Competency Framework

The ARA's competency framework identifies key competencies for all those working and volunteering within the archives, conservation and records management sector. It sets national standards in record keeping for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Developed in consultation with employers and members, the framework is a powerful career development tool designed to support record keepers with their career and professional development. ARA Members should revisit the framework periodically to help structure and plan their own career and professional development. Employers should also use the framework as part of their staff appraisal process, helping ensure their staff meet national ARA standards in practice and professional development.

The competency framework also sets the assessment standards for ARA professional registration at the Foundation, Registered and Fellow level.

Contents

Competency framework summary		
Area	**Function**	**Competency**
A. Organisational	Governance, Leadership and Management	1. Working with aims and objectives
		2. Developing and using policies and procedures
		3. Managing and using financial and other resources
		4. Working with people
	Compliance, Monitoring and Performance	5. Understanding, interpreting and complying with legislation and/or regulation
		6. Managing risk and/or business continuity
		7. Managing performance and impact
	Personal and Professional Development	8. Contributing to/understanding internal/external professional environments
		9. Developing self and others
		10. Applying ethics and standards
		11. Developing specialist knowledge and skills
B. Process	Processing / managing records in all media and formats	1. Using and managing information systems, records and data
		2. Creating and/or capturing and maintaining records
		3. Organising and describing records
		4. Appraising and disposing of records
		5. Providing intellectual and physical access to records
	Processing / managing archives in all media and formats	6. Archival collections management
		7. Acquiring and accessioning of archives
		8. Appraisal, retention, selection and disposal of archives
		9. Arranging, cataloguing and/or describing archives
		10. Providing intellectual and physical access to, and retrieval of, archives
	Preserving archives and records in all media and formats	11. Preservation management: understanding and assessing needs
		12. Undertaking and managing processes relating to buildings, environments, security, storage, packaging, handling and use
		13. Emergency and business continuity planning: prevention, reaction and recovery
		14. Digital curation: preserving born-digital and digitised records and archives
	Conserving archives and records	15. Assessing the stability and condition of archives and records
		16. Identifying and evaluating conservation options and strategies
		17. Applying interventive conservation measures to archives and records
		18. Developing specialist skills and knowledge
C. Customer/stakeholder	Understanding users/ stakeholders	1. Identifying and developing policies for supporting internal and external users/ stakeholders including individuals and community groups
		3. Planning and delivering activities to meet the requirements of internal and external users/stakeholders
		4. Meeting the special needs (physical/intellectual) of individuals/groups
	Service delivery	5. Promoting and providing facilities for access appropriate to the nature of information held
		6. Providing (intellectual) access to the content of records and archives on-site and on-line
	Engagement	7. Learning and development: providing opportunities for users and stakeholders
		8. Developing and sustaining local/virtual user and community networks
		9. Encouraging user and community engagement with service evaluation
		10. Undertaking marketing, advocacy and outreach
		11. Developing specialist knowledge and skills

Explaining the competency framework and levels

The competency framework identifies 39 key competencies for the archives, conservation and records management sector. The competencies are grouped under three areas; organisational, process and stakeholder/customer.

- **Organisational Area (3 functions)**

Function: Governance, Leadership and Management. Competencies A1-A4 focus on ways in which you deliver workplace aims and objectives, how you apply policies and procedures, and how you use resources and work with others.

Function: Compliance, Monitoring and Performance. Competencies A5-A7 focus on how you comply with rules and requirements, how you identify and manage any risks that arise, and how you deliver what is expected of you.

Function: Personal and Professional Development. Competencies A8-A11 focus on how you learn about your work and workplace, how you organise, manage and develop your work and support others, and how you apply ethical standards.

- **Process Area (4 functions):**
Function: Processing/managing records in all media and formats. Competencies B1-B5 focus on how you manage and organise the records you (or others) create when undertaking workplace tasks (in relation to archives/records management and/or conservation).

Function: Processing/managing archives in all media and formats. Competencies B6-B10 focus on how you support any/all of the processes involved in the management of archives including accessioning, appraising, arranging, describing and providing access.

Function: Preserving records and archives in all media and formats. Competencies B11-B14 focus on how you care for workplace records and archives, both hard copy and digital, and how you work towards the prevention of disasters.

Function: Conserving archives and records. Competencies B15-B18 focus on how you understand and apply conservation treatments to a range of archival materials.

- **Customer/Stakeholder** (3 functions):

Function: Understanding users/stakeholders. Competencies C1-C3 focus on how you support internal and external service users including individuals and community groups and those with special needs, and how you help plan and deliver activities to meet their needs and wants.

Function: Service delivery. Competencies C4-C5 focus on how you help provide access to service users to the finding aids, content of collections and other information they need.

Function: Engagement. Competencies C6-C10 focus on how you help to provide support to service users' learning and development, and how you support local and/or virtual user and community networks.

Each area includes the competency title developing specialist knowledge and skills. Applicants for ARA professional registration may select this option if they have developed a competency that falls within the organisational, process or customer/stakeholder areas, but it is not currently listed in the framework. This helps ensure that professional registration recognises and rewards they broadest range of experience from across the record-keeping sector.

The five levels of experience

Each competency provides some examples of how it can be achieved at any of five levels. The levels have been defined using accepted models of skills acquisition developed by H. Dreyfus, S. Dreyfus and B.S. Bloom[1], and shown in the competency level descriptions table below.

The level examples help you benchmark your current knowledge and experience, identifying your strengths and areas you would like to develop. They also identify types of work experience undertaken at higher levels, which will help you decide how to develop your levels of competence and progress your career in a way that best suits your circumstances. The level examples also help you understand which of our three levels of professional registration (Foundation, Registered and Fellow) you can apply for.

