

New Archivists Seeking Employment: Exploring Entry-Level Jobs in Archives

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ABSTRACT: Resulting from a collaborative student project undertaken during a master's of library science program, and since revised to include additional data, this article investigates jobs available to recent master's degree graduates by examining entry-level archival job advertisements found in the ALA Job Advertisements from August 2006 through March 2013. Job requirements, location, required degrees and specializations, experience, assigned public and technical services tasks, and digital skills were reviewed, as well as the shift in educational requirements and professional tasks. The data's examination provides in broad conclusions for the profession at large, which are particularly useful to students, professors, and hiring managers.

Introduction

Current library science graduate students specializing in archives programs wonder about the state of the job market they are entering. The recent economic downturn in the United States resulted in the loss of employment and greater competition for available jobs. At the time this article was initially written, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in January 2013, the unemployment rate was 7.9%.¹ Although the July 2016 unemployment rate, at 4.9%, is a significant improvement, anecdotal evidence suggests that many students remain worried about finding a job after graduation.² According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, archival job growth was projected at 7% between 2014 and 2024, the same rate for all occupations.³ However, librarian, curator, and archivist jobs grouped together projected growth of only 4% between 2014 and 2024.⁴ The competition for archival jobs will be high because applicants will outnumber the available jobs.⁵

To gain better insight into archival positions available to recent master's of library science degree graduates, this article examines postings for entry-level archives jobs, defined as those requiring up to two years of experience and for which a new job seeker may reasonably expect to qualify, and answers five main questions:

1. Where are entry-level archival jobs located?
2. What tasks are entry-level archivists expected to perform?
3. In what types of institutions are entry-level archival jobs found?
4. Which types of academic degrees, specializations, and coursework are required or preferred for entry-level archival jobs?
5. How prominently do digital tasks appear in advertisements for archival entry-level jobs?

By gaining a better understanding of the archival job market, students can look to course offerings as well as volunteer and internship opportunities to plan for the types of archives positions they wish to pursue. In addition, professors and supervisors are better able to help their students prepare for postgraduate plans. When students, professors, and internship supervisors are aware of the expectations for entry-level jobs, current students will be better prepared for their first professional jobs.

Literature Review

Archival education programs in the United States are a relatively recent development, first prominently appearing in the 1970s.⁶ Before this time, James O'Toole and Richard Cox claimed that "archivists were most often individuals who had fallen into the profession on their way to or from something else."⁷ An archival education could be obtained through library science as well as history programs, and often only a course or two was necessary to secure a position as an archivist.⁸ In his article exploring the changes and progress of archival education, Timothy L. Ericson noted that in 1978 three-quarters of employers required or preferred a master's degree, usually in history, while less than a quarter of employers required a master's of library science (MLS).⁹ By 1991, the preference was for a MLS alone, or a combined MLS and MA in history in over half of job postings.¹⁰ Ericson's information was taken from job advertisements found in the *SAA Newsletter*.

Alan D. Gabehart's 1992 article examines many of the same questions we sought to answer in our own research. However, Gabehart surveyed archivists already employed at institutions rather than those exploring job advertisements. Surveying archivists and supervisors already employed at institutions to understand tasks, salary, and educational requirements was a common trend in the existing literature, although it focused on current archivists of all ranks in the profession rather than on entry-level archivists. Gabehart found that the majority of jobs required at minimum a bachelor's degree preferably in history, closely followed by a master's of library science.¹¹ A double master's degree in history and library science was the most *preferred* educational qualification, although it was also the least commonly *required*.¹² His data illustrated that to be highly employable an archivist should ultimately seek to have either a master's in history or library science, but preferably both. These results are comparable to Ericson's findings for archivists' education in the early 1990s. By the mid to late 1990s, the MLS overtook an MA in history as the predominant source of archival education.

Much has been written on the subject of graduate archival education, but the majority of these articles focus on curriculum and the development of archival training in the United States.¹³ Luciana Duranti discussed new directions for archival education in her 2000 article,¹⁴ and Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland wrote about the shortcomings of interdisciplinary foundations in archival education.¹⁵ Elizabeth Yakel conducted a survey of current archivists, providing valuable information concerning degrees and employing institutions but did not focus on entry-level requirements.¹⁶ Similarly, Amber Cushing's 2010 article focused on archivists aged 35 and under and largely dealt with levels of employment, job

satisfaction, and Society of American Archivist (SAA) membership.¹⁷ The survey did, however, include information regarding employment statistics that would include, but not be limited to, entry-level jobs.

Few articles deal explicitly with entry-level archival job requirements. At the time work on this article began (2013), the most relevant was written in 1992. A session titled “Archival Science Job Announcements Project: An Overview” at Archives 2013 New Orleans, a joint annual meeting of Council of State Archivists (CoSA) and SAA, presented slides and information encompassing the results of a discussion based within the study of 500 job advertisements to determine what education, knowledge, and skill requirements are desired by those seeking to employ archivists and records managers, leading into suggestions and considerations for developing curricula.¹⁸ While the focus here, like most of the research found, is on curriculum development, the use of job ad analysis within such a recent project is encouraging.

More recently, Eira Tansey and Matthew R. Francis each published articles exploring the job market for entry-level archivists. Tansey’s 2015 article examined requirements in advertisements found on the Archives and Archivists Listserv from October 2006 to May 2014, with a particular focus on the prevalence of the requirement for Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) certification.¹⁹ Tansey found that 324 out of 943 advertisements were for public colleges and universities and 198 were for private colleges and universities, with the remainder of jobs split among state and federal governments, corporations, museums, and public libraries.²⁰ Her findings also show that 86% of ads in her sample required a master’s of library science, with the next largest category of 11% preferring an MLS.²¹ This finding remained constant across all years of the survey.

In comparison, Francis used 258 responses to a 2013 survey of recent archival program graduates to learn more about where archivists work; what degrees they received; their core responsibilities; their status as full time, part time, permanent, or temporary; the regional location of their graduate programs; and their feelings of fulfillment in their work.²² His findings show that the vast majority (174) of responders earned an MLS/MLIS, with just 22 responders earning a dual MLS/MA degree, and 17 an MA in history.²³ Centered around details of employment, the majority of Francis’s survey questions are not comparable to our own research inquiries, but nonetheless provide useful information about the entry-level job market, particularly concerning temporary and full-time employment.

