Archival Research: A "New" Issue for Graduate Education

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Introduction

Collectively as archival educators, we have a mission—to graduate the best educated, best prepared individuals to work in their local environment and to play their part as citizens in a global archival community. As individual educators, we are engaged in a blatantly value-laden pursuit that requires each of us to take a position on what we feel is the best kind of education for our students, as well as for the development of the profession and its disciplinary base. These individual positions are crucial because they are what bring a enriching diversity of approaches and perspectives to archival education. However, our individual engagement also requires us to re-think and re-formulate our educational objectives and activities as our knowledge of the archival field and its environment grow and shift. Collectively and as individuals, we have, therefore, a perpetual challenge—to envision and anticipate what education will best prepare our students for archival careers that are likely to evolve, and cause the profession to evolve, radically over the next several decades.

This paper lays out my current thoughts as an archival educator in response to the questions given to this panel. It will first discuss the role of research in graduate education. It will then look at the development of the Archives and Preservation Management specialization at UCLA and how research requirements and opportunities have been integrated at master's and doctoral levels.

The Case for Professional and Research Education

Graduate education in archival science should have three primary functions: 1. inculcating the knowledge base, skills, ethos, and societal roles of the archival profession; 2. grounding these in the history and theory of the underlying discipline; and, 3. advancing all of the aforementioned through critical inquiry. Through their graduate education experience, archival students, both masters and doctoral, should be able to formulate their own way of looking at the world of archives and archival issues, and obtain a set of leadership skills, research tools and a vocabulary to query, understand, and advance the profession and the discipline.

Teaching professional and research skills within a single curriculum is a bit like bilingual education. On the one hand, students are not only learning how to read and to speak two languages, that of practice and that of research, but they are also immersed in, and sensitized to the cultural cadences embedded in those languages. They are acquiring a sense and appreciation of the diversity of perspectives and literacies that make up the social embedding of those languages worldwide. Such an education also requires students to confront and be able to investigate some hard "why?" questions.On the other hand, there is always the distinct possibility that students in such a curriculum will end up excelling in neither practice nor research. The way to address this is to offer two graduate degrees in archival science, each integrating research components, but tailored to a different end.

The difference between master's and the doctoral programs is one of emphasis and one of perspective. The master's degree is a professional degree – it addresses most closely the first two functions outlined above, but includes enough of the third to enable the students, as future practitioners, to develop the knowledge needed for decision-making and to work to question and improve their professional environment. A doctoral degree (at least when it is a research, rather than a professional doctorate) addresses most closely the building of knowledge and competency in the second and third functions outlined above, preparing students for careers in research and teaching. The assumption here is that doctoral students are likely already to have considerable knowledge and experience of the first function from prior master's degrees and work experience. Doctoral students are taking a doctorate in order to learn how to apply research skills not only with a view to *improving* the professional environment (applied research), but also to *proving* the premises upon which it has developed (theoretical research). This is not to say that discussion of the knowledge base, skills, ethos, and societal roles of the archival profession should be omitted from doctoral programs, but that they should be addressed from perspectives that are quite different from those of the master's level. In the first place,

doctoral students should learn to apply their critical analysis and research skills to a more conceptual understanding and questioning of how and why these have evolved, and how they relate to various external phenomena such as socio-political, economic, cultural, and epistemological developments. In the second place, students should learn how to convey these content areas as teachers of master's students.

There is, perhaps, one additional area of difference between the master's level and doctoral level in graduate education, and that lies in the area of mentoring. The role of mentoring in advancing the goals of archival education has only obliquely been discussed by the profession, and yet the development of a mentor-mentee relationship often becomes the invisible sustenance that nurtures the development of young professionals and stays with them throughout their career. Master's students and recent graduates often develop an informal mentoring relationship with archivists who have supervised them at the site of their internship or first position. Sometimes they participate in a more formal mentoring process such as that sponsored by the Society of American Archivists. For doctoral students, mentoring relationships are equally vital but here the archival faculty themselves have a direct responsibility, in their roles as teachers, advisors, committee members, and research project directors, to invest a considerable amount of time and intellectual and emotional energy as mentors and role models.