Level 1	Context and focus	Immediate workplace and tasks; short term view
	Dreyfus/Blooms	Novice: has basic knowledge and comprehension
	Nature of work	Routine, repetitive tasks, closely supervised, follows steps and instructions to complete work, little initiative required.
	Key words	Understands, describes, applies, complies, explains, identifies, maintains, undertakes, responds, follows instructions, shows affinity for.
Level 2	Context and focus	Own workplace and wider organisation; aware of and contributes to some mid-term goals and objectives; professional member.
	Dreyfus/Blooms	Beginner: has application; able to solve closed-ended problems; has broad general knowledge.
	Nature of work	Routine and independent tasks, competent without close supervision, some use of judgement and initiative.
	Key words	Applies, assists, complies, administers, advises, discusses, supports, organises, suggests, facilitates, interprets, plans, demonstrates.
Level 3	Context and focus	Wider organisation and political/environmental/economic issues; mid-long term goals; contributes to wider profession.
	Dreyfus/Blooms	Competent: can analyse; solves open-ended problems; has comprehensive knowledge; is proactive
	Nature of work	Undertakes and supervises complex tasks, assists in development of policies/procedures, confident use of initiative/judgement.
	Key words	Supervises, plans, manages, trains, analyses, appraises, implements, monitors, develops, organises, contributes, operates.
Level 4	Context and focus	Across own and comparator organisations; long-term goals and planning; holistic stance; major professional contributions.
	Dreyfus/Blooms	Proficient: synthesises; creates unique answers to problems; has complex/expert/specialist knowledge; adds to knowledge.
	Nature of work	Policy development, people management, evaluating and monitoring performance, initiating and managing projects.
	Key words	Decides, plans, prioritises, creates, initiates, formulates, develops, manages, evaluates, accounts for, reports, recruits, oversees.
Level 5	Context and focus	Horizon scanning and outward looking; focussed on mission and goals; national/international professional impact.
	Dreyfus/Blooms	Expert, authoritative: transcends reliance on rules; makes critical judgements founded on unique knowledge/experience/expertise base.
	Nature of work	Leading, political influencing, negotiating and advocating for organisation/unit/service; accounts for own service performance.
	Key words	Innovates, leads, scrutinises, provides, delivers, influences, advocates, justifies, negotiates, measures, benchmarks, accounts for.

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[1] *See* Dreyfus model of skills acquisition, H.Dreyfus and S.Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (1986);B.S. Bloom, et al.*Taxonomy of educational objectives: the classification of educational goals; Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* (1956).

Organisational area competencies with level descriptions

Area	Function	Competency
A. Organisational	Governance, Leadership and Management	1. Working with aims and objectives
		2. Developing and using policies and procedures
		3. Managing and using financial and other resources
		4. Working with people
	Monitoring and evaluation	5. Understanding, interpreting and complying with legislation and/or regulation
		6. Managing risk and/or business continuity
		7. Managing performance and impact
	Personal development	8. Contributing to/understanding internal/external professional environments
		9. Developing self and others
		10. Applying ethics and standards
		11. Developing specialist knowledge and skills

1. Working with aims and objectives

Level 1: Understands own work objectives and gives evidence of how the objectives are met. Also demonstrates an understanding of how own objectives relate to colleagues' objectives and that of immediate team/function.

Level 2: Discusses service and/or project mission, aims, objectives, and how they complete their own aims and objectives in context of these.

Level 3: Implements and evaluates own and service/project progress in delivering aims and objectives.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates implementation of service, project and business/other plans. Candidate supervises delivery of own and others' aims and objectives.

Level 5: Initiates/negotiates service/project strategic aims and objectives within a business/other plan and is responsible for short/medium/long term delivery.

2. Developing and using policies and procedures

Level 1: Understands and applies own workplace procedures appropriately.

Level 2: Discusses the context and content of immediate workplace policies and applies them appropriately. Candidate is able to advise on correct procedures.

Level 3: Contributes to development of policies and procedures as required and monitors their application in the workplace.

Level 4: Formulates policies and procedures, proactively updating and developing new ones as required, evaluating their use and value to the service.

Level 5: Directs the strategic development of some or all of the service or project's policies. Candidate can evaluate impact and benchmark with comparator organisations.

3. Managing and using financial and other resources

Level 1: Identifies people and processes involved in managing a service or project's resources.

Level 2: Accounts for own use of resources.

Level 3: Plans and accounts for resources needed and used in own area of responsibility.

Level 4: Manages, oversees and monitors procurement of resources and associated processes (projects, invoicing) and appropriate training for self/others.

Level 5: Advocates and negotiates for short/medium/long term funding; accounts for relevant internal and/or external budgetary provision.

4. Working with people

Level 1: Identifies and can describe roles and responsibilities of those in immediate working environment; contributes actively and inclusively to team working.

Level 2: Operates effectively as team member; uses team dynamics to foster good team working and inclusivity; interacts well with volunteers and internal/external groups sharing expertise with others; acquiring training where required.

Level 3: Develops and supervises own and others' work plans and skills, and monitors individual/team performances ensuring appropriate training for self/others (e.g. problem solving, setting targets); Able to contribute proactively to workplace and wider community activities.

Level 4: Formulates workforce policies; recruit, develop and manage people; oversee conflict resolution; establishes team(s) with complementary strengths and skills in the workplace or other environments.

Level 5: Leads and sets the standard in the development of staff; initiates workforce policies; manages and resolves conflict in complex situations.

5. Understanding, interpreting and complying with legislation and/or regulation

Level 1: Understands the general nature and importance of legislation and regulation; follows instructions regarding their application to own work practices.

Level 2: Identifies and implements legislation and regulation requirements that relate to own practices.

