
Existing records and archival programmes to the job market

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Abstract

Records and archival education and training programmes all over the world are facing increased pressure from the job market to produce records and archive practitioners that can meet the challenges of the rapidly changing job-market terrain. The lack of adequate resources including competent teaching/training personnel and facilities continue to erode the capability of the existing programmes. This paper argues that although Africa has in the recent past witnessed a marked increase in the resident records and archival programmes, the outcomes of these programmes remain less matched to the requirements of the job market. The flip side of the argument is whether the job market has been definitive enough on what is required of the existing records and archival programmes. The discrepancies, for example in the job advertisements, in the qualifications and competencies required for similar posts point to the lack of any uniformity or standards by employers. The paper outlines the nature of the current records and archival programmes in Africa in general and South Africa in particular; it evaluates the available resources; attempts to determine causes of the mismatch between the outcomes of the current programmes vis-à-vis the job-market requirements; and identifies and discusses possible major challenges facing the profession in its efforts to respond to the requirements of a dynamic job-market and the society at large. The paper recommends review of the existing programmes with particular attention to the resources required to achieve the desired outcomes. Continuous engagement between records and archival educators, government, professional bodies and the representatives of the job-market is encouraged.

Keywords: Professional education and training, archive and records management, outcomes, job market

1 Introduction

Education and training for archivists and records managers at present has no ideal programme. There are various options based on the purpose for which training is sought. According to the International Records Management Trust (2000) education and training programme may be in the form of pre-appointment education; on the job introductory education and training; post appointment continuing education; awareness raising for non-record personnel; graduate level advanced education; and short course training for skills development. Schulz (1988) says that the programmes can be offered anywhere deemed suitable for the training such as in-house, by universities and colleges, by consultants, and professional associations. Schulz (1988:320) further observes, however, that ‘although much attention has been paid to the form of education and training, relatively little has been paid to the needs of the work places hiring the archivists’.

The current archivist is no longer the person Jenkinson (1965) defined. Jenkinson saw the archivist as a custodian playing a passive role. But at present the activities of an archivist have thrust him/her in the limelight where he/she is actively involved in what Gabehart

(1992:421) recognised as ‘numerous functional areas: records management, archival buildings and storage facilities, records preservation and rehabilitation, archival arrangement and description, reference services and other.’ The author is of the opinion that the present archivist must do more than what Jenkinson prescribed because the employers now look for people who possess the appropriate combination of educational preparation and practical training suitable to match the needs of their institutions.

Moreover, unlike the times of Jenkinson and other pioneers of the profession, archivists no longer exclusively work for the government. They are employed in both the public and private sectors. This paradigmatic shift calls for the involvement of both the trainers/educators and the end users, i.e. the employers. This study looked at how this paradigm shift impacts Africa in general and South Africa in particular in the education and training of archivists and their fitness for the current job market.

The debate on the role of the current training and education programmes for archivists and records managers and the marketplace is considered appropriate because we cannot continue training for ‘unemployment’. There has not been much interaction between trainers and employers on this point but this does not mean that there are no issues pertaining to the suitability or not of the outcomes of the current education and training programmes to the job market. Joyce (1988:22) supports this and opines that

there is precious little evidence...of what the employers of archivists really want in the way of education of prospective archivists. [But] If we believe in our profession and in its future, we have no urgent task than to work with the prospective employers of archivists to learn their needs and to make them aware of the purposes and benefits of our education programs. There is little future for a community of the competent if there are no jobs for those designated as competent.