Despite the relative lack of formal research articles on the subject of entry-level jobs in the archival field, the topic has been discussed a great deal online. Websites such as the SNAP Roundtable,²⁴ *Archives Gig* (the archival job-hunting blog),²⁵ and INALJ (I Need a Library Job)²⁶ serve as helpful resources for students, recent graduates, and experienced archivists alike. Tremendous changes, such as the implementation of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and digitization, have occurred in the archival field since Gabehart’s article was published. This article attempts to help fill the informational void concerning requirements and preferences for entry-level archival jobs.

Methods

Sample

The job listings were taken from two documents made available by the American Library Association job list (ALA JobLIST), covering August 2006 through March 2013—a list of the jobs, with associated metadata and a PDF containing all the job posting abstracts. All of these job descriptions were matched and manually transferred from the PDF. The original job list spreadsheet contained 11,532 job advertisements. From this list, only those that represented entry-level archival jobs were selected. Since this was not explicitly labeled in the data set, we derived our own inclusion and exclusion criteria. Job ads were removed from our sample in the following manner:

- 171 ads were removed for requiring a PhD in the “Minimum Degree” category.
- 1,939 ads were removed for requiring “Five or more” years of experience in the “Years of Experience” category.
- 217 ads were removed for the job being located outside the United States according to the “State” category.
- 2,222 ads were removed for nonrelevance to archives based on the “Job Title” category; this included the following job ads: Children/Young Adult Services related, Branch Manager, Customer Sales Consultant, Dean of Library or Libraries, Executive Director, Library Sales Representative, and Marketing.
- 6,073 ads were removed after searching the “Job Title” and “adtext” categories for some form of archives or records-manager-related terms; if the ad did not contain a form of one of those terms, we removed it. Note that the term “adtext” refers to the full text of the advertisement as provided.

This brought the potential sample to 910 job advertisements. We read each ad to ensure it concerned an entry-level job related to archives. We read the full “adtext” category for each posting to discern if the job only mentioned some form of the word archive, or if the job was truly related to archival work. Often, the word “archive” was used in the description of the library system, but had nothing to do with archival work itself. Many of the ads had no information other than a link to web pages that no longer exist. Because we needed very specific information to code, a job ad was removed if we could not determine it to be entry-level or if the description was nonarchives related. This left 227 job ads. Eighty-one ads in the final list needed consensus from the full group to be included because they were borderline entry-level or archives related. A job ad may not have explicitly stated that it was for an entry-level job, but the description of the requirements compelled us to include it in the sample. For example, if the job ad did not require archival experience but only preferred it, we felt confident in including it in the sample. During the coding process, we discovered that some job ads advertised for multiple positions, and one job should have been removed earlier in the process. The final list contained 195 job advertisements verified as both entry level and archives related within the United States.

The Coding

We analyzed several aspects of the job ads: the presence of any form of the term “archive,” position type, job location, institution type, years of experience required, and educational requirements. For definitions and examples, refer to the Codebook in the appendix. We coded each job title for whether it contained “archive,” “archivist,” “archival,” or no archive-related term. We determined whether the position was a public services job, a technical services job, or a combination. Location was defined at the state level. Coding for the institution type involved identifying and sorting organizations into academic libraries, historical societies, museums and nonprofit organizations, and government positions. As the coding process began, an additional category, “other,” was needed to include corporate positions and private repositories. Because the focus was on entry-level jobs, we coded for years of experience asked for, and whether the experience was required or preferred. Since the amount of education that these jobs required was an important element, we broke down the education requirements and preferences into several coding categories.

Because the task of coding was divided among the four authors, an Inter Rater Reliability (IRR) test was performed on a small sample. Each author independently coded the first 26 job ads and calculated the IRR from those results. IRR was tested in six different categories: type of institution, type of job, MLS requirements, second master’s, archives specialization, and archival coursework. Institution type had 22 observed agreements and a Kappa score of 0.814 which is considered “very good.” Job type had 20 observed agreements, giving us a “good” Kappa score of 0.638, and the MLS category had 21 agreements, only a “moderate” 0.420 Kappa. After discussing these findings, some clarifications were made to our definitions for coding a bachelor’s degree. The second master’s degree category had 23 agreements, giving a “good” Kappa rating of 0.620; however, the archives specialization category had 21 agreements and a Kappa rating of 0.085, which is distinctly poor. The wording of this category was clarified and revised after discussing our initial coding process. The final category, archival coursework, had 22 agreements with a Kappa rating of 0.602, which is “good.” This automatically improved due to revision of the previous specialization category. A number of adjustments, additions, and changes to our Codebook were needed in the area of education once we had originally coded the first 26 job ads.

Limitations

The major limitation of the study was the use of a single data source, the American Library Association JobLIST. Our professor, Cassidy R. Sugimoto, obtained the data set and provided it to us. It originally consisted of a bank of 11,532 job postings from ALA from August 2006 to March 2013. Because of its library orientation, ALA seems an unlikely source for a high concentration of archival job postings, but archivists and archival job seekers should not discount it outright, particularly given that so many are educated in library schools. Ideally, job numbers and descriptions from sources dedicated solely to archival job postings would have been included, potentially encompassing *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, SAA Online Career Center, Archives and Archivists

(A&A) Listserv, and the National Archives and Records Administration website. It is also possible that smaller institutions might not post on these larger sites due to cost and instead advertise for positions on their respective websites. Private sector archival jobs might also post job advertisements elsewhere.

On September 15, 2016, we pulled all posted jobs found under the special collections and archives facet from the ALA JobList. Six of the twelve openings listed were cross-posted on the SAA Career Center, all were listed on *Archives Gig*, and all were advertised on at least one other job hunters' website. The most popular sites were HigherEd Jobs (5), Vitae (5), and Indeed (11). Admittedly, this tiny sample represents only what advertisements were captured on one specific day. However, it does demonstrate the frequency of cross-posting archival jobs. If we were to track this over several weeks or months, we would expect to find cross-postings at a regularity similar to this sample. Based on these findings, it is likely that the majority of jobs in our original sample were also cross-posted, making them easier for job seekers to find.

Despite this limitation, ultimately the ALA job postings offer a wide enough assortment to provide a solid data sample. Because the data set spanned August 2006 to March 2013, in many instances the job ads contained hyperlinks to full position and requirement descriptions that no longer worked. Numerous job ads that might have fit into the entry-level job criteria were eliminated because we had no way of verifying the job descriptions or qualifications.

Findings

Archival Job Titles

One of the goals of our study was to determine how many jobs employed some variant of the word "archive." We paid additional attention to determining the prevalence of jobs, such as reference and instruction librarian or assistant professor, that might have archival involvement, but whose advertised titles did not immediately suggest that they were archival in nature. The coding spreadsheet featured columns for job titles that contained the words "archivist," "archival," "archive," or "none." Of the 195 entry-level archival jobs coded, 59% (115) used the word "archivist," 29% (57) fell into the "none" category, 9% (18) used "archive," and 3% (5) used "archival."

