Mapping international core archives curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the possibilities for international common core curricula across archival education programs. Three universities' existing but independently developed curricula are analyzed to identify common core content. The development of the programs over time is also described noting some of the influences that have contributed to the current content of the three programs. A survey of the views of archival educators on the possibilities and the barriers to developing and sharing courses internationally was also conducted. Some attempts to cooperatively develop shared courses across international borders are also described; demonstrating that collaboration between archival educators is in progress.

Keywords Archival education • Curriculum research • Professional education • Masters programs • International cooperation

Prologue

This paper arose from discussions among the three authors from three different archival education programs about developing a joint course on international archives that would present a range of national traditions, policies, and approaches to managing and preserving archives, together with the cultural and legislative frameworks that have shaped those traditions. Our discussions led us to consider what archival education programs across the globe might have in common as a first step towards imagining what an international archival education might look like. As representatives of our three archival programs, we have been working together and discussing archival issues for several years and the idea of trying to capture what we hold in common, and where that might lead took shape. The gathering of international archival educators at the 3rd Asia-Pacific SAE Conference on Archival Education in Beijing offered an opportunity to further explore our ideas with our colleagues.

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Introduction

A presentation at the DLM Forum[1] in 2005 suggested that, "archival education must adapt professionals to changes, but also be an agent of change itself" (Guercio 2005, 1). The presenter, Maria Guercio, laid out a case for international archival education within the context of rapidly evolving digital innovation, of increasing multi-disciplinarity and of the subsequent need to develop universally accepted standards and policies. The new competencies required for managing records and data were not confined to any one nation, she argued, but spanned the world. She noted that, "the records systems, characterized for the last two centuries by a systematic knowledge, stable methodologies and well-developed tools are today at the center of a general transformation which requires at any level the existence of specific, frequently updated and more variegate skills" (Guercio 2005, 3).

Addressing a different information audience a year earlier, the director of a midwestern United States Library and Information school named 'globalization' as one of three critical competencies for information professionals in the twenty-first century. By globalization he meant both an awareness of the inter-connectedness of nations and peoples as well as an understanding of "the vast differences in cultural and economic realities" (Elmborg 2008, 499). Globalization offers a dual vision that includes appreciation of distinct communities and cultures on the one hand and recognition of their interrelationships on the other. The director further suggested combining globalization with his other two competencies, technology and critical thinking, into "one coherent vision – a whole vision of what it means to work as an information professional in the 21st century" (Elmborg 2008, 504).

A 'coherent vision', with globalization and technology at its center, combined with the increasing evolving and interconnected nature of record making and keeping across national borders suggests the need for an archival educational paradigm that both recognizes and speaks to national and cultural differences and acknowledges and fosters areas of shared international interests. Archivists must learn to negotiate, function and interact between two parallel paths, one documenting the culturally and nationally specific, the other operating within a universal technological environment where records and data are created across cultures and nations, time and space.

It was the recognition of these parallel paths that initially inspired three archives and records programs in information science schools in three different countries to come together around their own converging interests in the feasibility of international archival education. Their experiences, while still in the formative stages, suggested a wider examination of this issue. This paper is a preliminary investigation into the viability of an international archival education, exploring both the advantages and the disadvantages as well as the potentials for synergy. It explores this synergy through three different but related lenses: analyzing responses to a questionnaire given to participants in a 2013 ICA/SAE conference presentation as well as 'on-the-spot' responses to the presentation itself; mapping the curriculum of all three programs to gain insights into those topics that can be internationalized and those that are more localized; and utilizing an example of a syllabi developed and to be piloted and delivered online jointly by faculty in two of the three different programs in two different countries.

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[1] The acronym "DLM" stands for "Document Lifecyle Management". See http://www.dlmforum.eu/

International Archival Education: A Review of the Literature

Conceptualizing international archival education suggests a whole range of potential educational combinations and scenarios requiring varying degrees of joint participation. One instructor may offer an online course to students across multiple programs and venues; students in a program in one country may join a class at a program in another. Students in separate program work together and collaborate in virtual spaces, or students from different programs in different countries attend jointly held online classes around a common topic taught simultaneously by instructors from each program. These are only a few of the possibilities. There are as many options as creativity and technological ingenuity can imagine.

The subject matter for international archival pedagogy could range from creating new cultural and social awareness, to imagining universal archival theory and practice, to understanding archives in a global context, to exploring universal issues such as ethics and social justice, to joining together to examine international standards and policies. But despite the many global issues and the universality of the archival endeavor itself and despite the increasing interest in archival education as manifested in numerous conferences and presentations over the past two decades, an international archival education has not yet developed.