Level 3: Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of legislation/regulation applicable to own/other organisations; proactively applies where relevant; can advise and train others.

Level 4: Specifies, organises, evaluates and reports on compliance/non-compliance with legislation/regulation. Candidate can manage training of staff, volunteers etc. in these areas.

Level 5: Delivers, interprets and ensures compliance with legislation and regulation; horizon scans for new developments; benchmarks against comparator services.

6. Managing risk and business continuity

Level 1: Understands and can describe the nature of potential risks in own work area and how to avoid these.

Level 2: Demonstrates knowledge of relevant risk processes and complies with workplace risk policies and processes.

Level 3: Monitor risk compliance policies and processes and contributes to training sessions (e.g. information security and assurance; disaster planning).

Level 4: Formulates, develops, evaluates and reports on risk policies and management; ensures appropriate training is in place.

Level 5: Delivers and scrutinises workplace risk strategies, management and processes ensuring their on-going quality and relevance.

7. Managing performance and impact

Level 1: Understands and complies with staff/volunteer appraisal processes relating to own performance; can describe workplace performance aims and requirements.

Level 2: Complies with required staff/volunteer appraisal and performance management processes; can discuss desired impact of these on stakeholders.

Level 3: Contributes to the process of appraising others (including e.g. volunteers). Candidate applies processes for gauging impact on workplace; contributes to workplace audits and reports (e.g. annual reports, accreditation).

Level 4: Prioritises, plans and monitors staff, volunteer and workplace performance targets in line with the business/other plan. Candidate able to develop/implements audits and impact reports; may seek accreditation from external bodies.

Level 5: Scrutinises, benchmarks and ensures performance reaches expected standards, and that impacts are measured, documented and reported.

8. Contributing to/understanding internal/external professional environments

Level 1: Has basic knowledge of the nature of records/archives, the range of UK/Irish archives/records/information management/conservation (or museum/library) services.

Level 2: Displays broad general knowledge of key functions/characteristics of archives/records/conservation (and/or museum/library items/objects); chief legislative and regulatory standards/requirements for at least one sector; contents of core collections/resources in own workplace and their use. Candidate may hold appropriate level of membership of a relevant professional organisation.

Level 3: Contributes to sectoral developments (e.g. information governance; community archives; digital curation); active member of appropriate societies; familiar with work of other sectors (eg cultural/compliance/knowledge/volunteer management); confident in outreach, customer care and presentation activities.

Level 4: Contributes innovatively to the development of the sector beyond the workplace e.g. through project activity, partnership working, research and publication; develops other people's knowledge and understanding and shares expertise through mentoring, coaching, advocacy or other.

Level 5: Innovates in the development of strategic professional functions/issues/policies; works with partnerships/external bodies/new communities to build sector profile; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

9. Developing self and others

Level 1: Describes own strengths/weaknesses in generic (e.g. communication, time management) and professional skills and knowledge and has plans to develop these, with guidance; seeks alignment with appropriate benchmarks to assess level of knowledge, experience and skills; shares knowledge with others.

Level 2: Organises own work effectively and supports others in theirs; identifies own learning needs and in consultation plans and follows own professional portfolio and development timetable; participates in development opportunities, contributing openly and competently to workforce agenda and staff/volunteer development.

Level 3: Proactively seeks training opportunities for self and others to support workplace aims and objectives, including some management skills (eg project /presentation skills; staff appraisal; problem solving); comfortable in instructing and training others, supervising volunteers, running workshops and events etc.

Level 4: Plans/develops strategic and managerial skills (e.g. financial/personnel); identifies individual/collective workforce strengths/weaknesses and plans accordingly.

Level 5: Innovates/leads the development of the workforce to reach stated targets; enhance individuals' knowledge and skills; scrutinises/evaluates outputs and outcomes

10. Applying ethics and standards

Level 1: Identifies and recognises how ethical behaviour and standards pervade all areas of own work and impact on others; appreciates wider value of ethics and principles.

Level 2: Identifies and suggests solutions to varied ethical situations weighing all considerations; can discuss relevant application of information, records, archives and conservation or other relevant standards beyond specific workplace requirements; demonstrates ethical approach to issues affecting others (e.g. disability).

Level 3: Facilitates the timely training in, and application of, standards and ethics and monitors their implementation; can be assured that staff/volunteers/workforce acts ethically in given situations; contributes to solution of straightforward ethical issues/problems; demonstrates an inclusive approach to all stakeholders.

Level 4: Formulates, develops, evaluates and reports on the application of standards; monitors workforce response to ethical issues and ensures training; may contribute to the development of national/international standards e.g. through project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Advocates/influences the strategic application of ethics and standards; accounts for performance; horizon scans for new developments.

11. Developing specialist knowledge and skills

This can include but not restricted to:

- Knowledge e.g. of period of history/type of record/object/material/deterioration;

- Skills: recordkeeping e.g. palaeography, cataloguing, exhibitions, Latin, digital ingest, specific software; preservation: digitisation processes (e.g. scanning), conservation specialisms (e.g. seals, environmental management, stationery binding); academic e.g. writing, research, publication, peer review, teaching.

Level 1: Understands and describes the knowledge/skills/experience used to develop the selected specialist knowledge/skill and recognises its relevance to the workplace and its contribution to the wider profession; describes reasons why relevant to her/himself; follows steps and guidance to complete basic processes.

Level 2: Identifies the stages to be gone through in order to become expert in the selected knowledge/skill area; own plan and targets may be in place; applies knowledge/skill at a basic level routinely and sometimes independently; beginning to use own judgement when making decisions when applying the knowledge/skill.

Level 3: Proficient in demonstrating the specific knowledge/skill; shares developing expertise with others; analyses and solves knowledge/skill specific problems, sharing solutions with others within and beyond own workplace; applies standardised and routine procedures and concepts; acts independently.

