit hours as well as each course category’s credit-hour breakdown. As shown in the sample checklists (see Appendix C), each archival foundation course usually comprises 3 credit hours. However, library and information science courses may take as many as 9 to 12 credit hours—almost a third of the total credit hours required by the program degree. Showing the credit weight of each course category as well as the number of course categories covered permits a more nuanced representation of a program’s archives curriculum.

Table 12. Checklist Template

SAA Graduate Archival Curriculum Guidelines (2016)			Graduate Archival Course Coverage (Data Source: 65 programs in NA, 2019)			Program Courses and Credits
Core	Materials and Functions	Nature of records and archives	A: Foundation archival courses	Introduction to archives (A1)	97%	# of credits
		Selection, appraisal, and acquisition		Appraisal (A2)	38%	# of credits
		Arrangement and description		Arrangement and description (A3)	52%	# of credits
		Preservation		Preservation (A4)	74%	# of credits
		Reference and access				
		Outreach, instruction, and advocacy		Access and outreach (A5)	18%	# of credits
		Management and administration		Records and information management (A6)	49%	# of credits
		Records and information management		B: Advanced / specialized archival courses	49%	# of credits
	Profession	Digital materials management				
		History of archives and archival profession				
		Records and cultural memory				
	Contextual	Ethics and values				
		Social and cultural systems				
Complementary		Legal and financial systems		Electronic records, digital archives, digital curation and preservation, etc. (B3)	66%	# of credits
				Practicum / internship / field work / capstone (B4)	100%	# of credits
		Information technology	C: Allied profession courses	Library and information science courses (C1)	78%	# of credits
		Conservation		Information technology, digital libraries/humanities (C2)	58%	# of credits
		Research design and execution		Cultural heritage courses (C3)	75%	# of credits
		Organizational theory		History courses/liberal arts courses (C4)	28%	# of credits
		Library and information science				
		Liberal arts and sciences				
		Allied professions				

The checklist may be used for at least 4 purposes. First, programs can use course category coverage and degree credit-hour distribution information to assess their archival curriculum against GPAS. Second, programs may use these data to bolster their requests for resources to administrators. That said, should administrators see their archival programs failing to conform to GPAS, they might decide to eliminate them to conserve scarce resources. Third, programs might post their checklist in the SAA's "Directory of Archival Education" to highlight their strengths or specializations or to facilitate comparison among programs. Finally, since the checklist shows program curriculum listings, it sheds light on current archival education practices and can serve as a tool for GPAS review and revision.

## Conclusion

Through a content analysis of course listings, this research explores the graduate programs that offer archival education, the types of courses they currently list, and the extent to which those courses conform to GPAS stipulations.

The curriculum data analyzed in this study do not converge on a single archival curriculum model such as that advanced by GPAS. Instead, they indicate differing—at times dramatically—levels of GPAS conformance, whether in terms of course category or credit-hour coverage, each of which has its merits and demerits. The diversified nature of archival education in both LIS and history programs militates against programs' conforming to idealized and neatly pigeonholed criteria developed and vetted by relatively few stakeholders.

By identifying and then mapping current archival program courses to GPAS curriculum components, this study helps us to understand the current state of graduate archival education, suggests questions for GPAS review and revision, and encourages further research on archival education. We hope this research sets a foundation for future longitudinal study to monitor trends in the graduate archival education curriculum and therefore to facilitate GPAS review and revision.

Future research might explore 5 questions. First, what might programs' goal statements, course syllabi, educators, or students reveal about the current robustness and coherence of graduate archival education? Second, if many programs continue not to meet GPAS's recommendations, should GPAS be revamped to be more broadly useful? Indeed, is the 2016 GPAS yet another in a lengthy succession of "guidelines" (1977, 1988, 1994, 2002, 2005, 2011) doomed, in effect, to irrelevance? Third, few tenured or tenure-track educators have participated in GPAS development or review; what might their input and feedback suggest for future efforts? Fourth, what critiques might practitioners offer about how their education has impacted their job performance? Fifth, this study, like others preceding it, focuses on course listings, and listings drawn from programs' websites, which presupposes those websites are up to date. How might actual course offerings further

illuminate the current state of graduate archival education? Sixth, given the varying level of courses listed, might programs find ways to collaborate through consortia or resource sharing?

In 1968, H. G. Jones concluded, “It is time for us to stop complaining and get to work.”<sup>91</sup> His words remain prophetic.

