

# Archival Certification – Necessity or Nicety?

**SUSAN HAMBURGER, Ph.D.**

**The Pennsylvania State University**

**Abstract:** The Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) was established in 1989, and participates in the definition and advancement of international professional archival goals, ethics, and standards. Since 1989, more than 1,300 archivists have been certified by meeting standards of experience and education, and by passing the certification exam. This research project investigates the correlation between archival certification and employment. A survey disseminated between February 26 and April 26, 2013 sought to determine if, twenty-four years after inception, archival certification is a factor in evaluating the professional credentials of candidates hired for archival positions.

## Introduction

Archivists have debated the pros and cons of archival certification since the 1980s. After considering and rejecting accreditation of degree programs like library schools undergo, and of institutions like museums seek, the profession chose the path to certify individual archivists initially by petition to grandfather in those in the field without higher education degrees, and by examination. Once one hundred archivists received certification, they formed the Academy of Certified Archivists to perpetuate the certification process.

Various reasons have been offered over the years for why an individual archivist chooses to become certified. Anecdotal evidence suggests some want to prove to themselves that they know enough to pass the test, others want the validation and reassurance that they are qualified for what they are doing, some just enjoy taking tests and want to see how high they can score, others want to use it as a benchmark to see what they do not know to improve in those areas, and still others hope the credential will give them an edge when applying for a job.

It is this last goal that the author studied for this research project. Regardless of the feel-good reasons to add one more set of letters after your name, does the expense of taking the exam, paying annual dues, and recertifying every five years actually bring a return on the investment with an archival position? Do the hiring managers value the credential, weigh and evaluate it as a positive factor, and/or give preferential consideration to candidates with C.A. after their names? Or is certification a more personal self-evaluation for those already motivated to improve themselves and participate in professional development? To answer some of these questions, the author designed a survey addressed to the hiring managers at archival institutions.

## Literature Review

John Shank noted that “studies that analyze position announcements are numerous in the library literature.”<sup>1</sup> That is not the case in the archival field. A search of Library Literature & Information Science Index, Library and Information Science Abstracts, and Library, Information Science &

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<sup>1</sup> John D. Shank, “The Blended Librarian: A Job Announcement Analysis of the Newly Emerging Position of Instructional Design Librarian,” *College & Research Libraries* 67 (Nov. 2006): 516.



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Technology Abstracts found an overlap of twenty-four articles and books published between 1984 and 2012, but they analyzed only library positions. Analyzing position announcements could determine if institutions required or preferred archival certification, but not if they actually considered and/or hired someone with the credential.

Bruce Dearstyne noted the early debate among archivists who thought certification was “elitist, unnecessary, expensive, difficult to administer, and probably ineffectual in making for real change,” while a majority of others felt certification would “strengthen [the profession’s] capacity to secure resources, deal with issues, and improve its standing in society as a whole.”<sup>2</sup> Dearstyne concluded that it was “too early to judge the impact of certification, but it can certainly be expected to strengthen archivists’ professional identity in the years ahead.”<sup>3</sup> With more than 1,300 certified archivists among the ranks since the first groups were grandfathered in and passed the examination, there appear to be some compelling reasons why these professionals became certified. Exploring these reasons will be undertaken in future studies.

The report from the Working Group from the Society of American Archivists’ Committee on Education and Professional Development indicated that the plan for archival certification was “not intended to control entry into any professional position,” nor that it would become the “routine credential of professional archivists in the near future.”<sup>4</sup> This study seeks to determine if this intention is inherent in the actions of employers.