The role of research in archival graduate education

The nascent discussion of the role of research in archival graduate education brings a new dimension to a debate that has been dominated in the United States for many years by the same set of questions: *Do we need a distinct master's of archival science degree? Should graduate archival education take place within history or LIS programs? What should be the balance of theory and practice in graduate archival education? To what extent should graduate archival education be responsive to the needs of contemporary archival employers? To what extent should it be anticipating or working to shape future directions of the field?* While we have not resolved these questions and they certainly have not gone away, perhaps we could recalibrate them if we had more data to work with. I have argued elsewhere that the activities of the archival community as a whole need to be more knowledge-based. Lack of knowledge of how archival education fits into the overall archival system has played a major part in holding back the profession and academia from advancing archival education more rapidly (1). Systematic research is an important way in which such knowledge is gained, and yet the research base of the archival community is pitifully small. This is starting to change, and as testament to this we are here today asking a new, additional set of questions relating to archival education: *To what extent should research be integrated into graduate archival education? What is qualitatively different between professional and research education? What is the argument in support of a Ph.D in archival science?* Research is not a new issue for the field *per se* – what is new is conceiving of research education and experience as an overt an integral piece of graduate archival education.

Building robust doctoral education programs that are more than a flash in the pan or a passing fad requires both an external professional and an internal academic infrastructure. Luciana Duranti and I recently co-wrote a column for *Archival Outlook* discussing the pressing need for archival doctoral education and the kind of external infrastructure that we believe should be put into place to support it. What we have called for are the following:

- Doctoral programs with a range of disciplinary and methodological perspectives emphases and directed by full-time qualified faculty available at several institutions;

- A wider spectrum of readily available publications drawn from different archival traditions, and ancillary and allied disciplines, including monographs, refereed research articles, and collections of papers on selected topics;

- Dissemination of research results by academically acceptable means, including rigorously refereed journals, juried conference sessions, specialized education and research forums, and clearinghouses for research results such as a pre-print server;

- Increased research funding for academic research obtained by:

- Influencing federal funding agendas to include broad conceptualizations of large-scale collaborative research initiatives as well as small research grants for individual dissertation research;

- Recruitment of doctoral students to participate in faculty research projects so that they can acquire research experience, have the opportunity to collect their own data and publish the results of their analyses; and

- Development of more research partnerships between academia and the field (2)

The internal infrastructure for doctoral education is unlikely to differ significantly from that in place in many other disciplines. A series of doctoral-level seminars should lay the groundwork for students' qualifying exams and dissertation preparation by providing opportunities for in-depth discussion of archival theory and practice, critiques of the relevant literature, the development of theoretical models, and the production of substantive seminar papers. Research education should be incremental and should be reinforced through research experience. Students should be required to take several different methods courses—those that introduce them early on in their studies to methods that are heavily used in the field, and later on, those that they have identified as appropriate methods to use to investigate their dissertation research questions. In their first year in the doctoral program, students should also be required to take a research design and perhaps also an epistemology course. Initially doctoral students should be engaged as apprentices to faculty researchers, and then, as they complete more of their research methods coursework and become more proficient, as full-fledged research assistants working with faculty on major research projects and achieving external recognition through professional presentations and co-publishing. At this stage, the students should also be beginning to identify a substantial research question or set of questions which they wish to address through their own dissertation research. They might also gather preliminary data as part of the larger research project of which they are a part, and identifying faculty internal and external to their institutions who might be good to serve on their dissertation committee. All of these activities serve to build the student's competency, confidence, and contacts that will enable them to become independent researchers, initially for their dissertation work, but also for their long-term career.

As I discussed earlier in this paper, how research education is integrated at the master's level is different to how it is integrated at the doctoral level. As Terry Eastwood states in his paper, students in a 2-year master's program are generally not equipped to undertake research in their first year, although individual promising students can be incorporated in academic research to a certain extent in their second year. Moreover, since much research takes multiple years to complete, faculty may be less willing to commit the time to training master's students to work on research projects if they are going to graduate within one to two years. None of this, however, precludes research methods coursework being required of all students during their first year in the program. Research elements can also be incorporated into academic assignments, internships, and cumulating activities such as theses at the master's level. For example, students, either individually or in groups, can conduct case studies of institutional record-keeping practices or perform structured observations and analyses of user behaviours or archival services as term projects. While master's theses are unlikely to attain the depth of research expected of a doctoral dissertation, they nevertheless serve as an extended piece of (hopefully) publishable quality writing that requires the application of critical and analytical skills and the development and defence of an original intellectual argument.