2 Background to the training of archivists and records managers in Africa

The training of archivists and records managers in Africa is still on the long journey of establishing viable education and training programmes. Most of the current practising archivists and records managers cannot be assumed to have had the necessary archives education and training. A number of them have learned on the job or have attended short courses which hardly make them to have the required education background and competencies. Unlike the training programmes in librarianship, structured archival and records management education and training programmes in Africa can be said to be still struggling to establish themselves amid several handicaps. Most archivists who practised before mid-1980s either did not have any training or were trained overseas. Early training for archivists in Sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa then, can be attributed mostly to efforts by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Council on Archives (ICA). It was under the auspices of UNESCO and ICA that two centres to train archivists in Africa were established in the early 1970s. The school in Accra, Ghana was to cater for the ‘Anglophone’ Africa while the one in Dakar, Senegal catered for the ‘Francophone’ Africa. With the lapse of the UNESCO support, the centres became unsustainable as providers of archival training for Sub-Saharan Africa. This left most African countries with few options for the training of archivists and records managers.

Since the 1980s more institutions have been established in various African countries to train archivists (Kattuu 2009). Most of the institutions are based at the universities and intermediate colleges or institutions. In a few countries private institutions and individuals are

also involved in the training of archival and records management staff. Ngulube (2001:157) observes that ‘an analysis of education and training programmes in Anglophone Africa reveals wide differences with respect to content, composition of curriculum, certification, standards of provision and duration’. Our fear today is that although it is almost ten years since this observation was made, the situation may not have changed so much. In various countries there has been a proliferation of institutions which have involved themselves in the education and training of ‘archivists’ and ‘records managers without proper accreditation by the relevant accrediting authorities or bodies. It is argued that these institutions including some of those with proper accreditation may be turning out products with skills and qualifications that are possibly not portable and less competitive either on the local or international market. This paper is yet another attempt at identifying and discussing issues pertinent to the current education and training programmes for archivists and records managers in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and South Africa in particular and how the training impacts or is impacted by the marketplace. The major assumption is that the current education and training programmes do not adequately match the demand of the marketplace.

3 Methodology

Desktop research was the main method used to gather information on the subject under review. By using Internet, the researcher accessed information on courses offered by universities that are currently involved in the training of archivists and records managers in South Africa. To identify the impact of the training on the job market, job advertisement in the print press and on the internet were traced and analysed. Ocholla (2005) found this to be a reliable method of analysing the available job markets for students studying librarianship. Literature on the education and training of archivists and records managers was consulted especially the report on the recently completed survey on the ‘Demand for the supply of skills in library and information services, archival services and records management’. The survey was commissioned by the Department of Arts and Culture.

4 Findings and discussion

Except for the course offered by the National Archives and Records Services (NARS) of South Africa, courses on archives and records management in South Africa are offered at tertiary institutions mostly at the universities. Private consultants are also players in this field although the courses they offer are short and in most cases no certificates of qualification are issued.

4.1 Education and training

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering education and training programmes in archives and records management include the University of South Africa (UNISA), the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), University of Fort Hare (UFH), University of Johannesburg (UJ), and the University of Witwatersrand (WITS). UNISA and UFH also offer short courses in this field. Except for the UFH, full description of the modules offered was not on the Internet. Analysis of the modules indicates that the training offered at these institutions covers the traditional areas of records and archives management namely: records management, archives administration, and preservation and conservation.

The courses offered by UNISA are by means of distance teaching with the assistance of study guides, prescribed books and readers. Lecturers are available through telephone

contact and e-mail. Course work is organised by means of tutorial letters. The courses in the other universities are mostly residential and fulltime.

There is no indication of the current student population in these courses except for the University of Fort Hare which indicated the current student population of 30 for postgraduate diploma, and 10 for masters.

The teaching staff is quite thin on the ground on all campuses. No university seems to indicate satisfaction with the current staff complement. UNISA indicate a fulltime staff of three, UFH 1, but there is no staff indication for the other institutions although it may be assumed that they could be in similar problems with the staffing situation.

It is important to note that courses offered by HEIs are rarely done on the basis of demand and supply of the market forces. The HEIs are still struggling to come to terms with the ivory tower syndrome as they try 'to land at the market place' as dictated by the current higher education and training context. As a result the University education and training is still regarded as a liberating agent other than preparing people for particular positions or specific jobs. It is argued that the objective of University education and training is to 'grow' people who while being marketable are at the same time able to adapt easily to whatever environment they may find themselves in.