This could be due to a number of reasons. From the burgeoning literature on archival education it is clear that many nations are focused on getting their own educational houses in order (Lybeck 2003; Eastwood 2000). Academic institutions in many countries are often tied to the state in some way and while this offers opportunities for standardization within countries it also mandates that educating to internal archival practices will, of necessity, predominate. In addition, the growing literature from developing countries indicates that they are seeking to establish archival education that speaks directly to their own local needs (Gathegi and Mwathi 2007; Wamukoya and Kemoni 2001). And while differences in archival evolution in countries across the globe suggest that an international and internationally delivered archival education might greatly benefit small under-resourced countries, there is also the concern that this advantage may be counterbalanced by a vital loss of cultural specificity. At the same time, there has been recent movement among the archival educators community to push back against traditional Western archival antecedents and to cast archival education in a more multi- cultural and diverse light, an approach that might address these cultural concerns (Gilliland and White 2010).

Literature on archival education has proliferated in the professional journals over the past two decades concurrently with the development of archival education programs themselves. While the existence of education committees such as SAE within the International Council on Archives would suggest a focus on international education, the literature tends to divide into several more localized categories: discussions of specific programs (Jimerson 2001); discussions of national trends generally including programs at several institutions (Katuu 2009; Johare 2006); survey articles where the discussion is on a particular archives or records topic and where and how it is being taught in a variety of venues, and more generalized discussions of educational needs and trends (Menne-Haritz 2000; Bastian and Yakel 2006).

Although the bulk of the literature considers archival education by country or region, there are indications that international education concerns have been gradually coming into sharper focus over the past decade. Anne Gilliland and her co-authors have written a series of articles on their research into the cultural aspects of archival education. In "Pluralizing the Archival Paradigm: Can Archival Education in Pacific Rim Communities Address the Challenge?," they explore archival education within the

context of the diverse indigenous and minority communities of the Pacific Rim nations suggesting, "a need to develop and deliver culturally sensitive and responsive archival curricula and associated pedagogy inclusive of local and Indigenous knowledge and practices," and one that is also integrated into a paradigm for archival education broadly (Gilliland et al. 2008, 87). In "A global search for universal models of education and training in electronic records management," Rusnah Johare (2007) surveys the records management education programs in Europe and the United Kingdom, analyzing the elements of these programs and exploring how these techniques and strategies can be applied in developing countries.

From a more interdisciplinary perspective, Fernanda Ribiero in "An Integrated Perspective for Professional Education in Libraries, Archives and Museums: A New Paradigm, a New Training Model" (2007) suggests an educational approach that integrates archives, libraries and museums. She writes that "the new information age has given rise to a recent perspective that understands archivistics, librarianship and, in some aspects, museology, as applied disciplines in the area of information science," (Ribiero 2007, 116) noting that this transdisciplinary model has significant implications for education in each of these three areas.

The literature suggests not only a continuing concern with archival education on a national level, but also an increased focus on the international level. In fact it seems to indicate a natural progression, one that was reinforced throughout this entire investigation.

Research Methodology

The authors chose to approach the broad issue of international archival education from three perspectives, each of which might offer different types of insight. A short questionnaire would elicit direct responses to basic questions about the viability as well as the need for international archival education. The mapping of core archives and records courses from different institutions would expose commonalities and differences in course offerings as well as indicating different emphasis and understanding of core archival knowledge. A practical example of a possible course jointly designed and delivered by two institutions in two different countries would illustrate how such an education might be implemented.[2]

The questionnaire, administered to the participants in the SAE Beijing conference, posed four questions: 1. What do you consider to be the 'core content' for an archival education program? 2. Do you think that identifying 'core content' internationally across archival programs is even a goal to work towards? Why or why not? 3. Do you think there is a potential for an online international archives program? What do you see as the obstacles? 4. Do you think there is a need – now or in the future for archivists and records managers with a more developed awareness of and focus on the international dimensions of archival theory and practice? If so, what new skills or education might they need?

The mapping utilized the core curriculums of the archives and records programs at Mid-Sweden University, University College London and Simmons. The joint course in international archives is currently being designed by faculty at UCL and Simmons for online delivery in Spring 2015.

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[2] Program scheduling in the third school prevented its inclusion at this time.