A substantial number of jobs (29%) qualified as archival but did not contain any variant of the word "archive" in the job title. We determined these jobs to be archival based upon the language used in the job description. For example, an ad for "Instructor/Assistant Professor" included adtext describing the duties as providing reference, classroom instruction, and helping to maintain the University Archives collection. It went on to state that prior archival experience was preferred. Nonarchival titles in our sample included: reference and instruction librarian, assistant professor, manuscript cataloger, manuscript librarian, special collections librarian, digital projects librarian, reference librarian, digital services librarian, assistant librarian, librarian, curator, information specialist, and Methodist librarian.

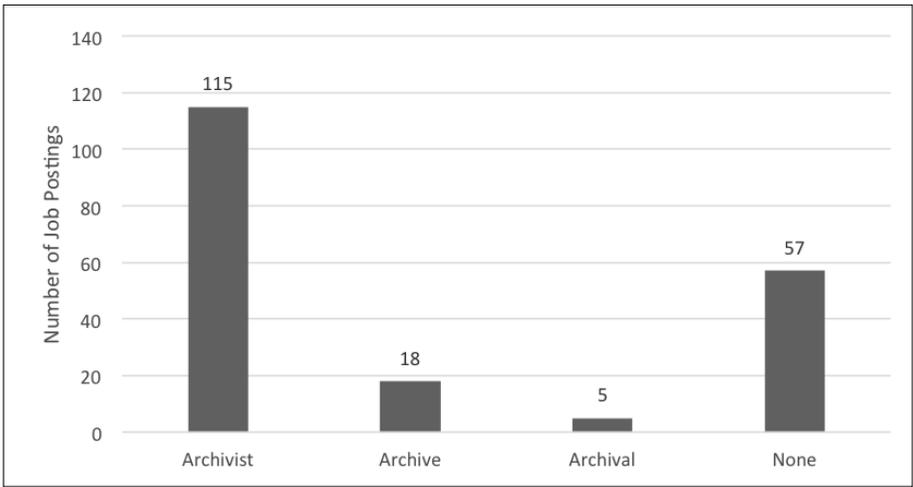


Figure 1: This bar graph shows the number of job postings containing the words “archivist,” “archive,” and “archival,” as well as none of the above.

Jobs by Geographic Location

Jobs were coded by state location to identify which areas of the United States featured high or low numbers of entry-level archival jobs. These numbers, without adjusting for state population, are shown in figure 2. This revealed the highest number of jobs in California (25), followed by Georgia (15), and Indiana (12). Overall, 7 of the 50 states had 10 or more archival job postings; 12 states had between 4 and 9 jobs; 10 states had 2 to 3 jobs; 13 states had 1 posting; and states 9 had no postings.

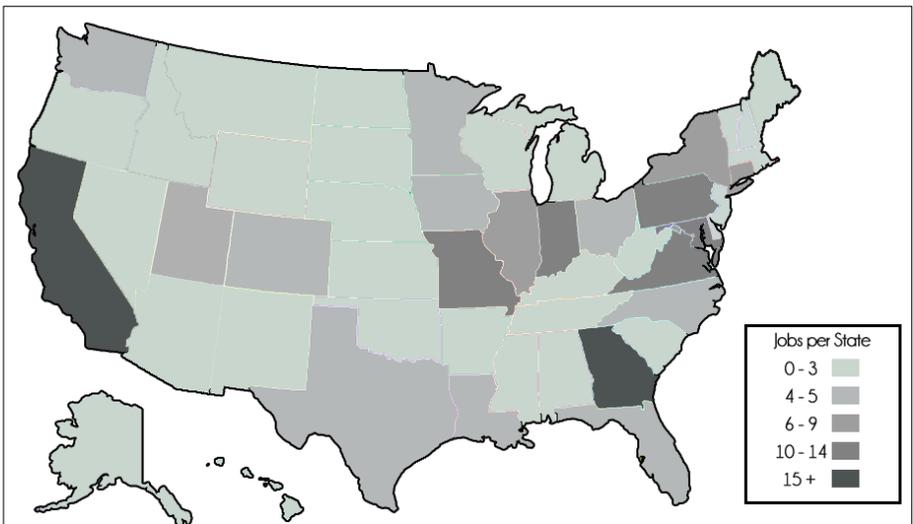


Figure 2: The number of jobs by state (without normalization) ranged from 0 to more than 15.

To show the difference in job distribution in relation to state population (see figure 3), we normalized the number of jobs for population size, indicating jobs per million people. Initially, California had the highest number of entry-level archival postings, but when normalization was taken into consideration, the rate of jobs per million was .652. This meant it went from ranking first in the number of jobs down to twenty-third. Washington, DC, was eleventh with 6 advertisements, but moved to number one with 9.88 jobs per million. Indiana, Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri were the only states found in the top 10 on both lists. Indiana and Maryland each retained their positions of third and fourth, respectively, while Missouri dropped from fifth to seventh and Georgia dropped from second to tenth.

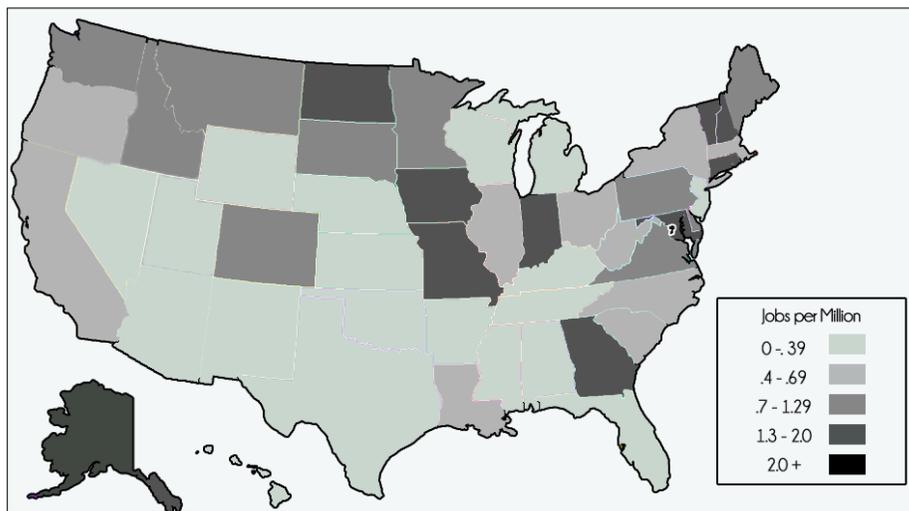


Figure 3: Jobs by state normalized for population size ranged from 0 to over 2 million.