4.2 The job market

Education and training especially at the pre-employment level in South Africa at present seems to have no correlation with the job market. There has been public talk of creating so many jobs within a given period of time but no disaggregated statistics have been given on how the number of jobs shall be shared out. Those engaged in education and training at various levels hardly have any figures to work with. Therefore, they tend to train by 'faith' that someone out there will need their products.

The job market needs are sometimes or not reflected in the advertisements for jobs. An analysis of job advertisement in the local press and the internet for the last three years may be key to extrapolating the job market's perception of an archivist or records manager. Two scenarios seem to emerge: the job market is not conversant with the qualification, duties, and responsibilities of an archivist or records manager; secondly the market knows them but would like to add more but more likely with a higher or lower remuneration package! Sample the following:

Supervisor Information Records Management (Basic Salary Plus Benefits Negotiable)

Permanent Skilled level position

Benefits: Medical Aid, Pension, Bonus

International Engineering Company seeks an **Information/Records Management Supervisor**

Main responsibilities:

Under administrative supervision, analyses, evaluates and implements procedures to achieve information management objectives. Performs supervisory and training duties, initiates quality control procedures and monitors workflow, recommends modifications to existing procedures, systems and methods of operation, assists in training and supervision and may be required to give presentations to Project.

Minimum 5 years experience in document management and a broad technical knowledge of automated documents management systems. Leadership skills and development talent. Technical knowledge. Excellent relationship skills

COMMENT: Rather scanty in details. Prospective employee may be curious to know the amount of work involved in order to compare it to the remuneration package offered

A major bank is looking for an **Information management specialist** that will be responsible for the design, modelling and management of various content and information strategies that will ensure the reuse and implementation of content.

In addition this candidate will also be responsible for development and implementation of information, content and records management policies and best practices.

The Information Management Specialist will also be responsible to assist the Unit in communicating, marketing and use of unified content of Client.

SKILLS REQUIRED

Content management expertise: 3-5 years appropriate experience, not to be limited to Web Content management.

Exposure to document management and workflow

Metadata and taxonomy creation

Experience in the banking sector, with specific focus on the retail banking domain

Knowledge of retail banking products (eg home loans, asset based finance, current accounts, credit cards and lending)

Experience in the IT industry will be an advantage

Exposure to project management

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Excellent time management and organisational skills

Excellent written and oral communication skills

Must be customer focused

Must work well under pressure and changing priorities

Strong prioritization and organisational skills

Flexibility to work in a changing, fast-paced environment

Strong sense of urgency and accountability

EDUCATION: Informatics/Information Systems/ Information Science Degree

COMMENT: Clear cut required skills and personal attributes. The job is calling for someone just more than an information management specialist, e.g. knowledge of banking. Most practising archivists and records managers may not have these skills. Perhaps some institutions may need to send one of their own for training.

PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN (Level 8)

Requirements

Incumbent must be in possession of relevant three year-Bachelor's Degree or Diploma

Must have at least three years' experience as a librarian

Relevant courses will be to the advantage of the incumbent

Valid driver's licence

Excellent writing, presentation and verbal skills

Fluency in at least two official languages one of which must be English

Core Functions:

Establish and maintain a Provincial Library

Manage all administrative responsibilities related to library

Procurement and distribution of all relevant government publications to stations

COMMENT: An example of a profession with clear grading of the levels of entry which is still lacking in the archives and records management

ASSISTAND DIRECTOR: HUMAN RESOURCES & RECORDS MANAGMENT

REQUIREMENTS

A three year degree or Equivalent qualification in Human Resources Management OR Grade 12 with extensive relevant experience. Strategic planning, project management, decisiveness, interpersonal, general management and business insight skills. Knowledge of all legislation pertaining to Human Resource Management, Development and Employee Relations and Policy application. Relevant experience and exposure to Human Resource Management and Government Financial Management (PFMA). Knowledge of Government financial management system. Computer literacy. Valid Code 8 driver's licence.