Research Perspective: Questionnaire

The questions were introduced as a component of the presentation of this project at the 2013 SAE Beijing Conference. Responses were solicited at the presentation and were also requested through a questionnaire sent to all participants immediately after the conference. In addition to the discussions recorded at the conference, seven respondents returned the questionnaire. The authors recognize that such a small sample can only be indicative of possible trends and is not necessarily representative of the larger body of archival educators. However, it is important to note that each respondent is an archival educator from a different country where they either direct an archival program or represent it on this ICA/SAE committee. They therefore bring significant expertise and experience to these issues. The following analysis of responses draws both from the questionnaires and from significant feedback from the presentation.

Question #1. What do you consider to be the 'core content' for an archival education program?

Respondents all agreed that an understanding of archival theory and history along with the traditional archival activities – appraisal, arrangement and description, records management, preservation, reference, outreach – was essential, as was electronic record-keeping. But they also added a variety of other knowledge areas. Several identified cross-cultural awareness and an understanding of records issues within a global context. Technology and digital skills were crucial. Diplomatics and paleography were also considered important knowledge areas, particularly by European respondents.

Several responses indicate a lack of distinction between archives and active records in Europe, suggesting that keeping Archives and Records Management together would be necessary in a global curriculum. Responses from Italy and China highlighted how these countries feel that they are differentiated from others, and support much of the literature that suggests countries highly value their own perspectives. Responses from China in particular describe an education that begins earlier, demands practical management and analysis experience and also has a corporate focus.

Question #2. Do you think that identifying 'core content' internationally across archival programs is even a goal to work towards? Why or why not?

All respondents agreed that identifying core content across programs was a worthwhile and reasonable goal, one respondent even pointing out that this was compliant with EU standards that called for creating a "common marketplace and educational space."

They also felt strongly that context, specifically cultural context and consideration for local conditions was essential and that, "any such educational program should be supplemented by knowledge related more specifically to the country in which archivists are supposed to work." One respondent wrote that, "I notice that often in international meetings, people from different professional traditions speak past each other." Core content would help to develop an understanding of what archivists share in common and help towards creating a common understanding of basic archival terms and concepts. It was even suggested that identifying core content would help educational programs overall since even within programs it was difficult to find agreement.

Most responses also seem to agree that harmonization should be a goal because of benefits like common vocabulary, common understanding of core activities, and the overcoming of ethnocentric attitudes. Some suggested that archives, by necessity, need to

follow business and government in making the world smaller and more connected. By stressing the importance of local culture and context, respondents opened up a potentially challenging educational issue, whether, on the one hand, to limit a core international curriculum to subjects without controversy and thus avoid cultural clashes, or on the other hand to make efforts to address all controversies and embrace cultural diversity.

Question #3. Do you think there is a potential for an online international archives program? What do you see as the obstacles?

Respondents all agreed that there was 'enormous' potential for an online international archives program. Sharing expertise across programs was seen as a huge plus. As one respondent commented, "to be able to focus on one's own expertise and call up the expertise of others rather than having to (poorly) re-invent it, frees up the space for innovation and development of new curriculum." In addition, online availability could significantly increase educational options from an economic perspective and might mean that 'anyone can get an archival education, saving the money they would need for travelling and living abroad." Students would graduate with more mobility due to sharing the same basic knowledge and understanding of the profession as well as an increased cultural awareness.

But respondents also noted compelling obstacles that included infrastructural barriers, language, technological capacities, cultural traditions, different university regulations and policies, as well as some of the strictures associated with on-line education such as the loss of face-to-face interaction. However, there was also a strong feeling that many of these may be "obstacles to be overcome rather than major impediments to the proposal."

Question #4. Do you think there is a need – now or in the future – for archivists and records managers with a more developed awareness of and focus on the international dimensions of archival theory and practice? If so, what new skills or education might they need?

All respondents strongly agreed that there is currently a need for international archival education. A number felt that to some extent that need was already being met through educators who were actively involved in collaborative international projects as well as through online classes that attracted international students. However, all agreed that there was much more to be done.

At the same time, as one respondent pointed out, this is also "not about being homogeneous, but about supporting heterogeneous systems and practices." Pooling expertise and creating basic structures "on which layers of context specific customization can then be added," were suggestions for ways of accomplishing this. Globalization as well as the increasing inter-disciplinarity between cultural heritage institutions (i.e. archives, libraries, museums) were also major reasons for the internationalization of archival theory and practice. Some of the skills and affordances needed included cultural sensitivity, personal and social competencies, ability to work in teams, understanding global issues, international placements and student exchanges.