The states with no entry-level archival job postings on the ALA JobLIST website over the course of nearly 7 years all had relatively low populations. It is likely archival jobs were available, but that they were posted locally or at the state level through state association listservs and job boards.

Job Types

We divided archival job types into 4 categories for coding: public services, technical services, both, and N/A (see figure 4).

Defined as including outreach, reference services, and instructional services, public services positions require the archivist to interact with researchers and the public, whereas jobs in which the archivist works solely with professional colleagues were not. Of the 195 jobs coded, 4% (8) were coded as archival public services.

Technical services encompassed processing, creating EAD finding aids, cataloging, accessioning, appraisal, digitization, curating an exhibit, and interacting with

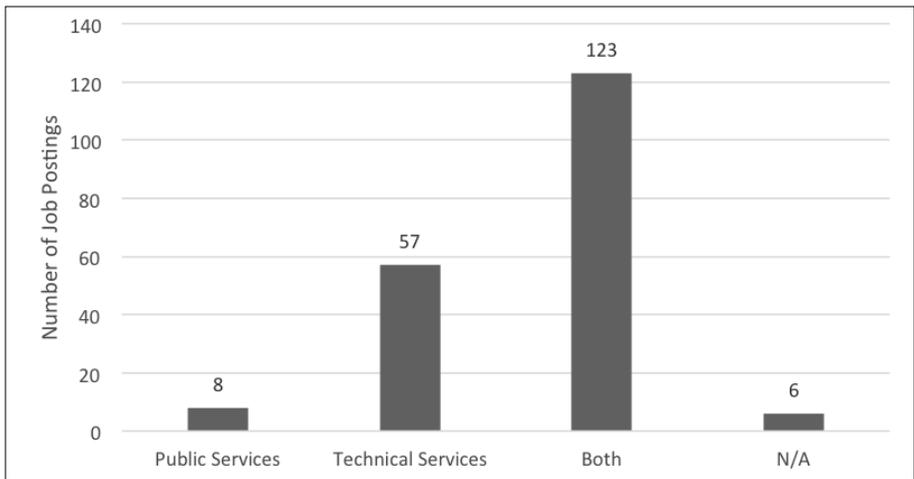


Figure 4: This bar graph shows the types of archival tasks mentioned in job postings.

professional colleagues in the archival field, or related fields such as history and preservation. Of the jobs surveyed, 29% (57) contained only elements of technical services work, demonstrating that technical services is an important area.

Jobs described as requiring elements of both public and technical services were defined as “both.” Perhaps unsurprisingly, these jobs were the most abundant with a total of 64% (123) of job ads.

N/A was used when no description of tasks was given. Many of these provided links to an institutional job application website, but due to the 6-year date range of the data, almost none of the hyperlinks remained active. Without a job description, coding for more specific tasks could not be done. N/A accounted for 3% (6) job ads.

Institution Type

We coded and categorized the institutions hiring archivists into academic, public, government (nonmuseum), museum and nonprofit, and other (see figure 5).

Academic institutions encompassed university, college, and community college positions including special libraries based within these institutions. Jobs at academic institutions comprised the largest percentage of job ads, with 81% (158) of the 195 possible jobs. We encountered a few instances of contract positions being hired by an outside agency, but if the work was being done in an academic setting, we considered it to be academic.

Public libraries accounted for the smallest number of jobs at just 3% (6) of the total. Government institutions included federal, state, and local repositories, excluding museums. Government jobs made up just 4% of the total jobs (8). Museums and

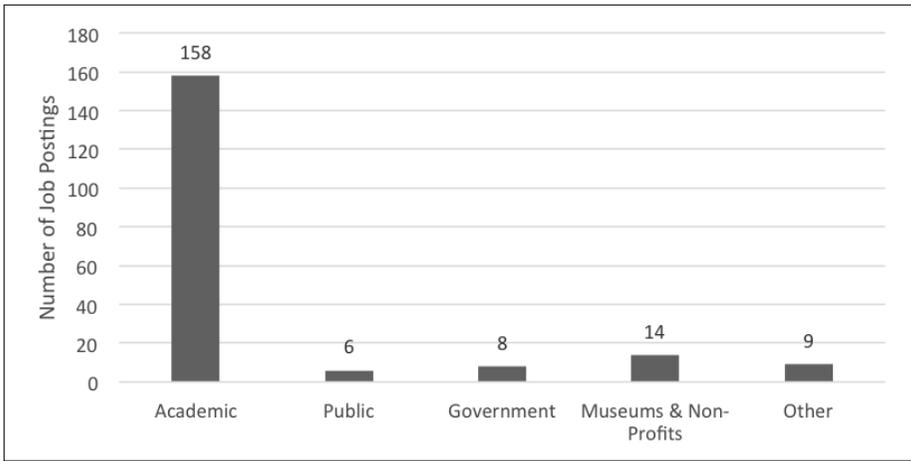


Figure 5: This bar graph shows the types of institutions in which archival jobs are found.

nonprofits comprised museums, historical societies, history centers, and nonprofit organizations. These advertisements often required additional research to determine if the organization was nonprofit or for profit. Jobs in these institutions accounted for 7% (14) of the total.

The “other” category served as a catch-all for the remaining archival repositories comprising both corporate and private repositories. Like the museum and nonprofit institutions, these advertisements often required additional research to learn if an organization was corporate or private. Five percent of jobs (9) fell into the “other” classification. Two examples of noncorporate “other” postings were openings at the American Academy of Poets and Longwood Gardens.

Years of Experience

We based coding for the specific number of years of experience required or preferred on the information provided in the advertisement text. If no information was available, the number was pulled from the years of experience category in the JobLIST spreadsheet provided to ALA by the employer. In 27% (53) of the ads, no year requirement was given in the adtext or under the years of experience column in the spreadsheet, so we based its entry-level status on the duties listed and the job description. Some advertisements did not specify *required* experience but did include *preferred* experience in the adtext. In some cases, the experience required was not given in numbers but in descriptors. In these instances, we used an abbreviation of the descriptor (listed in the appendix) to code. Four categories requested less than to at least 1 year of experience. In total, 38% (74) of job ads listed a requirement of 1 year or less of experience. Two years of experience was required in 17% (33) of the job ads.