There is one additional level in graduate education where research education might occur, and which I have not addressed earlier, and that is at the post-master's certificate level. Post-master's certificates such as Certificates of Advanced Study (C.A.S.) are being increasingly promoted by library and information science programs in the United States as a means by which graduate students who were unable to squeeze everything they wanted or needed into a two-year master's can take additional coursework specializing in an area such as Archival Science, and can also complete a culminating project in an area of applied research. These certificates are also available to professionals in the field who wish to return to school to re-tool their skills and knowledge base and spend time on a research project that is often addressing a practice-based issue that they have identified in the workplace. Such programs tend to be very much self-directed and self-crafted based on coursework available at both master's and doctoral level in the school, but they provide an interesting intermediate level between master's and doctoral programs and a direct connection to applied research issues in the field.

Which research methods and why?

Students in any graduate program must be competent in four aspects relating to research – they must know how to put together a research design, they must have strong knowledge of the method or methods they plan to use in carrying out that design, they must understand the theory base or epistemology from which those methods derive, and they must be able to determine and implement the most appropriate ways to analyze any resulting data. In particular, students, through their studies, should acquire the ability to:

- read and understand the field's research literature;
- understand the relevance of, and apply research constructs such as induction/deduction, replicability, generalisability, and triangulation of methods;
- understand and address ethical concerns associated with research and data collection such as the protection of human subjects;
- identify and articulate a research question;
- identify and apply appropriate research methods and methods of data analysis;
- develop a research design;
- build and test models;
- formulate and conduct an evaluation plan;
- work collaboratively;
- write and review research and development proposals; and,
- disseminate the results of research.

Research methods most commonly taught in archival programs are outlined in Table 1, together with examples of some of the research activities for which they might be effective. For the most part, these methods have emanated from the historical and social science disciplines in which the archival programs are located. Graduate students at any level would benefit from being able to take courses in at least one of these methods *in addition to* a research design and a statistics course. Diplomatics, not currently taught by any US archival program, comes closest to a method that is directly associated with the historical development and practices of archival science. Diplomatics can provide an invaluable analytical framework for understanding the creation, function, and form of individual documents and their aggregates. Courses teaching many of these methods are likely to be available elsewhere on a campus if the archival program is unable to provide them itself due to lack of resources or expertise. It is preferable, however, for basic methods and research design courses to be integrated into the archival curriculum and taught from an archival perspective to ensure that students really grasp how they might be applied in the archival context.

Table 1: Research methods frequently taught in archival education programs

Research Method	Definition	Examples of Potential Applications in Archival Research
Diplomatics	Body of techniques, theories, and principles for analyzing	• Analysis of changes and continuity in

	the form, function, and genesis of documents, with a particular view to establishing authenticity.	document forms over time. • Identification of record types in electronic systems. • Identification of requirements for preserving authentic records in electronic systems.
Historiography	Body of techniques, theories and principles of historical research and presentation involving a critical examination, evaluation, and selection of material from primary and secondary sources	• Writing institutional and administrative histories. • Analysis of the historical development of archival movements or legislation. • Evaluating the extent to which digital access initiatives facilitate the research practices of historical scholars.
Survey Research	Written or oral surveys designed to produce systematic, representative, qualitative and quantifiable data based on responses provided by individuals within a targeted population to a predetermined set of questions. These can be made more reliable through the use of structured interviews,	• User needs and attitudes analysis. • Tracking of graduates of archival education programs. • Surveying of current archival practices.
Case Studies	In-depth study of an individual situation, institution, or process in order to understand it in complex detail, and sometimes, to compare against other cases.	• Detailed description and analysis of specific services or electronic records or digital access initiatives at one or more institution.

Table 2 indicates additional methods, including quantitative and more in-depth qualitative methods, that could usefully be applied in archival research and might be studied at the doctoral level.

Table 2. Other research methods useful for archival research

Research Method	Definition	Examples of Potential Applications in Archival Research
Metrics: • Cliometrics	Statistical, often computerized, methods for analyzing historical data.	• Analyzing histocial record-keeping practices, e.g., occurrence of certain data elements in records, or consistency of linkages between different data elements.
• Sociometrics and Social Network Analysis	Statistical methods for analyzing complex relationships between and attitudes of members of a social grouping.	• Description and analysis of interaction between collaborators participating in multi-institutional initiatives. • Identification of "invisible college" phenomena among archival practitioners or researchers.
• Bibliometrics	Statistical methods for analyzing bibliographic data.	• Citation analysis of archival literature examining the extent to which authors draw upon literature from other disciplines. • Analysis of the aging and scattering of archival literature.
Ethnography	Systematic description of individual cultures and	• In-depth studies of archival practices