Research Perspective: Mapping Curriculum Across Three Universities

Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College (GSLIS)

Single archives courses were first introduced into GSLIS the early 1980s but archival education did not become a consolidated program track within the library curriculum until the mid-1990's. At that time the archives program followed what was known in the United States as the 'three-course sequence,' (Davis 1988, 283) that generally included an introductory course, a practicum and a seminar. In the late 1990's this track expanded, moving from the three core courses to four with a menu of electives and became a "concentration," that is, a suite of courses leading to a specific career path.

As the program continued to grow, both in courses and in students, the faculty also grew from one full-time faculty with three to four adjuncts in 1999, to four full-time faculty and eight to ten adjuncts in 2011. In 2005, the Archives concentration, traditionally only offered in Boston, was extended to GSLIS's extended campus in western Massachusetts.

In 2013 the GSLIS program was ranked as the #1 program in Archives and Preservation in the United States along with the programs offered by the University of Michigan and the University of North Carolina.[3]

GSLIS offers both a Master of Science and a Ph.D. The doctoral program is fairly new - only five years old - and includes a number of students focusing on archival and digital preservation issues.

Archives and Records Management, University College London

Archives and Records Management has been taught at UCL since the 1947 when Sir Hilary Jenkinson established the Diploma in Archive Administration (Shepherd 2009). For a substantial portion of the intervening period (between the late 1980s and 2012) there were in fact two programs: the Master of Arts (MA) in Archives and Records Management (ARM, designed for UK students) and the MA in Records and Archives Management (International) (RAMI), formerly known as the MA in Overseas Records Management and Archives Administration and established and overseen in its early years by Anne Thurston. Both the MA and the postgraduate Diploma offered via these two programs were accredited by the Archives and Records Association and by its predecessor the Society of Archivists. The curricula were refreshed and reorganized at regular intervals notably in the early 1990s, again in the early 2000s and most recently in 2011-2012. The 2002 review left the two programs in place but with less to differentiate them than before and committed both programs to a records continuum understanding of the indivisible link between archives and records, and between archives and records management. The teaching also exhibited an increased awareness of the growing significance of digital records whilst retaining many traditional elements of archival education that Jenkinson would have recognized (Yeo, Shepherd, and Flinn 2014).

The most recent review in 2012 merged the two existing programs resulting in one professionally accredited Archives and Records Management program incorporating a more internationally, digitally and conceptually focused curriculum (see more details of these changes later). Nearly all the teaching at UCL is conducted face-to-face and the postgraduate qualifications are completed either full-time in one year or part-time in a

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[3] U.S. News and World Report, http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-library-information-science-programs/library-preservation-rankings

modular fashion over two to five years. The postgraduate Diploma in Archives and Records Management and the taught element of the MA is worth 120 credits (equivalent to 48 ECTs) and the MA Dissertation is worth a further 60 credits (24 ECTs) making a total for the MA of 180 credits or 72 ECTs. At any time there are 35 to 40 full-time and part-time students on the postgraduate ARM program, of which around 10 come from outside the UK. In addition to the postgraduate professional qualifications since the 1960s UCL has had a PhD with students from all over the world joining UK doctorial students in conducting a considerable body of original research in the then emergent field of archives and records management.

Archives and Information Science at Mid Sweden University

The discipline of Archives and Information Science was established at Mid Sweden University, Härnösand in 1988/1989. It now offers programs at all three levels of tertiary education: bachelor, master and PhD level. At bachelor level, students can follow a program consisting of courses at first, second and third year totaling 90 ECTS out of a required 180 ECTS for a full Bachelor degree. The equivalent of a one-year full-time (60 ECTS) program is offered at master level. Both of these programs were evaluated as being of 'High quality' when the Swedish Higher Education Authority announced in January 2014 the results its rigorous evaluation of all university programs in archives, library and museum studies. This national evaluation program is conducted on a five-year cycle.

The bachelor and master courses are all offered by distance learning, using a blended learning approach, in which students may attend intensive lecture sessions on campus or online. These sessions are recorded and posted on the course website, so that students may log in later or replay whenever they wish. On the learning platform they also have access to structured learning resources and study guidance. In between these intensive sessions students work independently, always with the opportunity to discuss issues online with fellow students and tutors. All student work is submitted via the online learning platform for grading. At any one time there are approximately 200 part-time students per year enrolled across the bachelor and master courses.

A two-year Master by Research program has also recently had its first student intake. In this program there is a strong emphasis on research planning, and research methods appropriate to archival science. The second year consists of research project work and a dissertation arising from the project work.