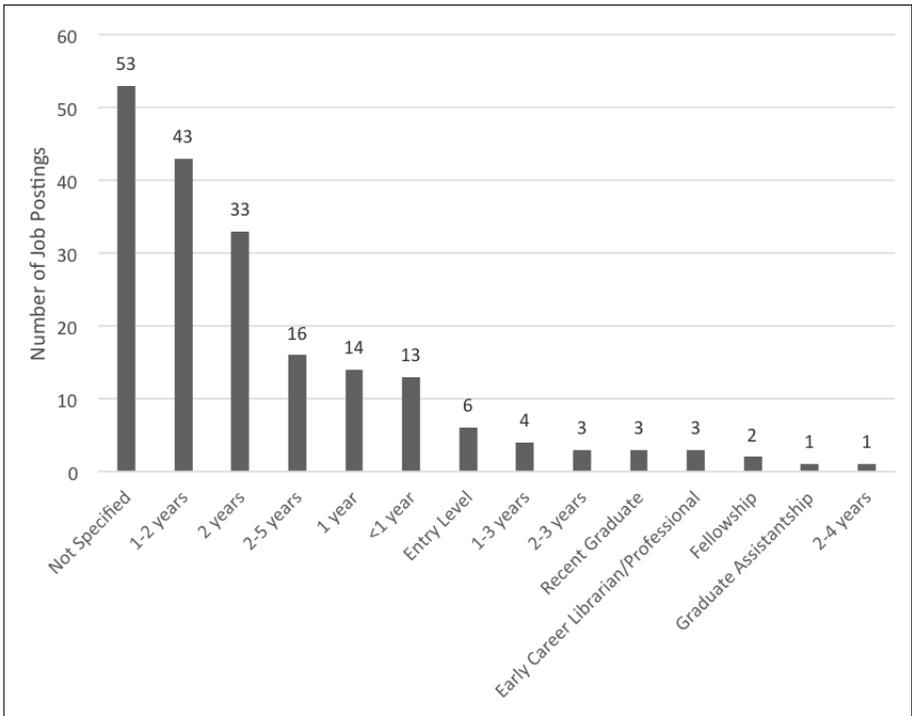


Figure 6: This bar graph shows the number of job postings by years of experience required.

Digital Skills

Due to the rise in importance of managing digital records and using information technology to facilitate information about records in the archival and special collections fields, we chose to explore the prevalence of the word “digital” within job descriptions (see figure 7). A simple yes-or-no system was used, with “yes” entered into one column if the words “digital” or “digitization” were specifically used or mention was made of the digitization of photographs, documents, and audiovisual media. “No” was entered if digitization tasks were not mentioned or the words “digital” or “digitization” were not used.

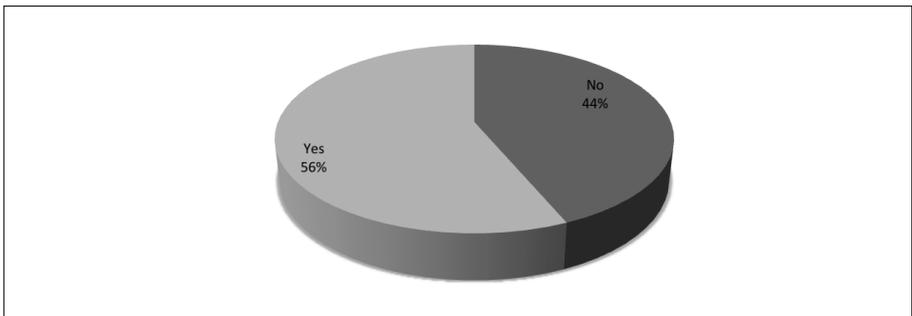


Figure 7: This pie chart represents the use of a form of the word “digital” in job descriptions.

The difference between the presence of a form of the word “digital” and no mention of anything digital was minimal, with 56% (110) of jobs advertisements falling into the yes category, and 44% (85) into the no category.

Education

To understand educational requirements for archivists, we coded for a master’s degree (see figure 8). The first education coding category was specific to an MLS. As we coded, we found that many jobs had an “or” option; the job required an MLS *or* another master’s degree. “Master’s in a different field” was defined as a master’s degree that was allowed in place of an MLS or an MLIS. This degree could be in any field, but was most often a master’s of information science, history, or museum studies. In some instances, no master’s degree was required. The “bachelor’s only” was used to designate the requirement of only a bachelor’s degree. In some cases, a bachelor’s degree was required with a preference for a master’s degree. The type of master’s was not specified.

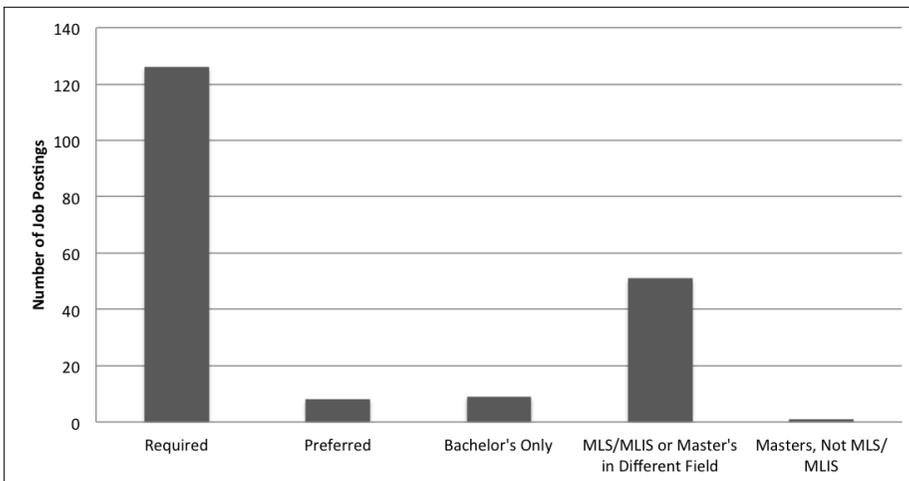


Figure 8: This bar graph shows the number of job postings by master’s degree requirements and preferences.

The majority of advertisements, 65% (126), explicitly required a master’s of library science, while 4% (8) merely preferred an MLS. An MLS or a master’s in another field was required for 26% (51) of the jobs, 4% (9) required a bachelor’s only, and only 0.5% (1) required a master’s degree in another field with no mention of an MLS.

Additional coding revealed how often potential employers asked for a second master’s degree, which could be from any field. A scant 1% (2) of the jobs required a second master’s, while 11% (22) preferred one. The vast majority of advertisements, 88% (171), did not ask for a second master’s degree.