Level 4: Highly developed competence demonstrable against recognised benchmarks; recognises exceptions to commonly accepted standards and concepts; proactively seeks to share developing skills/knowledge and expertise to benefit others, making significant professional contributions through mentoring, advocacy, publication.

Level 5: Expert with authoritative and specialist knowledge giving rise to high degree of problem solving skill; confident decision-making based upon comprehensive experience; skill/knowledge achieved with ease ('second nature'); capable of analysing, improving and redefining accepted standards and concepts and publicising these.

Process area competencies with level descriptions

Area	Function	Competency
B. Process	Processing / managing records in all media and formats	1. Using and managing information systems, records and data
		2. Creating and/or capturing and maintaining records
		3. Organising and describing records
		4. Appraising and disposing of records
		5. Providing intellectual and physical access to records
	Processing / managing archives in all media and formats	6. Archival collections management
		7. Acquiring and accessioning of archives
		8. Appraisal, retention, selection and disposal of archives
		9. Arranging, cataloguing and/or describing archives
		10. Providing intellectual and physical access to, and retrieval of, archives
	Preserving archives and records in all media and formats	11. Preservation management: understanding and assessing needs
		12. Undertaking and managing processes relating to buildings, environments, security, storage, packaging, handling and use
		13. Emergency and business continuity planning: prevention, reaction and recovery
		14. Digital curation: preserving born-digital and digitised records and archives
	Conserving archives and records	15. Assessing the stability and condition of archives and records
		16. Identifying and evaluating conservation options and strategies
		17. Applying interventive conservation measures to archives and records
		18. Developing specialist skills and knowledge

1. Using and managing information systems, records and data

Level 1: Undertakes basic processes on records and records systems in own work area with guidance, under supervision (Electronic document and records management system (EDRMS)/acquisition/conservation/collections).

Level 2: Can discuss principles, purposes and procedures relating to own/others' service/project's record systems; applies procedural rules in relation to key processes (e.g. data entry, filing, tracking movement/use of records) including those relating to personal data in own and distributed services; understands contexts of records/information management in UK and/or Ireland; applies relevant standards and best practice.

Level 3: Implements relevant systems and technologies in the management of records and information; applies regulations relating to the management of user and personal data; helps train, support and advise others in these and in standards and best practice.

Level 4: Formulates/develops policies/processes for, and monitors/evaluates the use of records systems for consistency of input, compliance with regulatory requirements, standards and best practice in relation to user, personal and other data; develops/introduces new systems and/or technologies as required, ensuring training in their use in own/distributed services; contributes to innovation/developments (nationally/internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Provides authoritative and strategic evaluation of records systems used by the service or project; horizon scans for new developments in the area; specifies for new systems as required; ensures that systems in use work inter-operatively where appropriate; or may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

2. Creating and/or capturing and maintaining records

Level 1: Knows what records should be created and maintained to support own work processes and can do so competently when following guidelines.

Level 2: Discusses the principles of record keeping including the justification for creating authentic and reliable records for evidence/accountability/business processes of the service/project and its delivery of effective services; can apply these, and assist others, in relation to records in own area of responsibility; applies professional standards and best practice.

Level 3: Captures and maintains records in any media/format in relation to the systems within own service/project in accordance with agreed national and/or international standards; comfortable with new and changing technologies; implements updates proactively; assists and trains others.

Level 4: Evaluates the use/application of standards and policies in relation to the creation/maintenance of records in support of own/others' systems; monitors decisions affecting the form and structure in which records (and metadata) should be created and captured; monitors consistency and ensures own and others' training needs are met; evaluates on-going fitness for purpose of capture technologies, formats and media, introducing changes when appropriate; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Scrutinises performance and ensures that appropriate records are captured and maintained across systems and services/projects in accordance with regulation, legislation, standards and best practice ensuring that any new developments and/or technologies are considered when relevant; or may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

3. Organising and describing records

Level 1: Explains the benefits of, and applies appropriate processes when using filing, classification and descriptive processes in order to manage records in own area.

Level 2: Applies local rules/standards/best practice for filing, classifying and describing records including file titling and addition of other metadata in paper/digital systems.

Level 3: Implements all required principles and processes of classification, indexing and other descriptive processes, including vocabulary controls as appropriate; assists training where required in line with standards and best practice (e.g. staff in own or other services).

Level 4: Formulates, develops and monitors policies and procedures on how to organise records so as to support requirements for use; proactive in developing and supporting the systems and technologies that assist own and others' processes in the organisation and description of records; ensures descriptive standards are in use; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Delivers strategic oversight of policies, processes, standards and technical systems employed in the service or project and their description of records; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

4. Appraising and disposing of records

Level 1: Can justify the reasons for retaining or disposing of records relating to own work processes and apply, when using guidance provided to do so.

Level 2: Discusses the impact of regulatory, business, risk and accountability requirements on decisions affecting the appraisal of records (including at the time a record is created); applies retention schedules to

records series and disposes of those earmarked for destruction/archiving using appropriate systems to do so, including confidential waste for paper records and the deletion of digital records

Level 3: Directs and assists others in the development of retention schedules that meet the requirements of regulation, business, risk, accountability and efficiency for the respective service or project and ensuring all disposal processes are properly carried out.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and monitors policies and processes relating to appraisal, retention, de-accessioning and disposal systems and processes recommended and used within the service or project including compliance with all external and internal requirements, standards etc.; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Delivers strategic oversight of the service or project's policies, processes, standards and technical systems employed in the appraisal and disposal of records; for advice provided to client bodies; for data content retained in own systems; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

5. Providing intellectual and physical access to records

Level 1: Describes retrieval and access processes within own workplace; applies processes appropriately, following the rules for allowing/disallowing access.