The Master by Research and PhD programs require attendance on campus. This is seen as a means of providing and participating in a collegial and supportive environment for research.

Comparing Core Curricula from three universities in three countries

Because all three universities teach at the master level, the authors decided to focus at this level for the comparison of our core curricula. Figures 1-3 set out the program structures at master level for each of the three universities, using official course titles. A brief program description is provided above each Figure. When reading the Figures, note that Mid Sweden University uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)[4] in which one credit point represents 25-30 hours' work. 30 ECTS is a full-time study load for one semester; 60 ECTS is a full-time study load for one year. At UCL a

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[4] The ECTS System, http://www.studyineurope.eu/ects-system. Accessed 29 January 2014.

postgraduate Masters is worth 180 credits (equivalent to 72 ECTs) and represents an annual fulltime student learning load of 1800 hours. Simmons College follows the U.S. credit hour system whereby a course is worth a certain number of credits often (but not necessarily) related to the number of class contact hours per week. The GSLIS Masters program is 36 credit hours. Each course is worth 3 credits, taught in one 3-hour session per week, for a total of thirteen or fourteen weeks per semester. The MS program is 12 courses in total. In the process of carrying out this project, the authors have realized that it is extremely difficult to compare course concentrations across different credit systems. A set of guidelines for comparison across credit systems would be a useful future project.

TABLE 1.
Simmons College GSLIS Core Master Degree Courses

Course Title	Credits
Introduction to Archival Methods and Services	3
Managing Records in Electronic Environments	3
Establishing Archival Programs (an Archives management course)	3
Archival Access and Use	3
Preservation (choice of Digital Preservation and Preservation Management)	3
Field Study	3
+3 electives in chosen stream	9 (3 each)
+3 core LIS courses (Foundations, Organization and Reference)	9 (3 each)

The GSLIS Archives Concentration consists of six core archives courses, three core LIS courses, three electives, one of which must be a Technology course with the rest selected from three tracks: Archives, Digital Preservation and Cultural Heritage, for a total of twelve courses or thirty-six credit hours (each course is three credits).

The six core courses for the Archives Concentration include: Introduction to Archival Methods and Services (a 60 –hour internship is a required in addition to the classroom learning), Archival Access and Use, Establishing Archives and Manuscripts Programs, Managing Records in Electronic Environments, and an Archives Field Experience (130 hour internship), and a choice of Preservation courses, either Digital Stewardship, Preserving Digital Media or the more traditional Preservation Management for Libraries and Archives.

For their electives, students have a variety of choices including Appraisal, Oral History, Photographic Archives and Cultural Heritage Informatics. They also have a range of technology choices appropriate for archivists such as XML, Database Management, and Digital Asset Management for Libraries, Archives and Museums.

After the most recent thorough-going review at UCL a refreshed Archives and Records Management Master's program has been offered since 2012-2013. Although the new program is best characterized as an evolution rather than a revolution, it does contain a number of elements that are substantially different from the preceding programs. The new program seeks to:

(1) Address the redundant separation of the ARM and RAMI programs by merging the two programs and teaching all students a more internationally-aware curriculum as befits a more globalized archives and records world;

(2) Better embed thinking about the connection between records and archives and their management arising out of the records continuum and the digital curation lifecycle, resulting in a more coherent and more digitally aware program;

(3) Embrace a more conceptual and discursive approach by introducing the doubled-weighted, over-arching and jointly taught Concepts and Contexts module which combines shorter, concepts based lectures with more seminar teaching and which makes connections with more applied modules (Creation and Capture, Curation and Stewardship, Access and Use, the Record-keeping Professional) being taught at the same time;

(4) Encourage a more pluralistic and active approach to archives and records management theory and practice by inviting students to investigate diverse ways of understanding archives and record-keeping. This includes re-thinking traditional profession concepts and definitions, exploring a variety of non-organizational, personal, community-based and participatory approaches to record-making and record-keeping, promoting greater awareness of the influence of technological change on the creation and management of a range of digital objects, and acknowledging and accounting for the active influence of record-keepers in framing the archival legacy and shaping social memory, and the ethical responsibilities that underpin such influence;

(5) Offer more choice and pathways by offering fewer core modules and more options encompassing both traditional skills (paleography, preservation) and more contemporary ones (digital curation, digital recordkeeping, oral history).

The majority of students, full-time and part-time complete their Masters by completing a 60-credit dissertation of original research in a subject of their own choice from within the field of archives and records management.