We defined “archives specialization,” another educational component, as a formal concentration in archival coursework. This designation would appear on a transcript as

a formal declaration acknowledged by a degree-granting program of a specialized direction of study. At 95% (186) of the total advertisements, the vast majority of ads did not specify the need for an archives specialization. Just 1% (2) of advertisements explicitly required it, while 4% (7) preferred it.

To more thoroughly illustrate general requirements, we also coded for archival and additional coursework. We defined “archival coursework” as classes pertaining to archival studies or a concentration in archives, outside of a formalized specialization. Sixty-eight percent (132) of advertisements had no specific requirements or preferences in this area, while 17% (34) did require archival coursework, and 15% (29) preferred it. Additional coursework included nonarchival, but job relevant education such as history, rare book and special collections, or foreign language knowledge. For example, one job ad stated, “Graduate level course work in military studies, military history or related areas required.” A large majority of job ads, 81% (159), did not specifically require or prefer additional coursework, 3% (6) required it, and 16% (31) preferred additional coursework in a foreign language. Coding for Academy of Certified Archivist certification revealed that 93% (181) of advertisements did not mention ACA—7% (14) preferred a candidate be ACA certified, and none required it.

Discussion

Job titles are among the first aspects of job postings that applicants notice. As we analyzed advertisements, it was important to look at the title language because of the variation between the advertised position title and its relevance to the expected tasks. As anticipated, “archivist” was the most prominently utilized title, appearing in over half of the job ads. “Archive” and “archival” were minimally present.

An unexpected finding was the high number of advertisements without any variant of “archive” in the job title at all. This demonstrates that entry-level job seekers should not dismiss a job posting outright because the title does not include some form of the word “archive.” Doing that would have eliminated nearly one-third of the ads in our sample. Archival job seekers should carefully and closely examine job descriptions.

Initial findings concerning the number of jobs per state looked grim, particularly for states that fell into the 0 to 3 and 4 to 5 job categories. Based on figure 2, it seems as though California and Georgia had the highest numbers of archival jobs. However, after normalizing job numbers by state population, a much clearer picture of job availability in each state emerged. Figure 3 illustrates job numbers normalized by population, showing that figure 2 is somewhat misleading. When the numbers are normalized, states that originally had very low numbers now appear in a much better light, while some states that appeared to have high numbers decreased significantly. While our data did suggest a slight regional trend of lower job numbers in the Southwest, the majority of jobs were spread around the country, although not evenly by population density. This information serves as an important reminder that archival job seekers should not despair

over a lack of job openings in a particular state or region before considering the effects of population.

The cost of posting an advertisement to the ALA JobLIST may prove prohibitive to smaller repositories.²⁷ Advertising in local, state, and regional listings would be another source for nonnational postings. The extremely high number of academic library jobs coupled with the lack of local postings suggests that the ALA JobLIST works best for job seekers conducting a national search of primarily academic archival jobs. Those desiring an entry-level job should be aware of this and make use of listservs and networks within state and regional archival organizations.

Although archivists are stereotyped as working alone with old papers in windowless back rooms, in reality, archivists must expect to undertake a wide variety of tasks including outreach and reference. Our data clearly show that students planning to enter the archival field should select a variety of courses, internships, student jobs, and volunteer opportunities to become well rounded.

According to our research, academic institutions are the most common locations for entry-level archival employment. Recent surveys of the archival profession support these findings. Cushing's survey of archivists 35 and under found that 44.3% of respondents are employed in academic institutions.²⁸ In our study, this number is 81%. Outside of the academy, Cushing found that 22.5% of archivists work in museums and nonprofits, while 16.4% work in government positions.²⁹ In comparison, our numbers are 7% and 4%, respectively.

One reason for this difference in numbers could be that museums and nonprofits may be less likely to advertise on a website with such a clear library focus. Cushing's survey reveals that a significant number of archivists work outside of academic institutions. Looking at our data alone, this would not be obvious. What can be gathered from these findings is that archivists hoping to find work in nonacademic settings should not rely heavily on the ALA JobList. It seems probable that job websites primarily focused on archives and museums are the more common places to find nonacademic archival job postings.

We purposely coded for job ads requiring up to 2 years of experience and no more because that range is most usually considered entry-level. We included jobs that asked for 2 to 5 years of experience if the adtext supported the idea that archivists with just 2 years of experience could reasonably apply.

The presence of digital skills in advertisements was split almost 50-50. These numbers were somewhat surprising, though not completely unexpected due to the recent increase in digitization projects, including performing and supervising digitization, digital initiatives, and managing born-digital materials. Because of the amount of archival literature dedicated to digital projects, we expected "digital" to occur much more often than it

did. While we did not track the dates of the job ads to check for the possibility of an upward trend in the use of “digital” within the ads, such an occurrence is possible.

According to our findings, the necessary education for those seeking employment as archivists is an MLS/MLIS. The job advertisements we examined overwhelmingly required an MLS, while a smaller number only preferred it. Just under a quarter of the ads’ required master’s degrees could be in a field other than library science. In comparison to our 2013 findings, Gabehart’s 1992 survey of archivists at 475 institutions found that 30.8% of employers required an MLS; 13.8% required a master’s degree in history; 1.6% required a double master’s; 7.0% required “other”; and 36.7% required only a bachelor’s degree.³⁰ However, requirements were often vastly different than preferences. Nearly a quarter, 23.6%, of employers preferred applicants to have an MLS; 22.7% preferred a master’s degree in history; and 25.8% preferred a double master’s.³¹ Although we did not specifically code for a master’s degree in history, our results can still be reliably compared to Gabehart’s. Our research demonstrates that the requirement for a non-MLS master’s declined within the last 11 years while the requirement for an MLS dramatically increased. Unlike 1992, archival job seekers today cannot expect to find many positions that require only a bachelor’s degree. This assumption has since been supported by Tansey’s 2015 article examining entry-level archival jobs from 2006 to 2013. She found that 68% of job advertisements in her sample *required* a master’s of library science, while 11% preferred an MLS.³² Only a small portion required or preferred a bachelor’s degree.³³

As of 2013, 31 ALA-accredited academic institutions offered archival coursework, a certificate, or a specialization, contrasted with 50 ALA-accredited library science programs in the United States.³⁴ In 2016, the number of ALA-accredited MLS programs remains consistent, but ALA-accredited MLS programs offering archival coursework, a certificate, or a specialization rose to 33.³⁵ Therefore, the number of ALA accredited MLS programs offering an archival education has increased from 62% to 66% in only 3 years.

