



Professional Learning Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the scope of the Association's operations in providing professional learning opportunities.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF POLICY

For the purposes of this policy, "professional learning" is defined as those activities coordinated by the Association that promote greater knowledge of the principles and practices of archival science as well as other topics and issues of interest to the archival community.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Association is committed to facilitating the ongoing development of archival professionals through opportunities for ongoing learning and networking.

Education for archivists is one of the core activities defined in the Association's initial objects when it was first incorporated. Consequently, the Association has a strong focus on the provision of professional learning activities to its members. The Association believes that a well-educated archival profession with access to ongoing professional development opportunities is critical to creating a strong sense of communal professional identity and to developing the skilled workforce necessary to meet the continually evolving needs of employers, society, and the archival records themselves.

The Association recognizes that there are a number of challenges in the provision of professional learning opportunities for archivists in Canada:

- Archivists are spread across the country, in remote areas in which it is difficult for the Association to establish and maintain a presence. \
- Archivists and their employers have limited budgets for professional learning activities.
- Archivists typically seek to have some form of acknowledgement that they have completed a course of study.
- The learning needs of archivists evolve over their careers, and each archivist develops an individual, preferred learning style.
- The content of professional learning changes as new developments and issues arise within the profession and society.



- Universities, colleges, provincial and territorial archival councils and associations, and other national and international archival organizations offer professional learning opportunities in the field of archival science and related disciplines, resulting in more than one institution offering similar content and thereby creating competition among them.
- While professional learning is a key priority, the Association has finite funds to address the professional learning needs of the archival community at a national level.

The Association addresses these challenges through the following policy directions:

- The Association will seek to offer professional learning opportunities using a variety of methods, including online and in-person offerings and those that are revenue generating as well as those that are included with membership fees.
- The Association attempts to offer its professional learning activities at a variety of locations and time periods for its events while being mindful that the list of locations is often limited to those larger centres which have very cost-effective air and/or rail service, such as Toronto and Montreal.
- In light of past discussions within the community and respecting historical precedents, the Association will focus its professional learning initiatives entirely on more advanced subjects in the field of archival science and related disciplines, specifically leaving introductory or basic learning opportunities to be developed and offered by the provincial and territorial archival councils and associations.
- All professional learning opportunities offered by the Association will represent valuable, content-rich experiences that contribute to the participant's ongoing professional development needs.
- When the Association pays for the development of the curriculum of specific professional learning opportunities, it will own the subsequent product which then may be licensed for use by others, subject to the terms and conditions of contracts related to these initiatives.
- The Association may contract with an instructor(s) to present a particular professional learning opportunity, in which case the instructor(s) retains all rights to her/his presentations, subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.



- The Association does not provide a continuing course of studies leading to certificates, diplomas, or degrees, leaving those activities to universities, colleges, and other post-secondary institutions. The Association may offer certificates of completion for individual professional learning opportunities that it presents.
- In instances where fees are charged for professional learning opportunities, the Association will review the costs to present each opportunity based on an analysis of the costs of service, current market conditions, and fees charged by similar organizations, while it will ensure that its professional learning fees generate revenue over costs to sustain the operations of the Association. Participation fees will be kept reasonable and are usually discounted for current Association members as a member benefit.

To achieve the goals of the preceding policy directions, the Association offers the following events and programs as the core of its professional learning initiatives:

- Annual Conference: The Association offers an annual conference, which provides case studies, panel discussions on issues of importance to the community, and presentations on new and innovative research. Further details are available in the Association's Conference Policy.
- Workshops: The Association offers two types of workshops:
 - Offered as a means of leveraging the presence of potential instructors and delegates at the Annual Conference, the Association coordinates workshops designed for both archivists in the region hosting the conference as well as the many individuals travelling to attend the conference. These workshops offer learning for intermediate and advanced-level archivists and cover a range of relevant and timely topics. Workshops vary in duration, from one-half day to two days, and are typically offered prior to, or following the Annual Conference.
 - The Association develops and presents online workshops on diverse topics in the field of archival science and related disciplines in order to provide professional learning opportunities at a distance.
- Institute: The Association's Institute offers a more intense learning experience, featuring topics and curriculum designed for archivists at a more advanced level. Institute sessions typically last two to three days and feature topics suggested by members, which is an expression of interest in and demand for the subject.