TABLE 2.
UCL Core Master Degree Courses

Course Title	UCL Credits	ECTs
Concepts and Contexts	30	12
Creation and Capture	15	6
Curation and Stewardship	15	6
The Record-keeping Professional	15	6
Access and Use of Archives and Records	15	6
(*Plus two relevant electives*)	(15 each)	(6 each)
MA Dissertation	60	24

Mid Sweden University's master-level courses aim to develop understanding of archival theory and promote awareness of research in the discipline. The Information Management and Records Management course provides an introduction to standards, theories and models for information and document management and information architecture. It places particular emphasis on the Records Continuum and Information Continuum models (Upward 1996; Upward and Stillman 2006). Theory of organizations is also covered in this first course. The Archival Theory course begins with the history of ideas in archival science and goes on to cover appraisal theory, records concepts including authenticity, and the Life Cycle and Records Continuum Models. The course on Archival Systems deals with strategies, models, standards and methods for developing and administering archival systems, interpreting systems in the broader sense of the word. Preservation strategies, the Open Archival Information Systems Model (OAIS) (Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems 2012) 2012) and metadata are included in this course. Access and Use includes the use of archival information and archival information systems, methods for analysis of use of archives and of user behavior; methods for analysis and design of information systems; and strategies for promoting accessibility of archives. Full-time students study the Theory and Methodology and Research in Archives and Information Science at the same time as they work on their own Dissertation. The Theory and Methodology course gives a brief introduction to qualitative and quantitative research methods, discusses research methodologies for the social sciences and then focuses on theory and the widening range of research methods employed in archival science research in recent years. The course on Research in Archives and Information Science explores recent international research projects in the discipline, as well as past and current research projects at Mid Sweden University.

TABLE 3.
Mid Sweden University core master degree courses

Course Title	Credits
Information management and records management	7.5
Archival theory	7.5
Archival systems	7.5
Access and use	7.5
Theory and methodology	7.5
Research in archives and information science	7.5
Dissertation	15

Common core content across the three universities

The following is a very brief overview of common content across the three university programs. The authors recognize that course titles are not a sufficiently meaningful basis for course comparison. It must be stressed that this overview is only a preliminary exploration and is not the result of a detailed analysis of course syllabi, which would be necessary if all course content were to be mapped across the three programs. However, it is clear that there are several shared themes. All three teach about:

- Digital records management and archival systems, reflecting awareness of the need for understanding, planning and managing systems for the entire information flow from records creation to the archive.
- Access and use of records and archives, reflecting increasing emphasis on services to users and the use and re-use of information in the archive. Interestingly, this was the only topic for which all three programs had a common course title.
- Preservation strategies. The emphasis in this broad topic varies across the three programs to some extent. Simmons College offers a choice between digital preservation and preservation management. In the digital preservation courses, two focus on digital curation, the others programs takes the OAIS standard for the transfer of records to the archive as the conceptual model for teaching in this area.

Enrichment or elective courses

Both Simmons College and UCL offer students the opportunity to select from a fairly extensive range of electives which are considered to be specializations, offering enrichment rather than being core curriculum requirements. Mid Sweden University does not formally offer students a choice of electives. However, at various times special courses have been offered and substitutions for the core content can be approved on a case-by-case basis, subject to the course coordinator's approval. Examples of electives that have been offered across the three universities include the following:

- Specific formats (for example photographs, rare books, art, maps);
- Digital curation or preservation;
- Standards for digital recordkeeping;
- Oral history
- Cultural heritage and cultural memory.

Traditions and structural requirements in archival education

Tradition and regulation play a large part in the development of educational programs in several ways. Most countries have a regulatory organization that governs the requirements for higher education and the standards and structure of degree programs at every level. For example, in some countries regulations set a minimum credit point requirement for a dissertation or equivalent independent work without which a postgraduate degree cannot be called a master degree. Thus, students in Mid Sweden's one-year program at master level formally graduate with a 'magister' degree, not a master degree, since in Sweden a master degree must contain a dissertation worth 30 ECTS. Other program patterns may be more influenced by custom than regulation, such as whether or not students may choose from a range of elective courses. Similarly, practical fieldwork may be considered a valuable component of a master degree in some professional communities, but not in others. An alternative strategy for providing practical experience is the provision of situated learning about digital systems and tools in a virtual environment, such as that offered by the Simmons College Digital Curriculum Lab (DCL). The DCL is open to new educator partners who wish to join and contribute (Anderson et al. 2011).