Level 2: Locates, retrieves, presents and interprets records for those with permission to access them in a timely manner, following access guidelines relating to privacy, security, freedom of information, personal, commercial or other sensitivity.

Level 3: Operates fully all service/project systems for physical and intellectual access/retrieval; monitors and assists others, ensures own and others' training is up to date.

Level 4: Formulates and develops policies and systems on which physical and intellectual access and retrieval depend; ensures their effective operation in own and others' systems as required; ensures that records are stored on media that ensure usability for as long as necessary to ensure timely access; that standards are effectively applied; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Ensures the strategic effectiveness of access and retrieval systems and for advice offered to others; and the appropriate allocation of resources; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

6. Archival collections management

Level 1: Describes the functions involved in the management of collections within own service (including e.g. accessioning; acquiring; appraising; cataloguing; storing and locating; providing access; preserving and conserving) and undertakes basic processes in related activities in own workplace.

Level 2: Operates systems that support collections management functions effectively; can discuss the effects of the differences and similarities between archival and other cultural collections (e.g libraries, museums) on practice; applies processes relevant to specific work area/project competently.

Level 3: Has comprehensive knowledge of relevant collections management standards in archival and other cultural collections (e.g. libraries, museums) environments and applies these and other policies and procedures as required within own workplace; uses fully all relevant technologies; assists in the training of others.

Level 4: Formulates/maintains a collection management policy that aligns with the mission statement of the service/project and that policies, technologies and processes for collection development, information,

access, care and conservation are in place and comply with standards; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication or unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Advocates and justifies to budget holders the value of strategic and integrated collections management that maintains the balance between access and preservation, the needs of collections and the people who use them, and between short, medium and long term priorities.

7. Acquiring and accessioning of archives

Level 1: Describes the archives acquisition remit and collection policy within own service and inputs accession and other acquisition data with guidance.

Level 2: Discusses context of the acquisition of archival collections across UK or Irish collecting institutions (national, local, business, museum, etc.); applies basic acquisition/ collection policies/processes in own service/project including those relating to donors/depositors and range of media and formats in which collections are acquired.

Level 3: Has comprehensive knowledge of national acquisition standards, guidance and benchmarks; of holdings of own organisation/project and where these are complemented in other organisations' collections; fully implements acquisition and related processes in respect of any collection (both hard copy and digital); supports the development and delivery of in-house guidance and training.

Level 4: Formulates, develops, monitors and evaluates policies and procedures for collection development and acquisition (taking account of national/international developments) ensuring that the collections reflect historic and current communities, and that training is available as required; proactive in the acquisition of digital media; updates acquisition strategy and setting priorities as appropriate; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Advocates and justifies under scrutiny collections acquisition in terms of community and cost benefit and resource management; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

8. Appraisal, retention, selection and disposal of archives

Level 1: Describes the basic methods by which archival records may be selected and appraised in own workplace, and applies these under supervision.

Level 2: Discusses the context of key selection and appraisal policies and processes adopted in UK/Ireland and the degree of relevance to collections in own service or project; applies basic processes in own service or project with some supervision.

Level 3: Has comprehensive knowledge of national and international appraisal and selection standards and guidance; undertakes independent selection, appraisal/de-accessioning decisions for relevant collections in any media/format, and associated processes; supports the development/delivery of in-house guidance and training.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates policies and procedures for the selection and appraisal of archival records (taking account of national/international developments) ensuring that appropriate legislative/regulatory requirements are implemented, changed and updated; ensures training in appraisal methodologies is available; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Scrutinises and has strategic oversight of implementation of the appraisal and selection of relevant collections justifying decisions made in terms of community and cost benefit, risk and resource management; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

9. Arranging, cataloguing and/or describing archives

Level 1: Explains why it is necessary to apply office/project policies and procedures when arranging and describing archives; can arrange and describe basic series under supervision using simple catalogue entries and access or indexing terms.

Level 2: Arranges and describes archival collections of medium complexity using accepted classification and arrangement schemes, local guidelines and other standards, completing required cataloguing/description processes consistently and accurately using technology as required.

Level 3: Monitors own and others' catalogues/descriptions; solves arrangement and description challenges not specifically catered for in guidelines; comprehensive knowledge and application of national/international standards for classification, description and indexing, authority control, thesauri etc.; solves simple technical problems in cataloguing/descriptive technologies where used.

Level 4: Formulates, develops, monitors and evaluates policies and procedures for arrangement and description; supervises development of guidelines; oversees implementation of cataloguing strategy and relevant training; ensures technologies used remain fit for purpose, updating as appropriate; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Scrutinises and has strategic oversight of description processes, benchmarking against comparator bodies for compliance and impact; responsible for ensuring appropriate technologies and applications for arrangement, description and indexing remain fit for purpose, budgeting for and introducing updates as required; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

10. Providing intellectual and physical access to, and retrieval of, archives

Level 1: Demonstrates understanding of how archives are retrieved and accessed within own workplace/project using physical and digital processes, the nature of the user base and the basis of rules for access to the collections and can apply these; helps users to use finding aids.

Level 2: Retrieves, presents and interprets archives in a timely manner, following access guidelines relating to privacy, security, freedom of information, personal, commercial and other sensitivity.

Level 3: Operates fully all physical and intellectual access and retrieval systems in own service/project ensuring that own and others' training needs are met.

Level 4: Formulates, develops, monitors and evaluates policies and procedures on which service/project's physical/intellectual access and retrieval depend; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Scrutinises and has strategic oversight over the effectiveness of access and retrieval systems of a service/project, horizon scanning for developments in access standards and technical systems; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

11. Preservation management: understanding and assessing needs

Level 1: Describes and applies processes for ensuring preservation of the information resources/archives/records in workplace (locking storage areas; saving/ filing records).

