

Development objective:

Please explain the development objective you have identified, and why. Please identify the competency or competencies from the ARA's framework that you think relates to the objective.

In order to successfully apply for Archive Service Accreditation, I needed to develop my abilities to complete a complex and multi-faceted application as well as refreshing my knowledge of the processes involved in writing policies and procedures.

Competency A2 Developing and using policies and procedures.

Competency C8 Encouraging user and community engagement with service evaluation

Development period:

The date or dates which the development took place.

████████████████████

Development activity:

What activity did you undertake to meet the objective? This should include details of events, training courses, workplace activity or voluntary activity outside the work place.

The decision by my employer to apply for Archive Service Accreditation was taken 12 months before I joined. My predecessor, the most senior member of archive staff, had made a start on the application before she moved to a new position with another employer. The application was then put on hold until her replacement was recruited.

My first task was to familiarise myself with the standard, the process and the application form. Thankfully there are very detailed and helpful guidance notes available online on the TNA website Accreditation pages. My next task was to review the preparatory work relating to the application. Although some of the documentation was still valid it was clear that quite a bit of the other work had been superseded in time and that in any case there was plenty still to address before we could apply.

I introduced myself to some of TNA's accreditation team and gained further insight from them before preparing local versions of the paperwork (rather than starting online), noting which questions I could answer and which ones I could not, and why (for example, where the answer required a policy or plan that was not yet available).

I quickly realised that I would require the assistance of a number of colleagues to properly complete the application. I set up a project group so that I could manage/co-ordinate how I worked with colleagues and what information and support I required from them and their teams (e.g. archive development, information, preservation and digital records). Over time policies and plans were written and the application started to come together. While this was going on I kept in touch with TNA, updating them on progress.

Reflection:

Use examples to show how you have applied what you have learned to your work. Think about what went well, what didn't go well, and how you will continue to develop.

When first faced with a task like this it can seem overwhelming. However, as with any complex project, with time and as parts of the application came together, it became evident that the process is perfectly manageable once you have understood what is required and broken it down into smaller chunks of work.

The assistance provided by TNA was invaluable, as it helped me get to grips with the key elements of the application. I was effectively learning as I progressed, but I did so with a certain degree of confidence; I am experienced in planning and managing complex projects.

The process was also a great learning experience in how to tackle policy writing. A considered look at guidance, combined with looking at outdated policies we already had allowed me to see how to produce something that would be useful for my employer while also fulfilling the needs of Accreditation.

Overall I was pleased with the application. However, I should have formed the project group earlier on in the process. The workloads created were not appreciated, although everyone recognised the importance/value of the exercise. Some group members may have responded more positively if I had also taken the time to speak to them informally. An early warning is always appreciated. Although I spent time thinking through all the necessary steps, I should have consulted before doing so. With hindsight I can see that my plan would have been strengthened if I had engaged with others and factored in their competing priorities.