Our research shows that an MLS is the most common educational requirement for archival jobs, therefore it is not surprising that an archives specialization would also frequently be required. We did not expect such a large portion of the advertisements not to specify a requirement or a preference for an archives specialization or coursework. That only 1% of advertisements explicitly required an archives specialization was particularly surprising. Initially, we wondered if employers were asking for ACA certification instead, but coding revealed that 93% of ads did not mention certification. Similarly, Tansey found that the vast majority of ads did not mention ACA certification, while few preferred it, and an even smaller number required it.³⁶ Up until the 1970s and 1980s, the archives profession suffered from a lack of standardized education.³⁷ The *SAA Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies*, first published in 1977, helped provide common standards across curriculum. However, these guidelines were recommendations only, and while nearly all archival education coursework is part of an MLS/MLIS degree program,³⁸ other educational aspects of archival programs often remain

inconsistent.³⁹ It is possible that the lack of specificity for coursework or a specialization is a lingering legacy of the lack of standardization within the profession.

Follow-up

Because our initial dataset is now several years old, we wanted to examine an additional, updated, small set of current job advertisements using the same instructions as our original coding. We gathered data from the ALA JobList website on September 15, 2016, and found that 8 of the 12 archival jobs qualified as entry-level positions.

Seven job titles included the terms “archivist” or “archives”; 7 were located in academic libraries and 1 in a public library. Six jobs required elements of both technical and public services work, while 2 jobs focused more exclusively on technical services. The openings were predominantly in the eastern half of the United States: Illinois (1), Texas (1), New York (1), Connecticut (2), Missouri (1), Virginia (1), and Iowa (1). Five ads specifically mentioned digitization or digital projects, while the other 3 did not.

As our original coding showed, the current advertisements asked for widely varying experience. One ad did not specify the level of experience needed, another required 1 to 2 years, 2 ads required 2 years of experience, 2 were listed as entry-level, 1 asked for 3 to 5 years of experience, and 1 required less than a year of experience.

Seven of the 8 jobs required a MLS degree, while 1 job would allow a bachelor’s if the applicant also had 5 years of experience in the field. Only 1 asked for a second master’s (history or a related discipline); the other 7 ads did not mention a requirement or preference for an additional degree. None of the advertisements mentioned an archives specialization, specific archival coursework, additional coursework, or ACA certification.

Obviously, a larger dataset would be needed to make any definitive statements of comparison, but the advertisements that we examined in 2016 matched the general trends previously observed. A master’s of library science is still the most common level of education sought by employers, the majority of jobs were found in academic institutions, and the majority of archivists perform a combination of both technical and public services.

Conclusions and Further Research

Although archivists traditionally had educational backgrounds rooted in history, educational requirements have undergone a shift in the past 15 to 20 years. Our analysis of ALA job advertisements from 2006 to 2013 provides evidence of this transformation illustrating that employers now require a master’s of library science more often than one in history. As archival work becomes more directly influenced by advances in technology, the requirement for knowledge and experience in and relating to digital

preservation and asset management grows. This is especially clear from the number of job postings requiring skills related to digital work. Of the postings we analyzed, 56% mentioned digital tasks. This number rose to 62% in our follow-up research, and it can be assumed that this number will continue to rise. The ever-increasing push toward a paperless workplace enforces a strong need for archives students to gain technical knowledge and experience while still in school through coursework, internships, or volunteering. In this competitive archival job market, these sought-after skills could make a significant difference.

While the last few years have also seen an increased interest in studying the job market, further research should be conducted to better understand these changing job trends and requirements. As previously discussed, our work, bound within the parameters of the original assignment, only included archival jobs data from the ALA JobLIST website. An excellent prospect for future research would be to expand the data set to incorporate, compare, and contrast entry-level job advertisement information from the SAA Online Career Center website as well as the Archives and Archivists Listserv. This could be expanded to survey advertisements to determine the percentages of temporary versus permanent positions. The results of such studies would be of interest not only to those seeking any level of archival employment, but to those in charge of posting openings as well.

Another area of potential research is to more closely examine and track these important broader shifts by delving into the details. During coding, we grouped several educational requirements, such as a second master's degree and additional coursework, together and defined them broadly. Further work could identify the types of second master's degrees required or preferred by employers. Similar research could reveal a more inclusive list of the types of additional coursework required or preferred.

As we move further into the digital age, the importance of digital records management and use of information technology become increasingly relevant to the archival profession. If job advertisements included more specific aspects of or references to "digital" language, we could better track these trends and details. This information could then inform necessary adjustments to archival education to better equip new archivists to meet those needs.

Breaking down and tracking these individual components of archival job ads better identifies trends in the required and preferred skills necessary to fill archival positions. As more formalized programs for archival education emerge and evolve, these established directions will help to more closely define and potentially tailor archival education to best match students' interests with employment opportunities. Students and employers will be more prepared for initial employment opportunities, archival educational programs will improve, and in the end, a superior archival profession will thrive.

Appendix: Codebook Explanations

Definitions

Entry-Level Job: These were jobs in which the adtext in our sample provided a description for positions for which a job seeker entering into the field may reasonably expect to qualify. We limited our definition to job ads that required up to 2 years of experience.

Archival Job: These positions all had some aspect of archival work included in their posted job descriptions. We defined “archival work” to include accessioning, processing, describing, EAD, finding aids, archival reference, archival instruction, archival cataloging if it requires specific archival knowledge, digitization, and so on.

If the job description included elements that fit both the definitions for entry-level and archival jobs, then we included it in our selection of jobs on our modified spreadsheet.

If a job description used the word “desired,” we coded those examples as “preferred” rather than “required.”

Job Title

We considered the job title to be the exact job title as provided in the job advertisement.

Archivist: Was the word “archivist” present in the job title?

Ex.) #3 “Processing Archivist”

Archive: Was the word “archive” present in the job title?

Ex.) #4 “Special Collections and University Archives Librarian”

Archival: Was the word “archival” present in the job title?

Ex.) #87 “Archival & Metadata Librarian”

None: The words archivist, archives, or archival were not present in the title.

Ex.) #14 “Manuscripts Librarian”

Job Type

Public Services: This included outreach, reference services, and instructional services for which the archivist interacts with researchers and the public. Jobs in which the archivist works solely with professional colleagues were not included as containing a public service element.

Ex.) Job #48—“The Research Services and Collection Development Librarian provides reference, instruction, and public programming...” The adtext does not mention any duties that are technical in nature.

Technical Services: This included processing manuscripts, EAD, cataloging, accessioning, appraisal, digitization, curating an exhibit, and interacting with professional colleagues in the archival field, or related fields such as history and preservation.

Ex.) Job #62—“the Arrangement and Description Archivist is responsible for the selection, appraisal, arrangement, and description of manuscript and archival materials.” The adtext does not mention public service duties.