DUTIES

Manage the functions of the internal Human Resources & Integrated Records Management within HRM legislation and the National Archives Act. Operationalise the Department's Human Resource Management Plan and Policy. Ensure adherence to HMD and HRD Policies and Procedures. Promote sound Employee Relations in the office. Coordinate programme and project related to Human Resource Management and Development functions. Assist in aligning the overall office Operational Plan with the Departmental Plan. Manage the Compensation of Employee Budget of the Region in line with Organisational structure and establishment. Provide strategic advice for the office within the Management Team

COMMENT: Why should HRM be more linked to records management than other departments or sections such as finance, procurement, etc? Does HRM training include in archives and records management?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS/ARCHIVES/REGISTRY

MANAGER

REQUIREMENTS

Qualifications: Appropriate B-degree or equivalent qualification. Code 8 Driver's licence. Extensive experience in records management. Sound knowledge of archives and records/archives management legislation. Successful completion of the National Archives and Records services "Records Management" course. Good management and leadership abilities. Extensive experience as supervisor and junior manager. Analytical thinking and innovation. Communication and writing skills as well as an ability to engage in high level negotiations. Excellent interpersonal relations skills. Computer literacy with expert knowledge of MS Office Suite. Proven program and project management skills. Public speaking and presentation skills.

DUTIES: This Department manages +-2100 File subjects:-Manage the records/archives/registry i.r.o the Department Head Office, Head Office consist of +-80000 current files and +-90000 archive files. Manage the records/archives/registry i.r.o the Department's 14 Regional Office. Regional Office consists of +-100000 current files and +-60000 archive files across respective Regional offices. Proven experience in managing large-scale operations as indicated above. Regular travelling will be required. Develop, maintain and review a file-plan for the Department. Ensure proper management care of all in the Department. Manage records management staff and registries to ensure sound records management practices. Develop and implement policy framework and administrative/manual workflow process. Liaise with other information stakeholders within the Department. Conduct an audit of records management practices to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Initiate a systematic disposal and appraisal of records in the Department. Train staff and clients from the department in records management and registry.

COMMENT: This is a senior post with the responsibility of managing huge amount of records and possibly the personnel involved. It therefore requires more advanced training in records management than the short course offered at the National Archives.

Job Vacancies International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Position: Digital Records Management Officer

Location: United States of America (The), Washington

Length of Contractual Assignment:

One year from date of appointment (with possibility of renewal)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is seeking a records management professional with strong technical expertise to assist with an on-going implementation of an electronic records system across the organization and assist with other archives and records related systems. The position is located at IMF Headquarters in downtown Washington, DC.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the general supervision of a Senior Archives and Records Management Officer, the specific responsibilities of the Digital Records Management Officer may include any of the following.

* Implement the Electronic Records Management System (Autonomy Records Manager) including:

o Implement records management policies such as file plans and retention schedules

- o Develop and test electronic records procedures and workflows
- o Develop and test business rules for automated declaration and filing of records
- o Develop and update the [records management](#) educational material
- o Assist with developing strategy and testing approaches for capturing email as a record
- * Provide business analysis support for Archives and Records projects including requirements gathering and workflow design.
- * Provide [technical support](#) for several Archives and Records systems – including maintaining technical/user documentation, identifying new requirements and writing enhancement specifications, and developing test scripts for systems, providing training
- * Liaise with records management staff on the implementation and maintenance of file plans, retention schedules, training program and other project efforts.
- * Participate in enterprise-wide IT projects to ensure that institutional records management requirements are addressed.
- * Research Archives and Records technology topics for projects as needed.
- * Provide web support as needed for Archives & Records Web pages using SharePoint team collaboration and project sites.
- * General duties may include: updating budget report spreadsheets, maintaining project files and assisting with tasks as assigned on systems related efforts.