Level 2: Discusses/applies best practice in the preservation of records/archives in own service/project; administers/completes surveys of preservation needs with guidance.

Level 3: Fully applies service/project preservation policies and practices; can train others in these and monitor the completion of surveys of preservation needs and implementation of resultant priorities and processes; contributes to updating processes.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates preservation policies and practices across the service/project measuring outcomes and impact; ensures the regular assessment of preservation needs; updates policy and processes as appropriate; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Scrutinises and has strategic oversight over service/project's preservation strategy and policies in relation to assessing preservation needs of records/archives in all media and formats and their delivery with evaluation of cost benefit; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

12. Undertaking and managing processes relating to buildings, environments, security, storage, packaging, handling and use

Level 1: Describes and applies rules and processes regarding the safety, security, environmental monitoring, handling and use of records and archives in own workplace.

Level 2: Discusses/applies service/project-specific processes for the safety, security, environmental control, handling and use of records/archives; assists/supports others.

Level 3: Competent in the application of and training others in the processes relating to the safety, security, environmental control, handling and use of records and archives; contributes to development and updating of guidelines and monitors others' application of these.

Level 4: Formulates, develops, evaluates and updates policies and processes relating to the safety, security, handling and use of records and archives; ensures that appropriate training is in place; measures outcomes and impact; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Scrutinises and has strategic oversight over service/project's preservation strategy and policies in relation to preservation management (including accommodation, environment, security, storage, media specific requirements, reprography, disaster management, conservation) delivery and evaluation of cost benefit; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

13. Emergency and business continuity planning: prevention, reaction and recovery

Level 1: Describes and applies methods for disaster prevention and management in own workplace whether for digital or non-digital records and/or archives.

Level 2: Discusses and applies organisation-specific rules and processes relating to disaster prevention and management and can assist and support others to do so.

Level 3: Applies and trains others in processes relating to disaster prevention and management; contributes to development of guidelines; and monitors others' application.

Level 4: Formulates, develops, evaluates and updates policies and processes relating to emergency planning; ensures training is in place; measures outcomes and impact.

Level 5: Scrutinises and has strategic oversight over the service/project's emergency planning strategy and policies, their evaluation and delivery within budget.

14. Digital curation: preserving born-digital and digitised records and archives

Level 1: Describes and applies processes relating to safe preservation of born-digital and/or digitised records and/or archives as appropriate to own workplace, appreciating the differences where these apply; those in technical roles (e.g. scanning) undertake simple processes for operating equipment and any products.

Level 2: Discusses and applies principles and processes (including technical) of digital curation and preservation in relation either to born-digital documents created within the service or to records/archives that have been digitised (e.g. as part of a digitisation project), and the systems that support them, addition of metadata etc.

Level 3: Assists in the development of preservation policies and processes that impact upon born digital records and/or those generated as part of an archival digitisation project and fully applies these; competent in application of any relevant technical process; assists in training others in their use.

Level 4: Formulates, develops, evaluates and updates policies and processes relating to the preservation of born-digital and digitised records, ensuring that appropriate technical and other training is in place, and measuring outcomes and impact; maintains technology watch; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, has unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Scrutinises and has strategic oversight over the long-term survival of all digital records (born digital or as part of an archive digitisation project) in line with service/project goals, within budget; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

15. Assessing the stability and condition of archives and records

Level 1: Identifies, under supervision, through a visual assessment, some basic conservation problems that a common piece of cultural heritage (e.g. archival document) might present and shows basic understanding of its context and physical nature.

Level 2: Has working knowledge of and assesses and records the physical nature and condition of a range of routine or common heritage items, and suggests methods for their conservation (including no action), noting the pros and cons of the impact of each on the item(s) and its/their environment(s).

Level 3: Has good working knowledge and substantial practical experience of analysing, assessing, considering options and selecting the most appropriate in relation to the conservation of a range of types of cultural heritage (e.g. range of archival media and formats).

Level 4: Is proficient in determining, within given parameters (workload, budget, etc), which cultural heritage items should be assessed and ensures appropriate allocation of resources (materials, person/hours) to this, evaluating and monitoring processes and outcomes; routinely and independently delivers solutions; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, has unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Has authoritative knowledge of complex cultural heritage items and their assessment within budget allocations; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

16. Identifying and evaluating conservation options and strategies

Level 1: Identifies at a basic level what conservation options are available in relation to common items of cultural heritage; applies appropriate ones under close supervision

Level 2: Demonstrates working knowledge of range conservation options satisfactorily, and selects and justifies an appropriate option for application to a routine or common piece of cultural heritage under general supervision.

Level 3: Demonstrates good working knowledge of, and substantial practical experience in, identifying and recommending conservation solutions to a wide range of cultural heritage objects; develops advice/recommendations relating to the different options available; applies relevant legislation, guidance and/or organisational policy.

Level 4: Negotiates with organisations and individuals, and discusses reasons, for the choice of a considered course of action in relation to proposed actions on complex aspects of the cultural heritage, justifying in terms of policy, resources and optimum conservation options; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, has unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Has authoritative knowledge and deep understanding and experience of the selection, application, evaluation and resourcing of conservation options and strategies; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

17. Applying interventive conservation measures to archives and records

Level 1: Applies, under supervision, the basic processes of conservation, working effectively in situations that present low level complexity of conservation problems.

Level 2: Completes straightforward tasks across a broad range conservation practices and has working knowledge of the principles that underpin these.

Level 3: Competent in the application, communication and implementation of conservation standards and practice including in complex and emergency situations; good knowledge and application of treatment-based, preventive/conservation management measures at a technical and scientific level; recommends appropriate sources of further analysis, treatment or preventive care where these lie outside personal expertise.