Appendix A: Graduate Archival Program Curriculum Checklist Data for 65 Programs

Programs	Degree Credits	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4
1	36	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	31	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓				✓
3	36	✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	48	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5	42	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
6	72		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7	40	✓			✓						✓				✓
8	58	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9	36	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10	39	✓								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11	36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
12	39	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
13	36	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14	54	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
15	40	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
16	36	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
17	39	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓		✓	
18	36				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
19	36	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
20	36	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	
21	36	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
22	36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
23	30	✓		✓						✓	✓				✓
24	36	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
25	48	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
26	36	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
27	36	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
28	36	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
29	39	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
30	36	✓			✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓
31	30	✓			✓						✓			✓	✓
32	36	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓			
33	48	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		
34	36	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	



Programs	Degree Credits	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4
35	36	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
36	36	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
37	32	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓				✓
38	36	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
39	36	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
40	36	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	
41	36	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
42	36	✓					✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
43	36	✓		✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	
44	37	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
45	38	✓			✓		✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
46	36	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
47	8.0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
48	36	✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	
49	45	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	
50	36	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓		✓	
51	30	✓						✓			✓			✓	✓
52	30	✓						✓			✓				✓
53	48	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
54	52	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
55	36	✓			✓						✓	✓		✓	
56	46	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
57	36	✓			✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓
58	36	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
59	39	✓			✓		✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
60	36	✓									✓				✓
61	36	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
62	63	✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
63	56	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
64	39	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
65	36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Total		63	25	34	48	12	32	32	17	43	65	51	38	49	18
Percentage [%]		97 %	38 %	52 %	74 %	18 %	49 %	49 %	26 %	66 %	100 %	78 %	58 %	75 %	28 %

Appendix B: Directory of Archival Education, 1997–1998  
versus 2022

1997–1998	2022
Auburn University	Auburn University
	University of Alabama
University of South Alabama	
	University of Arizona
University of Arkansas	
	San Jose State University
University of California, Los Angeles	University of California, Los Angeles
University of California–Riverside	University of California–Riverside
Colorado State University	
	University of Denver
Catholic University	Catholic University
	Johns Hopkins University
	University of South Florida
	Clayton State University
	University of Hawaii
	University of Iowa
Loyola University of Chicago	Loyola University of Chicago
Rosary College (Dominican University)	Rosary College (Dominican University)
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
	Indiana University
	Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
	Emporia State University
University of Kentucky	University of Kentucky
	Louisiana State University
University of Maryland	University of Maryland
Simmons College	Simmons College
University of Massachusetts–Boston	University of Massachusetts–Boston
University of Michigan	University of Michigan
Wayne State University	Wayne State University
	St. Catherine’s University

1997–1998	2022
	Southeast Missouri State University
	University of Missouri
	University of Southern Mississippi
Rutgers University	Rutgers University
New Mexico State University	
Long Island University	Long Island University
	New York University Department of Cinema Studies
New York University	New York University
Pratt Institute	Pratt Institute
	Queen's College, CUNY
St. John's University	St. John's University
	University of Buffalo
Syracuse University	Syracuse University
University at Albany	University at Albany
	East Carolina University
	North Carolina Central University
North Carolina State University	
	University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill
	University of North Carolina–Greensboro
	Kent State University
	University of Akron
Wright State University	Wright State University
	University of Oklahoma
	Clarion University
	Drexel University
Duquesne University	
	Shippensburg University
Temple University	Temple University
University of Pittsburgh	University of Pittsburgh
University of South Carolina	University of South Carolina
	East Tennessee State University
	Middle Tennessee State University

1997–1998	2022
	Texas State University
Texas Tech University	
	University of North Texas
University of Texas–Arlington	University of Texas–Arlington
University of Texas–Austin	University of Texas–Austin
	University of Washington
Western Washington University	Western Washington University
University of Wisconsin–Madison	University of Wisconsin–Madison
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
University of Wyoming	
University of British Columbia	University of British Columbia
University of Manitoba	
University of Toronto	University of Toronto
University of Western Ontario	
	McGill University
University of Montreal	University of Montreal

Appendix C: Two Sample Curriculum Checklists (2019–2020)