Furthermore, archival traditions and the education programs that develop to serve them are socially constructed, related to the cultural and intellectual climate in which they are offered. Students must know the legislative framework surrounding the creation and

capture of contemporary records and which has historically shaped the national archives of their country. Other contextual issues also play a significant role in shaping the archive and the archival curriculum. For example, whether the country has a political history as an ancient sovereign state or a postcolonial nation; or a cultural history that includes a significant oral tradition. Diversity within the student body, the population in general and in the records / communities that the archivists will engage, all mean that programs have to embed plural understandings and approaches to recordkeeping in a manner which recognizes and acknowledges that cultural sensitivities may differ and contradict traditional Western archival theory and practice (Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG) 2011). Similarly local climate and specific environmental challenges shape approaches to teaching preservation. For example, Simmons College must address the two separate archival traditions of manuscripts and public records that prevail within the U.S. archives and records environment. Thus appraisal, donor relations, advocacy are important topics in the Simmons College curriculum while they might be less so at UCL or Mid-Sweden.

The curriculum must also change and evolve to meet contemporary needs in the workplace. At UCL paleography remains an important curriculum topic because many UK professionals must manage and promote access to many very old records, however, the recent review made the difficult decision to re-cast *Reading and Interpretation of Archives from 1500* from a core to an optional module. Paleography and diplomatics continue to be viewed within the program and the professional more widely as important archival skills but no longer compulsory for those whose interests lie elsewhere and wish to specialize in other directions. Mid Sweden University decided a paleography course that was also very popular with genealogists should be transferred to the History Department, where it continues to be taught, again freeing up space in the curriculum for other topics of increasing importance. Appraisal is a part of the curriculum, but a more theoretical approach is taken, since in Sweden appraisal and disposal in government archives have been very strictly regulated for many years.

Research Perspective: Developing shared courses

The first step in exploring the potential for a shared program of international archives and records management education could be in the development of individual courses which might be shared between the three universities and possibly wider afield and could be used as a proof of concept. Mid Sweden and UCL have already jointly developed and shared an online course of Standards for Digital Recordkeeping. This module which has been taken by students from both universities over the last few years aims to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to evaluate the utility of national and international standards for the management of records in digital environments.

This is accomplished by exploring the historical development of records and information management standards and by examining the global similarities and challenges through examining the development of standards in Australia, America and Europe. Taught in English, students are required to read, analyze and understand a suite of national and international standards relating to the managing of records and information in a digital environment and then evaluating their application to their own national situation and where applicable to their own local organizational context.

Further to this, as part of the formal research and teaching collaboration between the three programs, in 2014 faculty from the three programs are working on developing a course on the international contexts in which archivists and recordkeepers operate, provisionally entitled The Recordkeeping World; International perspectives on archives and records. Still in the process of development in early 2014, it is intended that this

course will be offered to Masters students at the three universities in the academic year 2014-2015.

Utilizing a variety of online teaching materials, activities, virtual tours and readings, the subjects that the course introduces will be discussed and debated via online discussion forums and video seminars and the students will be asked to collaborate on joint projects which examine different archival questions from a range of different national, cultural and legislative perspectives. By introducing the students to a range of different ways of thinking and doing about archives and records, and then analyzing these different approaches in an multinational context, it is hoped not only that the course will result in a broader understanding of the different professional challenges that they might face in their career but also that it will better prepare them for working in an increasingly digital and global environment.

At the heart of this approach is a culturally sensitive commitment to identify and explore a variety of diverse and heterogeneous ways of thinking about the archives and records and their management. To that end, the course will inspect the similarities and the commonalties of global recordkeeping and the world of international standards and multinational corporate governance, but it will also set this drive for standardization against the diversity of national cultural, political and administrative traditions and practice some of which may be contradictory and even incommensurable.

The outline of course contents and the choice of topics to be examined has been developed by mapping together courses on international archival contexts taught in the individual universities. Amongst the different topics which have emerged from this process are:

- The development of international theory and practice in archives and records management including divergent understanding and terminologies.
- Examples of international collaboration and archival solidarity.
- International discourses about recordkeeping, transparency, accountability and governance.
- Comparative perspectives on international approaches to archival legislation and access to information, privacy and other information management legislation.
- International strategies for using records and archives to support human rights, social justice and international justice movements and their opposites.
- International and diverse discourses about archives and cultural heritage.
- The causes of and approaches to dealing with international archival disputes such as disputed, displaced and migrated archives; non-organizational and non-Western approaches to records and archives including community and personal archives, oral and other non-textual records, indigenous recordkeeping.
- The development of international standards and the challenges and benefits of such standards; experiences of recordkeeping within multinational and transnational governmental, non-governmental and corporate bodies.
- A comparative international analysis of the challenges and opportunities of digital and social technologies for recordkeeping.
- The development of archives and records management as a profession in different national and international contexts.