	practices based on observation	such as reference services. • Examination of records creation and record-keeping practices in specific institutional settings.
Narrative Analysis	Body of techniques for examining how narrative or rhetorical tropes are used in documents to "tell stories" or advance particular perspectives or arguments.	• Analysis of records or information policy development. • Tracing the emergence of certain aspects of archival administration such as electronic records management as priority issues for the profession.
Grounded Theory Development	Method for discovering concepts and hypotheses and developing theory directly from data that provides relevant and interesting cases for analysis.	• Exploratory research where little is known about a particular situation or phenomenon, e.g., modeling the functionality of different types of electronic record-keeping systems.
Systems Analysis	Evaluation of activities, processes, and functions in order to identify desired objectives and to determine procedures for efficiently attaining them.	• Design and refinement of reference service delivery • Design and refinement of digital access systems.

The UCLA context

It is important that educators, working in concert with the profession, develop a unified vision and a common understanding about the core knowledge and competencies for master's (and perhaps doctoral education, although that tends to be a more idiosyncratic process) that must be addressed by graduate programs in archival science. It is also essential, however, that there be pluralism in programs. Individual programs must not be so constrained by professional curricular guidelines that they are unable to address identified local needs and emerging markets, or to specialize in particular aspects of archival science where expertise and institutional support are available. Encouraging pluralism will enrich the profession, provide prospective graduate students with a choice of programs with different emphases, and build centres of excellence in specific research areas. In this spirit, it is important to point out that

Archives and Records Management is not the only rubric under which to conceive of a program. As Peter Wosh has pointed out, New York University has a Certificate in Archival Management and Historical Editing. At UCLA we have an Archives and Preservation Management Program that encompasses both master's and doctoral components. We also have a joint post-master's certificate program in Film and Television Curatorship with the UCLA Department of Film and Television that reflects the importance of the media industry and moving image archives and preservation to Los Angeles.

UCLA's program, established in 1996 within the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, is very much a work in progress (details of curricular offerings are available on the Web (3)). It has developed considerably during the past 3 years, and we anticipate continuing to build and refine it as our resources expand and we develop more data on what works well and what is still needed. The program has two full-time faculty as well as several other faculty and adjunct faculty who teach specialized courses. Although located within the School's Department of Information Studies, it has developed out of an unusual nexus of interests in archival science, preservation management, records management, library and information science, museum studies, education, film studies, history of science, and anthropology. The vision driving this program is to address identified professional needs in California, and also to produce the kinds of leaders and researchers that the archival profession will need in the next few decades. Through this vision, we have tried to address our immediate Southern California context with its metropolitan hinterland of approximately 16 million people speaking over 200 languages, several hundred archives and museums, and vast corporate interests, including the entertainment and software industries.

In developing the program, we needed to take into consideration the strong curatorial tradition in Southern California that has led manuscript repositories and museums to be heavy recruiters of archival graduates into middle management positions. In contrast, we found that there was very little in the way of a records tradition in Southern California, an aspect we have tried to remedy by strengthening our curricular focus on the record. As mentioned above, the description, preservation, and use of visual materials and the non-textual record are of critical interest locally. Many of our graduates become film archivists, digital asset managers, or metadata managers for studios and independent film archives, and the need to address the theory base and new skills that such positions require have led us to develop a certificate program that we believe will bring film curatorship and moving image archives education into the Twenty-First Century.

As much a philosophical as an academic commitment is our promotion of multicultural and international aspects of archival theory and practice. We are very concerned about educating students who will be able to develop record-keeping and archival programs within diverse and multilingual cultural settings and businesses, especially in the Latino and Asian-American communities. We have also established strong links with Canadian, Australian, and European archival education programs, and integrated comparative discussion of other national archival traditions into our curriculum in an effort to develop student understanding of why and how different archival traditions and practices have evolved, as well as to prepare students for future work in international research activities and policy and standards development.

The UCLA Archives and Preservation Program currently maintains a master's cohort of approximately 20 in a two-year degree program. It also has six students focusing on aspects of archives and preservation at the doctoral level. The academic backgrounds of the doctoral students are eclectic: biophysics and microbiology, business administration, film and television, archaeology, theatre, and law. Three students have prior archival graduate qualifications, two from Europe; three do not, posing interesting questions about what and how archival knowledge should be acquired by them. The aspirations of the doctoral students also differ--some will likely become faculty, some researchers in private industry or policy think-tanks, and some consultants.