Qualifications:

- * Good working knowledge of and experience with electronic management principles and systems; experience with Autonomy Records Manager application is desirable;
- * Familiarity with the technical guidelines contained in ISO 15489 – International Standard for Records Management and DoD 5015.2 Standards;
- * Experience with creating/managing [information systems](#) and databases;
- * Experience with MS Office Applications – Word, Excel; PowerPoint, Visio, Project and Access;
- * Excellent English written and verbal communication skills; including writing user/technical documentation;
- * Strong analytical and problem-solving skills;
- * Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work as a member of a team is required and an ability to interact with staff from diverse cultures and backgrounds highly desirable;
- * Experience with basic HTML, XML, SQL and Crystal Reports desirable;
- * Experience with Enterprise Content Management Systems, including SharePoint, is desirable.

Educational Requirements

Education typically acquired by the completion of a relevant advanced university degree in Records Management, Archives Management, Library and Information Science, or related field and a minimum of two years relevant professional experience is required. Or a bachelor degree in a related field together with professional certification in records management (CRM) plus a minimum of six years relevant professional experience is required.

COMMENT: This is an international job open to all nations of the world. Can products from our current archives and records management programmes compete?

If the foregoing advertisements represent the job market's perception of the profession then it can be argued that there is lack of a strong correlation between the current education and training archives and records management programmes and the job market in South Africa at present. This may be attributed to a number of factors.

The existing education and training archives and records management programmes are reluctantly responding to the technological change that is increasingly impacting the information landscape since the 1990s. This is despite the fact that the market place has almost yielded to the forces of globalisation as driven by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The slow response to change by education and training programmes is not surprising. University based programmes are normally rigid once accredited. Any variation in the curriculum has to undergo rigorous internal and external quality assurance processes. It is possible that the current shortage of staff leaves no space to the already overworked academics to embark on this demanding exercise.

As the South African business environment becomes more global and as technological advances continue to dictate where and when business transactions are undertaken, the job market requires graduates who are capable and competent to contribute to their operations in an innovative manner. The recent survey on the skills required by the South African information sector indicates that employers require people who, besides being competent in the traditional management of archives and records, are competent enough to manage sophisticated digital or electronic records. Employers are also keen to hire people with good communication skills, team working, self-management, customer awareness, and problem solving skills. Most of the current programmes seem not to have the requisite module mix as well as resources to produce this type of human resource.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

The current education and training structure of the archives and records management programmes at HEIs needs an overhaul. For this to be more effective it has to be undertaken at all education and training bands-the FET and HET bands. These are the bands responsible for the education and training of human resources for archives and records management. The new structure should seek to respond effectively to the increasingly changing information terrain in the country. Besides the traditional areas of archival and records management education and training the reviewed curriculum should give more attention to hitherto overlooked niche areas such as electronic records archiving and management, audio-visual archiving, and preservation and conservation of digital records. Besides this, students should be encouraged to acquire knowledge in areas outside of their discipline. This will broaden their knowledge horizon as well as the environment they are required to operate. It is important for the exercise of reviewing the curriculum to involve all stakeholders such as the employers as representative of the job market, relevant government structures and students. Hynes *et al* (2011:17) are of the view that a 'discussion on the benefits accruing to students, industry and the education institution highlight important points for consideration' when an alternative to the existing system is being sought for.

The objectives of an education and training programme cannot be achieved without sufficient and qualified academic staff. The current academic staff are clearly overwhelmed by the load of teaching and administration before them. The first hurdle to overcome if the overhauling of the current curriculum is to be realized is the revamping of the current staff complement in all institutions running these training programmes. The programmes require staff with expertise in the key areas of the profession. It cannot be true that one or two

academics can have all the expertise required to run an education and training programme in all aspects of archives and records management. Staff who can competently handle emerging but vitally important training areas such as digitization, digital curation and preservation, audio-visual and digital archiving, records management electronic solutions, enterprise content management, open archival information system, etc. It is only by exposing the students to these areas of archival and records management knowledge and operation that we can be assured of producing a competitive product that will be attractive to both the local and international markets.