One of the most immediate challenges will be to discover how (and if) all these different themes and wide international framework can all be contained within one single module.

It is hoped that this course and the interactions between the staff and students it enables will not be an end-point for these processes but will rather provide a launch pad for the collaborative development of further and more specific curriculum. Of course the

working relationship between these three universities are not the only places that these conversations and collaborations developments are taking place. Notably at AERI[5] but also elsewhere, discussions about how to make the most of the internationally scarce resources and different expertise which exist in the archival education world by sharing content including perhaps core archival and recordkeeping courses are on-going. Existing models of sharing courses and students online (WISE Consortium) and the development of the online open access model of higher education (MOOCs[6], etc.) all offer something very promising. However we feel that the biggest challenges will not lie in the platforms that are developed to deliver these new courses but in the crucial task of defining the curriculum that will make up these international collaborative courses and programs.

Other internationally shared courses

There is further evidence that the possibility of international collaborative courses is gaining acceptance. There have been two other examples of collaborative course development in recent years, although neither has been developed with the intention of seeking formal approval by several universities as a course to be regularly offered within their specific archival education programs.

Both Mid Sweden and UCL have been partners in the EU-funded ARCHIDIS Erasmus Intensive program,[7] cooperatively developed and taught by fifteen European archival education programs. ARCHIDIS, which was funded from 2011-2013, was a 2-week residential summer program focusing on appraisal. Mid Sweden and UCL students were offered the course as an option. The universities involved are members of NAET: the North-western European Archival Educators Network.[8] Although the funding cycle for ARCHIDIS course ended with the 2013 course in Dundee, the NAET is interested in continuing to work together, having found the experience both stimulating and enjoyable for teachers and students alike. Course evaluations from both students and teachers have been very positive. The Network hopes to find funding for developing a similarly structured but new course on a different topic.

The second example is a suite of *Digital Pathways* course materials developed in a collaboration between ICA and InterPARES at the University of British Columbia. These eight modules were developed as a cooperative project during 2011 and 2012, workshopped at an ICA SAE Conference in Rome 23-24 June 2011 and completed in 2012 and promoted with an Introduction Video created in 2013. They are freely available to educators who wish to download and use them with acknowledgement.[9]

Conclusion and future research

This paper has discussed three approaches to exploring the possibilities for international common core curricula across archival education programs. One is a first attempt at identifying common core content in our own three universities' existing but independently developed curricula, documenting the development of the programs over

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[5] AERI, The Archives Education Research Initiative is an annual institute for archival educators and doctoral students. Grant funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services it is currently entering its sixth year, http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/
[6] Massive Open Online Course
[7] ARCHIDIS website: http://www.archidis-naet.eu. Accessed 29 January 2014
[8] North-western European Archival Educators Network: http://www.naet-europe.org. Accessed 29 January 2014
[9] The modules and video are available for download at http://www.ciscra.org under the heading" Collaborations with ICA".

time in attempt to describe the historical journey and influences that have contributed to the current content of the three programs. The next step in this part of our ongoing research will be a much more detailed analysis of our syllabi for comparative purposes.

The second approach is a survey of the views of archival educators on the possibilities and the barriers to developing and sharing courses internationally. Admittedly a small initial sample, a more focused survey to a wider audience and with more targeted questions building on the responses already received might be both a strategy for drilling down to specifics and engaging the international community of archival educators around an increasingly common purpose.

The third is a description of some deliberate attempts to cooperatively develop shared courses across international borders, demonstrating that international collaborative courses in archival education are not only a possibility but a reality. In each of the examples, the educators involved have found the experience of working together to cooperatively develop the courses a stimulating and rewarding experience. The ARCHIDIS course is the only one of the three which has so far also been cooperatively taught.

We hope that other educators who are considering collaboration will be encouraged by our findings, both to build collaborative course content and to publish their experiences in the archival literature. Much research remains to be done. Our work has focused and built on what we have in common and we have merely raised some questions about areas that may always require a national or cultural focus. Learning where we must agree to differ will also be crucial to successful collaboration.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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