Table 1: Archival Curriculum Checklist: X University

SAA Graduate Archival Curriculum Guidelines (2016)			Graduate Archival Course Coverage (Data Source: 65 programs in NA, 2019)				X University (36) Credits
Core	Materials and Functions	Nature of records and archives	A: Foundation archival courses	Introduction to archives (A1)	97%	✓	3 credits
		Selection, appraisal, and acquisition		Appraisal (A2)	38%	✓	3 credits
		Arrangement and description		Arrangement and description (A3)	52%	✓	3 credits
		Preservation		Preservation (A4)	74%	✓	3 credits
		Reference and access					
		Outreach, instruction, and advocacy					
		Management and administration					
		Records and information management		Access and outreach (A5)	18%	✓	3 credits
		Digital materials management		Records and information management (A6)	49%	✓	3 credits
	Profession	History of archives and archival profession	B: Advanced / specialized archival courses	Advanced topic courses (archival history, cultural memory, ethics, etc.) (B1)	49%		3-9 credits
		Records and cultural memory		Special media archives (photographic archives, AV archives, etc.) (B2)	26%	✓	0-3 credits
		Ethics and values		Electronic records, digital archives, digital curation and preservation, etc. (B3)	66%	✓	3 credits
	Contextual	Social and cultural systems		Practicum / internship / field work / capstone (B4)	100%	✓	0-3 credits
		Legal and financial systems					
Complementary	Information technology	C: Allied profession courses		Library and information science courses (C1)	78%	✓	9+ credits
	Conservation		Information technology, digital libraries/humanities (C2)	58%			
	Research design and execution		Cultural heritage courses (C3)	75%	✓	0-3 credits	
	Organizational theory		History courses/liberal arts courses (C4)	28%			
	Library and information science						
	Liberal arts and sciences						
	Allied professions						

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Table 2: Archival Curriculum Checklist: Y University

SAA Graduate Archival Curriculum Guidelines (2016)			Graduate Archival Course Coverage (Data Source: 65 programs in NA, 2019)			Y University (36) Credits	
Core	Materials and Functions	Nature of records and archives	A: Foundation archival courses	Introduction to archives (A1)	97%	✓	3 credits
		Selection, appraisal, and acquisition		Appraisal (A2)	38%		
		Arrangement and description		Arrangement and description (A3)	52%		
		Preservation					
		Reference and access		Preservation (A4)	74%	✓	3 credits
		Outreach, instruction, and advocacy		Access and outreach (A5)	18%	✓	3 credits
		Management and administration		Records and information management (A6)	49%		
		Digital materials management					
	Profession	History of archives and archival profession	B: Advanced / specialized archival courses	Advanced topic courses (archival history, cultural memory, ethics, etc.) (B1)	49%		
		Records and cultural memory		Special media archives (photographic archives, AV archives, etc.) (B2)	26%		
		Ethics and values					
	Contextual	Social and cultural systems		Electronic records, digital archives, digital curation and preservation, etc. (B3)	66%	✓	3-6 credits
		Legal and financial systems		Practicum / internship / field work / capstone (B4)	100%	✓	0-3 credits
Complementary		Information technology	C: Allied profession courses	Library and information science courses (C1)	78%	✓	12+ credits
		Conservation					
		Research design and execution		Information technology, digital libraries/humanities (C2)	58%	✓	3 credits
		Organizational theory		Cultural heritage courses (C3)	75%	✓	6+ credits
		Library and information science					
		Liberal arts and sciences		History courses/liberal arts courses (C4)	28%		
		Allied professions					