- **Special Interest Sections:** These Sections provide a forum for discussion among members who share specific professional interests or members who are committed to advocacy around specific causes. Sections offer the opportunity for networking with like-minded archivists as well as the recognition of common issues. The creation of Sections recognizes the increasing diversity and specialization within the profession. The process surrounding the creation and management of Special Interest Sections are found in Section 9 of the Association's bylaw.
- **Student Chapters:** The Association encourages students at Canadian colleges and universities with programs related to archiving to form local student chapters. The goal of the Association's student chapters is to allow students in related disciplines to get involved, share learning experiences and connect with the Association, its members, and their future profession. The processes surrounding the creation and management of Student Chapters are found in Section 10 of the Association's bylaw.
- **Mentorship Program:** The Association manages a Mentoring Program to help new archivists in smaller organizations connect with and integrate into the Canadian archival community. Through the program, the Association matches students and recent graduates of archival studies programs, as well as others who have recently entered the profession, with experienced mentors who can advise and guide these new entrants with their work and career.

The list outlined above is not exhaustive, and the type of professional learning activities offered by the Association may change with the addition of new activities or the discontinuation of existing categories. The Association may discontinue any category or subcategory of professional learning activity if there is declining or minimal interest in it. Specifically with respect to workshops, the Association reserves the right to reschedule or cancel a scheduled professional development activity if revenues for the workshop are insufficient to cover its costs, with the process of cancellation and any refund of registration fees guided by a cancellation policy (Annex 1).

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

In order to achieve the goals of this policy, the Association will:

- Define the directions for its professional learning initiatives, and review them to ensure their relevance;
- Provide support and management to all of its professional learning initiatives, including defining roles and responsibilities for them;
- Define a policy for cancellation of professional learning events including a refund policy, review it to ensure its relevance, and publicize its principles and deadlines. (Annex 1)



ACCOUNTABILITIES

General Principles

Association members are bound by the Volunteer Code of Conduct when participating in Association business, declaring conflicts of interest, and maintaining confidentiality of information. Employees and contractors of the Association are bound by the terms of their job descriptions or contracts regarding the handling of communications duties; in the absence of any specific terms, this policy and the Volunteer Code of Conduct will apply as best practices documents.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides oversight and review over the policy to ensure that it remains relevant to the professional learning needs of members. It ensures that a Board member serves as liaison to those committees, student chapters, and special interest sections with an interest in professional learning so that their concerns are shared with the Board on a regular basis. In particular, a Director at Large is the primary liaison to the student chapters and special interest sections.

The Board of Directors approves all professional learning offerings presented by the Association, fee schedules and contractual relationships. In particular, the Board approves the themes or topics for workshops & institutes as a mechanism to ensure that consultation has taken place with the respective provincial/territorial archives and provincial/territorial archives council(s) based on the location recommended for each workshop and also based on a financial analysis of the workshop (e.g. expected number of participants vs. event expenses) such that each workshop is operated on break-even or revenue positive position.

Some elements of these responsibilities may be delegated to the Secretariat as part of its day-to-day administration of the Association's operations with respect to professional learning.

Membership Development

The Membership Development Committee is responsible for the oversight and management of the mentorship program. Further details about the mentorship program are located in the Committee's operations guide.

Professional Learning

The Professional Learning Committee is responsible for aspects of workshops, occurring both at the Annual Conference and other times, as well as the Institute. Further details about these activities are located in the Committee's operations guide.

Online Learning

The Online Learning Committee is responsible for aspects of workshops presented online.



Conference Host and Program Teams

The operations of the conference are managed by a partnership of the Board, Secretariat, and the Conference Host and Program teams. Further details about this relationship are found in the Association's Conference Policy.

Secretariat

The Secretariat provides day-to-day operations support for professional learning including contractual arrangements, registration and administrative support. It works with the Board and the committees responsible for aspects of professional learning to ensure adherence to this policy and that its objectives are being met. In concert with the responsible committee, the Secretariat also monitors the professional learning activities to gauge interest and determine whether events must be cancelled according to the principles of the cancellation and refund policy.

Members

As primary stakeholders of the Association, members are encouraged to suggest content needed for workshops and Institutes that meet their professional learning needs. They are also encouraged to submit conference proposals related to the conference theme, form and take part in special interest sections and student chapters as applicable, and take part in the mentorship program as a newcomer to the profession or as a mentor sharing their experiences.



Annex 1: Professional Learning Cancellation and Refund Policy

- The Association reserves the right to cancel professional learning events due to a low number of registrants or for other factors that impede the ability of the Association to hold the event.
- In the event that the Association cancels a professional learning event, individuals registered for that event receive full refunds of fees paid for that event.
- If a registrant requests to withdraw their registration in a professional learning event, the registrant must inform the Association in writing by the specified deadline date.
- Registrants who withdraw from professional learning events are entitled to refunds of registration fees under the following conditions:
- Refunds are only available prior to the deadlines and under conditions set by the Association at its discretion and advertised on the registration form for that professional learning activity. Refunds will not be issued after that deadline has passed.
- Refund requests are subject to the cancellation penalties set by the Association at its discretion and advertised on the registration form for that professional learning activity.