Archival and records management programmes like programmes in other disciplines must seek to achieve competencies set up in the curriculum. Competencies and the outcomes of an education and training programme should be synonymous but can this be said of our current programmes? Is a student graduating with a degree or postgraduate diploma be able to perform the tasks that are spelt out as the outcomes we need to look for at the completion of the course? The question of achieving competencies in archival and records management education and training is not limited to our programmes. It has exercised the minds of educators and trainers all over the world. Anderson (2007) admirably discusses some of the debates surrounding the term competencies and seems to indicate that the debate is very active to an extent that some countries are yet to settle on the real meaning of the term and how it should be applicable to their education and training programmes. Here too there is cause for concern as to whether or not the necessary competencies are being achieved at the end of our programmes. Is graduating after passing written examinations an indication that the necessary competencies have been achieved? The answer to this question can only come from the educators, trainers, the relevant government structures, the professional association and the end users such as the employers. As a participant in the education and training programme this writer argues that the outcomes of the current curricula are rarely achieved. Most of the students graduating from the programme do not possess the required competencies. Many reasons can be advanced for these but suffice it to state that the current education system is still trapped in the examination syndrome buttressed with excessive managerialism.

Situated or practice-based learning should be explored and encouraged. In many disciplines-law, medicine, accountancy, social work, education, library, etc-students are placed in institutions where they are afforded opportunity to put theory into practice (Cook 2000). It is argued this also presents an opportunity for the market place to participate in the training and shaping the type of person they need at the end of the course. Hynes *et al* (2011:19) opine that 'contemporary management problems require that students have the ability to leverage both their experience (know how) and the knowledge (know what), thereby centralising the relationship between experience and theory. Practice-based programmes are ideally placed to operationalize this relationship'. Students in archives and records management programmes do take practicum in the course of their studies but the results have rather been less impressive. There seems to be more loss than gain if the experiences from the University of Fort Hare are being replicated elsewhere in the country. The present writer coordinates the fieldwork attachment for the department. The students experience only three weeks of practical attachment during the entire duration of their course. This duration is hardly enough to learn anything substantial in a new environment. A new approach to students' practicum is required and situated or practice-based learning would be one of them especially for those institutions located in cities where there are industries and institutions that would host students for this purpose.

Short courses should be restricted to post-appointment or in service training. The courses should as much as possible target those from organisations with similar organization culture. Courses of this nature should be offered in progressions. Participants, for example, should not be allowed on a course if they have not attended a course which may be considered to be a prerequisite to the course being offered. Employers should use short courses to fill up the short falls in the courses offered at the university or other institutions. Anderson (2007: 99) feels that employers should not expect their new employee to arrive with all the skills required for the performance of their tasks. The author argues that each organisation has 'particular procedures tailored to their particular environment. No professional education qualification can substitute for the comprehensive induction programmes that are the responsibility of the employer'.

The support of a professional organization is valuable to any profession. In countries like Australia, Canada, Britain, France, Germany and United States of America the professional associations have been very instrumental in matters pertaining to education and training, standards (eg National Qualification Framework), job grading, and many other issues that affect the profession (Ellis & Greening 2002). For example, a professional association may be involved in carrying out feasibility studies on programmes aimed at developing competencies framework for the training of archivists and records managers. This can be done either at the national (South African Society of Archivists) or regional (Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives) level.

Education and training awareness should be extended to non-archivists and records managers who in some way or another are involved in matters pertaining to records or archives. They may be users or decision-makers. The group to be targeted for the training should include among others, directors, managers, company secretaries, lawyers, accountants, and auditors. Archives and records are among the major assets of any institution and it is therefore important that employees and other stakeholders are trained in the importance of proper management of archives and records.

A forum for employers, educators, and other relevant stakeholders should be formed to deal with matters pertaining to education and training and the job market. The National Archives and Records Services should coordinate this forum.

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