Both: These had elements of both public and technical services jobs. We did not code for supervisory duties.

Ex.) Job #11—“The Archivist will acquire and process materials, provide reference/research/outreach services, and assume primary responsibility for production of the department’s digital initiatives and for university archives.”

N/A: These are job ads in which the adtext and/or job title did not specify enough about job duties for us to determine whether the job was any of the other options.

Ex.) Job #17—“The City of Kingsport is looking for an outgoing and service oriented Archivist to direct the city’s municipal archives.”

States

We listed states by their abbreviations.

Type of Institution

Academic: These included university, college, and community college positions (including special libraries based at universities, colleges, and community colleges.

Ex.) Job # 45— “university archivist”; “Coastal Carolina University”

Public: These included jobs at public libraries.

Ex.) Job #29—“The Dayton Metro Library is seeking a Reference Librarian...” “Maintain and develop archival material...”

Government: These included federal, state, and local repositories, but not museums of any kind.

Ex.) Job #120—“The Archives Research Services Branch of the Library of Virginia is seeking an experienced Research Archivist...”

Museums/Nonprofits: These included museums, historical societies, history centers, and nonprofit organizations. These job ads often required additional research to learn if their posters were nonprofit or for-profit organizations.

Ex.) Job #148—“The Manuscripts and Maps Archivist is a member of a professional team that develops, organizes and coordinates the archives collections of Ironworld’s research library, the Iron Range Research Center...”

Other: This served as a catchall for the remaining types of archival repositories and was comprised of corporate or private repositories. These job ads often required additional research to learn if their posters were nonprofit or for-profit organizations.

Ex.) Job #92—“FRANdata...a premier research company”

Years

We coded for the specific number of years of experience required or preferred as provided in the adtext portion of the spreadsheet, which is the text of the original job posting on the ALA website. If no information was available in the adtext, the number was pulled from the Years of Experience column provided on the ALA spreadsheet job list. The Years of Experience column is composed of information provided to the ALA by the employer. In one particular instance (job #122), no year requirement was given in the adtext or under the Years of Experience column in the full spreadsheet. However, we determined the job to be entry level based on the duties listed and the language used to describe the job.

Ex.) Job #122—There were only 2 requirements listed in this job ad, an education requirement and then this sentence: “Formal training in archives administration preferred.” We included this as an entry-level job because the adtext referred to training being preferred. The training was not required and actual work experience wasn’t listed as required.

Ex.) Job #131—The requirement was listed as “coursework or equivalent experience in archives and/or manuscripts.” We included this as entry-level because the adtext referred to coursework being acceptable to meet the minimum requirements for the job.

In some cases, the experience required was not given in numbers but in descriptors. In those cases, we coded using an abbreviation of the descriptor.

Ex.) Job #190 for an ECL/ECP early career librarian. “Consideration will be given to applicants with a wide range of years of experience, including qualified early career librarians.”

Ex.) Job #177 for an RG—student or recent graduate. “Longwood Gardens Library and Archives seeks an MLS student or recent graduate...”

Ex.) Job #130 for an EL—entry level. “...an archivist at an entry level...”

Ex.) Job #129 for a GA—graduate assistant (specifically stated as a position for someone who already had an MLS degree). “...a graduate assistantship program for individuals who already have an MLS, or equivalent...”

Ex.) #170 for an FS—fellowship. “The HistoryMakers is pleased to offer a year-long fellowship...”

Some advertisements did not specify require experience but did include preferred experience in their adtext.

Ex.) Job #145—“Required Qualifications” makes no mention of years of

experience needed. However, “Desired Qualifications” specifically mentions experience: “One year of professional experience in an academic library.”

Digital

We entered “yes” into this column if an ad specifically used the words “digital” or “digitization” or mentioned skills in digitization of photographs, documents, and AV media. We entered “no” if digitization tasks or the words “digital” or “digitization” were not mentioned.

Education

MLS: This meant a master’s of library science was required, preferred, or not applicable. “Other Field” referred to job ads that allowed another degree in place of an MLS. That degree could be in any field, but would most likely be a master’s of information science, library and information science, history, or museum studies. If an MLS and/or other MA was required or preferred, we put an X in either the MLS-required or preferred box as well as in the Other Field box. Jobs requiring only a bachelor’s degree were coded as N/A under the MLS section if an MLS was not a requirement or as “MLS Pref” if only the bachelor’s was required but mention was made of preference for an MLS or other master’s degree.

Ex.) Job #14—“Master’s Degree in Librarianship from an ALA accredited institution”

Ex.) Job #13—“REQUIRED EDUCATION...MLS with a concentration in archives management and/or an MA in history or related field”

Ex.) Job #28—“Requires a Master’s of Library Science degree from a school accredited by American Library Association (ALA)...OR Requires a Bachelor’s degree plus 18 hours toward a Master’s of Library Science degree from a school accredited by ALA...A Master’s of Library Science degree must be completed within two years from being hired into this classification”

Ex.) Job #92—“A Bachelor’s degree is required, preferably in library services or information management,” but no additional education was required.

Ex.) Job #67—“Required: Bachelor’s degree in history or public history (MA in history or related field preferred.)”

2nd MA: We used this to indicate that a second master’s degree was either required or preferred. This degree could have been in any field.

Ex.) Job #7—“Qualifications: An ALA-accredited MLS, a second master’s...”

Ex.) Job #45—“Preferred qualifications include...second graduate degree”

Ph.D.: We used this to indicate that a doctoral degree was required, preferred, or not applicable. This degree could have been in any field.

Ex.) Job #117—“DESIRED: PhD”

Archives Specialization: This might have been required, preferred, or not applicable. We defined an archives specialization as a formal concentration in archival coursework for which “specialization” would appear on a degree transcript as a formal declaration by a degree-granting program of a specialized direction of study.

Ex.) Job #144—“An MLS from an ALA-accredited institution is required; preference will be given to candidates with a specialization in archives or records management.”

Archival Coursework: Required, preferred, or not applicable, we defined archival coursework as classes pertaining to archival studies or a concentration in archives. Coursework is not formalized in the same way as a specialization.

Ex.) Job #149—“QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS...archival coursework.”

Additional Coursework: Required, preferred, or not applicable, we defined other coursework as work that is not archival, but that is relevant to a specific job. The coursework may be in various areas of history or rare book and special collections, but could be any kind of nonarchival coursework required or preferred by an employer. It also included required or preferred knowledge of a foreign language.

Ex.) Job #53—“Graduate level course work in military studies, military history or related areas required.”

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