Level 4: Takes responsibility for and evaluates the effect of complex conservation measures including deciding on appropriate methodologies for gathering, interpreting and presenting data; ensures and monitors the maintenance of appropriate records in relation to conservation processes; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication, has unique technical/expert knowledge.

Level 5: Responsible for, and demonstrates deep understanding of the application of conservation measures within and/or beyond own service/project aligning with aims objectives and budgetary requirements; has holistic grasp of complex conservation/preservation situations; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

18. Developing specialist knowledge and skills

This can include but not restricted to:

• Knowledge e.g. of period of history/type of record/object/material/deterioration;

• Skills: recordkeeping e.g. palaeography, cataloguing, exhibitions, Latin, digital ingest, specific software; preservation: digitisation processes (e.g. scanning), conservation specialisms (e.g. seals, environmental management, stationery binding); academic e.g. writing, research, publication, peer review, teaching.

Level 1: Understands and describes the knowledge/skills/experience used to develop the selected specialist knowledge/skill and recognises its relevance to the workplace and its contribution to the wider profession; describes reasons why relevant to her/himself; follows steps and guidance to complete basic processes.

Level 2: Identifies the stages to be gone through in order to become expert in the selected knowledge/skill area; own plan and targets may be in place; applies knowledge/skill at a basic level routinely and sometimes independently; beginning to use own judgement when making decisions when applying the knowledge/skill.

Level 3: Proficient in demonstrating the specific knowledge/skill; shares developing expertise with others; analyses and solves knowledge/skill specific problems, sharing solutions with others within and beyond own workplace; applies standardised and routine procedures and concepts; acts independently.

Level 4: Highly developed competence demonstrable against recognised benchmarks; recognises exceptions to commonly accepted standards and concepts; proactively seeks to share developing skills/knowledge and expertise to benefit others, making significant professional contributions through mentoring, advocacy, publication.

Level 5: Expert with authoritative and specialist knowledge giving rise to high degree of problem solving skill; confident decision-making based upon comprehensive experience; skill/knowledge achieved with ease ('second nature'); capable of analysing, improving and redefining accepted standards and concepts and publicising these.

Customer/Stakeholder area competencies with level descriptions

Area	Function	Competency
C. Customer/stakeholder	Understanding users and stakeholders	1. Identifying and developing policies for supporting internal and external users/ stakeholders including individuals and community groups.
		2. Planning and delivering activities to meet the needs and wants of internal and external users/stakeholders
		3. Meeting special needs (physical/intellectual) of individuals/groups
	Delivering a service to users	4. Promoting and providing facilities for access appropriate to the nature of information held
		5. Providing (intellectual) access to the content of records and archives on-site and on-line
	Engaging Users	6. Learning and development: providing opportunities for users
		7. Developing and sustaining local/virtual user and community networks
		8. Encouraging user and community engagement with service evaluation
		9. Undertaking marketing, advocacy and outreach activities to reach new communities
		10. Developing specialist skills and knowledge

1. **Identifying and developing policies for supporting internal and external users/stakeholders including individuals and community groups**

Level 1: Identifies, understands and can describe the nature and role of user individuals and groups, including volunteers, encountered in daily work activities.

Level 2: Supports internal/external user and stakeholder groups impacted by and impacting on the workplace/service in line with policies and procedures.

Level 3: Contributes to the development of, and delivers the service's policies/procedures regarding all internal/external users and stakeholders, including volunteers.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates the delivery of service policies/procedures with regard to current/potential user/stakeholder/community groups actively seeking growth and partnership in the range and number of these groups.

Level 5: Advocates for, scrutinises and influences the workplace ethos and policies with regard to user/stakeholder relationships, scanning for opportunities to impact new communities.

2. **Planning and delivering activities to meet the needs and wants of internal and external users/stakeholders**

Level 1: Undertakes satisfactorily, under supervision, activities involving relevant service users, including volunteers.

Level 2: Assists in delivering activities in partnership with key users and stakeholders (onsite/on-line) responding appropriately to specific requirements; welcomes new/unfamiliar users.

Level 3: Develops and implements workplace activities that respond to the needs of current/prospective user/stakeholder groups in partnership and consultation with them.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates the delivery of stakeholder activities, monitoring and updating as necessary.

Level 5: Takes a leadership approach to the workplace's strategic management of stakeholder activities at all levels and can justify decisions on how needs are met.

3. **Meeting special needs (physical and/or intellectual) of individuals/groups**

Level 1: Applies workplace policies appropriately for meeting special needs of users encountered in daily work activities in an inclusive manner.

Level 2: Selects and undertakes appropriate methods for helping people with special needs, demonstrating a sensitive and thoughtful consultative approach.

Level 3: Organises training for staff who might need to deliver services to people with special needs, ensuring an appropriate approach and ethos is maintained.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates policies/procedures to ensure that legal and regulatory requirements in the delivery of services to those with special needs are implemented appropriately and sensitively (physical; web sites etc.); on-going pro-active monitoring of such requirements and their delivery.

Level 5: Scrutinises the delivery of amenities and services to all those with special needs; ensures expectations are managed/met; workforce is imbued with inclusive ethos.

4. **Promoting and providing facilities for access appropriate to the nature of information held**

Level 1: Describes the nature of the workplace's access facilities (information security guidance, finding aids, reprography, research services, preservation); applies procedures and guidelines accurately and appropriately under supervision to users onsite and online.

Level 2: Assists in providing a comfortable working environment for onsite users, ensuring that they and online users are informed of the facilities and range of guidance available to them and proactively helps to deliver these; shows users how to use finding aids and to handle material in an open and friendly manner.