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The completion of this project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (RE-246422-OLS-20).
- <sup>2</sup> Society of American Archivists, "Graduate Archival Education (GAE) Subcommittee," <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/graduate-archival-education-gae-subcommittee>.
- <sup>3</sup> "Society of American Archivists Council Meeting," May 11, 2016, 11, <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0516-V-D%20EdGuidelines.pdf>, captured at <https://perma.cc/Y6YY-J5LW>.
- <sup>4</sup> GAES members 2017–2018: Martin Olliff (chair), Alex H. Poole (vice chair/chair elect), Jeannette Bastian, Gailyn Bopp, Cecilia Salvatore, and Jane Zhang; GAES members 2018–2019: Alex H. Poole (chair), Jane Zhang (vice chair/chair-elect), Ed Benoit, Gailyn Bopp, Akila Ruffin, Cecilia Salvatore, and Angela White; GAES members 2019–2020: Jane Zhang (chair), Edward Benoit (vice chair/chair-elect), Jessica Newell, Arlene Schmuland, Ashley Todd-Diaz, and Angela White. Jared Johnson served as an RA from 2018 to 2019 (funded by a Catholic University of America Research Assistant Grant). The authors thank GAES members for help with the original data collection.
- <sup>5</sup> Richard C. Berner, "Archival Education and Training in the United States, 1937 to Present," *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 22, nos. 1–2 (1981): 14, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40322678>; Terry Eastwood, "Nurturing Archival Education in the University," *American Archivist* 51, no. 3 (1988): 235, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.51.3.qgk71605x660gm85>; James W. Geary, "A Fading Relationship: Library Schools and Preappointment Archival Education since 1973," *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 20, no. 1 (1979): 26, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40322861>.
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- <sup>8</sup> Accreditation constitutes "a process by which an institution or educational program is reviewed and approved as meeting the standards of a professional association or governmental program." William Maher, "Contexts for Understanding Professional Certification: Opening Pandora's Box?," *American Archivist* 51, no. 4 (1988): 410, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.51.4.h17366pq2550l482>.
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- <sup>19</sup> Luciana Duranti, "The Society of American Archivists and Graduate Archival Education: A Sneak Preview of Future Directions," *American Archivist* 63, no. 2 (2000): 239, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.63.2.l417x9l3840qn07l>.
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- <sup>21</sup> Cox et al., "Archival Education," 186; Richard J. Cox, "The Society of American Archivists and Graduate Education: Meeting at the Crossroads," *American Archivist* 63, no. 2 (2000): 374, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.63.2.r64t27100718121r>.
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- <sup>26</sup> Benoit and Force, "One Size Does Not Fit All," 41–42.
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- 51 McCrank, "Present Developments in Archival Education," 16.
- 52 McCrank, "Present Developments in Archival Education," 16.
- 53 McCrank, "Present Developments in Archival Education," 16–17.
- 54 Ericson, "Abolish the Recent," 27.
- 55 Ericson, "Abolish the Recent," 27.
- 56 Miller, "The SAA as Sisyphus," 231.
- 57 Society of American Archivists, "Education Directory," *SAA Newsletter*, March 1983, [http://files.archivists.org/periodicals/Archival-Outlook/Back-Issues-1973-2003/saa\\_newsletter\\_1983\\_03.pdf](http://files.archivists.org/periodicals/Archival-Outlook/Back-Issues-1973-2003/saa_newsletter_1983_03.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/E344-VQUJ>.
- 58 Timothy Ericson, "Professional Associations and Archival Education: A Different Role, or a Different Theater?," *American Archivist* 51, no. 3 (1988): 305, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.51.3.q26157412364n745>. These five dozen peripheral courses embraced historical preservation, history of the book, museum management, internships in public history, oral history, and documentary editing.
- 59 Ericson, "Professional Associations and Archival Education," 303–5.
- 60 Ericson, "Abolish the Recent," 30.
- 61 Ericson, "Abolish the Recent," 28.
- 62 O'Toole, "The Archival Curriculum," 106, 104.
- 63 Yet O'Toole dismissed these as effectively illegitimate—viz., they lacked reading and discussion, research papers, or exams.
- 64 O'Toole, "The Archival Curriculum," 106.
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- <sup>75</sup> Bastian and Yakel, "Towards the Development of an Archival Core Curriculum," 150.
- <sup>76</sup> Benoit and Force, "One Size Does Not Fit All."
- <sup>77</sup> Benoit and Force, "One Size Does Not Fit All," 35, 39.
- <sup>78</sup> Benoit and Force, "One Size Does Not Fit All," 38.
- <sup>79</sup> Benoit and Force, "One Size Does Not Fit All," 42.
- <sup>80</sup> Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles, London: SAGE, 2013), 1, 24.
- <sup>81</sup> Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, 24.
- <sup>82</sup> First, course titles and/or descriptions suggesting the same or similar content (either exact or near-exact wording) were grouped together. For example, we coded "Introduction to Archives" and "Archives and Manuscripts" as "Introduction" courses. Second, courses sharing similar characteristics were grouped together, for example, special media archives, LIS foundation courses, and so forth. Third, based on course descriptions, we separated archives courses from nonarchives courses. Fourth, we coded traditional archival foundation courses (appraisal, arrangement and description, etc.) as one subgroup, differentiated from specialized archival courses. Fifth, we coded library and information sciences courses and history and other liberal courses as separate subgroups (both with multiple sub-subgroups). Overall, we relied on established professional understanding of key archival functions to inform our coding; GAES members discussed and came to consensus on any coding questions. That said, some may quibble with some of our decisions, for example including "records management" as a foundation subgroup and "digital archives" as a specialized subgroup.
- <sup>83</sup> One university (63) discontinued its archival program in 2020–2021 due to its sole tenure-track faculty member's retirement.
- <sup>84</sup> David Wallace, "Survey of Archives and Records Management Graduate Students at Ten Universities in the United States and Canada," *American Archivist* 63, no. 2 (2000): 287, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.63.2.72050g01j3v858j1>; Cox et al., "Educating Archivists in Library and Information Science Schools," 229.
- <sup>85</sup> Bastian and Yakel, "'Are We There Yet?'; O'Toole, "The Archival Curriculum."
- <sup>86</sup> Society of American Archivists, "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies," 2016, <https://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/graduate/gpas>.
- <sup>87</sup> Society of American Archivists, "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies."
- <sup>88</sup> Society of American Archivists, "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies."
- <sup>89</sup> Ericson, "Abolish the Recent"; Benoit and Force, "One Size Does Not Fit All."
- <sup>90</sup> "Society of American Archivists Council Meeting."
- <sup>91</sup> Jones, "Archival Training in American Universities, 1938–68," 154.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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