Research at UCLA

As stated earlier, UCLA's Archives and Preservation Management Program must also meet the university's expectations in terms of supporting its national and international status as a research institution. Indeed, research is a major emphasis at UCLA, for master's, post-master's, doctoral students, and faculty. Master's students are required to satisfy prerequisites in statistics and computer programming before they commence their studies. The Master's

program is a 2-year full-time program, although students are increasingly spending longer periods in the program because of the difficulties in getting all the coursework they want. This is not so much a problem of scheduling or of students' heavy external workloads, as it is evidence of the rapidly increasing knowledge base that they are seeking to acquire. Students spend their first year attaining the theoretical, management, and research foundations of archival and library and information science, and museum studies (4), before they can take advanced courses or do internships. During their first year, students must take at least one research methods course. Three different research methods courses are offered each year within the Department--social science research methods, historical research methods, and systems analysis. A range of other research methods courses are available elsewhere on campus. I would like to see a course in Diplomatics integrated into this first year core in order to provide both the historical and theoretical foundations of the field, and an analytical framework for students to begin to understand the nature and genesis of the document. Working with their advisors, students select the course or courses that relate most closely to their interests and career objectives, or to the needs of their master's thesis. If master's students have already taken research methods coursework in a prior graduate degree, they are expected to take either a different kind of methods course, or to take a more advanced methods course in the same area. While we maintain an extensive internship program with over 120 sites in Southern California offering a range of paid and unpaid archives and preservation management internships, students may not begin an internship until they have completed all their foundations courses and the research methods requirement. Students may take up to 12 credit hours for 1-3 internships. Research activities are often integrated into advanced master's courses, and like UBC, our students have an option of writing a Master's thesis as a culminating activity. This option has tended to attract the master's students who are more academically inclined, especially those who wish to enter a tenure track position as a university archivist where they will need to publish. The other culminating option that students have is to prepare and present a portfolio of their work and professional engagement during their graduate studies. This portfolio is tailored to the student's specific career objectives and includes written and technological course products, internship activities, professional memberships, professional presentations and publications, and statements of career objectives, personal reflections on their leadership potential, and plans for continued learning. The portfolio is presented before a panel consisting of the student's advisor, another faculty member, and an external professional in the student's chosen field.

Doctoral students must also satisfy the programming and statistics pre-requisites to enter the program. Their course of study largely follows the model laid out above in this paper, and requires them to take several doctoral seminars and a range of research methods courses, and their progress is reviewed annually by the Department. Students spend 2-3 years completing their coursework before taking their qualifying exams and preparing their dissertation proposals. During this period, they work as research apprentices and graduate research assistants on faculty research projects.

We have been very successful in attracting funding that has helped us to build a strong research base in which to engage both master's and doctoral students. In the past three years, we have received funding from the National Science Foundation for the Digital Portfolio Archives in Learning Project (5), the University of California Office of the President (California Digital Library) for the Online Archive of California Evaluation Project (6), and the National Historical Publications and Records Program for the US-InterPARES Project (7). While master's students do not stay long enough to play substantive roles in long-term research, they have been extensively used to assist in the collection and analysis of data. Doctoral students have been integral to each of these projects, with five doctoral students currently working as part of the US-InterPARES and InterPARES Projects.

References

1. Gilliland-Swetland, Anne J., "Graduate Archival Education and the Professional Market: Perspectives on Data and Data Gathering," (forthcoming in *Archival Issues*).

2. Duranti, Luciana and Anne Gilliland-Swetland, "Archival Doctoral Education: An Issues and a Challenge for the Archival Profession" *Archival Outlook* July/August (1999): 23.

3. See the UCLA Archives and Preservation Program Websitefor further program information: http://scow.gslis.ucla.edu/faculty/swetland/HTML/program.html

4. For a discussion of how the core curriculum in information structures across llibrary and information science, archival science, and museum studies evolved, see Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland and Gregory Leazer, "Knowledge Sharing for Knowledge Management Across Museum, Library, and Archival Collections," (forthcoming in *SPECTRA*)

5. See the Digital Portfolio Archives in Learning Website, available at: http://scow.gslis.ucla.edu/faculty/swetland/HTML/DPA.html.

6. See Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, "Evaluation Design for Large-Scale, Collaborative Online Archives: Interim Report of the Online Archive of California Evaluation Project" for more detail on the nature and scope of this project.

7. See the InterPARES Website, available at: http://www.interpares.org and the US-InterPARES Website, available at http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/us-interpares for further information.