Level 3: Monitors and maintains supervisory and other requirements in a user-friendly manner to onsite/online users to ensure optimum experience; ensures facilities and guidance are well maintained and timely (web sites; microfilm readers); seeks on-going improvement of access facilities.

Level 4: Formulates and develops policies that ensure external best practice British/international/professional standards/guidance are implemented in provision of facilities to meet

ever-changing needs of a developing stakeholder base; contributes to innovation and developments in the sector (project activity, research, publication).

Level 5: Demonstrates leadership and innovation in the promotion and provision of access facilities, their delivery, evaluation and cost benefit, ensuring expectations are managed and met; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

5.   Providing (intellectual) access to the content of records and archives on-site and on-line

Level 1: Responds appropriately under supervision to requests from service users for basic information.

Level 2: Facilitates users' use of finding aids in relation to specific information requests; assists in projects that disseminate content more widely (e.g. digitisation projects).

Level 3: Contributes confidently to the creation of content for information access and finding aids (including metadata and content to computerised systems and digitised content); to the development and implementation of digitisation projects; responds appropriately to complex enquiries relating to content; assists in training others.

Level 4: Develops effective systems to enable optimum access to the content of records, archives and information and that user feedback is taken into account in their further development; keeps informed of developments in the sector on delivery of access to content; ensures training is in place; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Demonstrates leadership and innovation in the delivery of the workplace's access services, for advocating them and ensuring that expectations are being managed and met; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

6.   Learning and development: providing opportunities for users and stakeholders

Level 1: Describes the provision that the service/project makes in supporting and developing users to optimise their use of it (e.g. training, open days, community forums).

Level 2: Assists appropriately in delivering guidance and support to users of the service in an open, friendly and consultative manner.

Level 3: Contributes to methods used by the service (e.g. user forums) for identifying/providing for the learning and development needs of users in partnership with them.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates methods of ascertaining learning and development needs of users in consultation with them, and provides a managed programme for delivering training and other support, identifying barriers to learning and applying solutions.

Level 5: Innovates in the provision of learning and development opportunities for users/stakeholders/volunteers, ensuring this remains a priority within service delivery.

7.   Developing and sustaining local/virtual user and community networks

Level 1: Understands and can explain the value of maintaining good relationships with users and communities, including volunteers, in relation to own work environment.

Level 2: Interacts effectively and maintains good relationships with existing users and community groups, suggests ideas for new user activities and groups.

Level 3: Reaches out to communities, develops and applies the service's methods for engaging with them; monitors their activities and feedback.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates the setting up and maintenance of actual or virtual community networks that promote and deliver the service and support the community in their use of it (Web 2.0; social networks; friends' organisations); evaluates performance of such networks responsively and adjusts and enhances as necessary; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Leads in and advocates for the development of any network that will support the mission and aims of the service/project and its community of stakeholders; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

8. **Encouraging user and community engagement with service evaluation**

Level 1: Describes the advantages that are derived from consulting the service's user base as part of the process of improving it.

Level 2: Assists in the processes that are in place for engaging with users and proactively encourages their feedback and evaluation of the service.

Level 3: Contributes to, applies and analyses consultative evaluation processes (focus groups, questionnaires) and presents findings and recommendations.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and monitors evaluation processes in consultation with respective user groups; monitors their analysis and subsequent actions.

Level 5: Leads and innovates in the strategic development of community engagement and its evaluation, analysing, reporting, directing change and leading improvements.

9. **Undertaking marketing, advocacy and outreach activities to reach new communities, inform employers and other stakeholders**

Level 1: Works alongside colleagues undertaking outreach activities and contributes to these under supervision.

Level 2: Discusses workplace advocacy and outreach aims and objectives and undertakes some outreach activities (assisting preparation of exhibitions; guidance leaflets).

Level 3: Proactively supports the purposes of advocacy; engages in a range of outreach activities (giving presentations, contributing to publications, exhibition design, interpretation and display work, supporting Web 2.0 enabled initiatives); contributes to delivery of marketing and advocacy plans.

Level 4: Formulates, develops and evaluates short- to medium-term marketing and advocacy plans that identify outreach activities that can be delivered within budget; monitors delivery and evaluates impact, and updates and changes as necessary; continually seeks new advocacy opportunities; may contribute to innovation and developments in the sector (nationally and internationally) e.g. by project activity, research and publication.

Level 5: Initiates, advocates and justifies strategic aims and objectives, together with the budget, in relation to marketing, advocacy and outreach to all stakeholders, advocating and justifying their support; may demonstrate unique/highly specialist technical/expert knowledge.

10. **Developing specialist knowledge and skills**

This can include but not restricted to:

• Knowledge: e.g. of period of history/type of record/object/material/deterioration;

- Skills: recordkeeping e.g. palaeography, cataloguing, exhibitions, Latin, digital ingest, specific software; preservation: digitisation processes (e.g. scanning), conservation specialisms (e.g. seals, environmental management, stationery binding); academic e.g. writing, research, publication, peer review, teaching.

Level 1: Understands and describes the knowledge/skills/experience used to develop the selected specialist knowledge/skill and recognises its relevance to the workplace and its contribution to the wider profession; describes reasons why relevant to her/himself; follows steps and guidance to complete basic processes.

Level 2: Identifies the stages to be gone through in order to become expert in the selected knowledge/skill area; own plan and targets may be in place; applies knowledge/skill at a basic level routinely and sometimes independently; beginning to use own judgement when making decisions when applying the knowledge/skill.

Level 3: Proficient in demonstrating the specific knowledge/skill; shares developing expertise with others; analyses and solves knowledge/skill specific problems, sharing solutions with others within and beyond own workplace; applies standardised and routine procedures and concepts; acts independently.

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