Susan Maclin wrote in the *ACA News* that, “Employers have found the credential a useful tool for encouraging staff to assess strengths and weaknesses in their professional knowledge and as an encouragement, through the recertification process, to maintain minimum outside professional development activities. The presence of the CA on a potential employee’s resume, or the willingness of potential employees to sit for the exam has become an influential factor in the hiring practices of more and more employers.”<sup>5</sup> However, she does not provide documentation or statistics to back up this claim. On the contrary, Anne P. Diffendal reported in 2006 that the A\*CENSUS results showed that archival managers “were asked to rank nine qualifications according to their importance when hiring entry-level archivists, and also mid-level or senior archivists. Certification ranked as the least important of the qualifications for both questions in answers from all respondents, as well as from SAA members and from archival managers who were certified.”<sup>6</sup> She wondered whether the responses reflected the personal opinions of respondents or the hiring policies and practices at their institutions, and suggested that “future surveys might usefully inquire about the reasons and motivations for respondents’ answers.”<sup>7</sup>

The Academy of Certified Archivists advertises that archivists support certification because “it provides a competitive edge, it strengthens the profession, [and] it recognizes professional achievement and commitment.”<sup>8</sup> First published in 1995, the September 2007 version of “An Employer’s Guide to Archival Certification,” contains testimonials from certified archivists on the benefits of hiring applicants

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce W. Dearstyne, *The Archival Enterprise; Modern Archival Principles, Practices, and Management Techniques* (Chicago and London: American Library Association, 1993):75.

<sup>3</sup> Dearstyne, *The Archival Enterprise*, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Frank B. Evans, “The Quest for Professionalism; Archival Certification in the U.S.A.,” *Janus* 1 (1991):26.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Maclin, “Why Certify?,” Academy of Certified Archivists Web page, Other Resources--Articles, originally published in *ACA News*, July 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Anne P. Diffendal, “Part 8. Certified Archivists in the A\*CENSUS,” *American Archivist* 69 (Fall/Winter 2006):420.

<sup>7</sup> Diffendal, “Part 8. Certified Archivists in the A\*CENSUS,” p. 420.

<sup>8</sup> The Academy of Certified Archivists, “Why Do Archivists Support Certification?” advertisement, *Archival Outlook* (May/June 2013): [9].

with a C.A. One corporate archivist states that “as a hiring manager, when I weigh the differing educational backgrounds of candidates, the CA is a tangible and positive credential,” and a second corporate archivist reports that “archival certification is one of the key measurements I use in evaluating the professional credentials of candidates for archival positions in my department.”<sup>9</sup> The current study assesses the responses from a variety of types of institutions to see if there is a tendency among any specific type of archival repository, more so than others, to prefer certification.

In 2006, the president of The Academy of Certified Archivists, Michael Holland, greeted visitors to the Academy’s Web site by writing, “. . . we are especially interested and engaged in helping young and new archival practitioners in their careers by testing and verifying to employers that the Certified Archivist (C.A.) has a thorough knowledge of the fundamentals of the archival enterprise.”<sup>10</sup> James M. O’Toole has noted that “while the number of professionals who take this exam has remained small over the intervening years [between 1989 and 2011], it is still administered.” He adds in a footnote, “There has been, to my knowledge, no systematic analysis of the certification process during the two decades of its existence; such a study should be undertaken.”<sup>11</sup> The hope and expectation is that this current study will answer some of these concerns, and provoke discourse on the future of archival certification.

In discussing professionalism and archivists, Richard Cox suggested that “employers of archivists especially must be able to distinguish between qualified archivists and those seeking archival positions who lack proper education and experience.”<sup>12</sup> As for archival education, Cox observed that “there is little feedback from the employers of archivists about what such graduate programs should be teaching.”<sup>13</sup> In the thirteen years since Cox noted this disconnect, graduate archival programs have sprouted across the United States and the current survey results seem to indicate that a graduate degree in archival science carries more weight than archival certification when it comes to hiring. In 1977, Patrick M. Quinn observed that “position announcements for archival openings in colleges and universities have increasingly included the request for an M.L.S. Very infrequently is this requirement subordinated to relevant archival experience.”<sup>14</sup> Frederic M. Miller found that “through the operation of the job market, and without anyone mandating it, the master’s degree in history, librarianship, or the specialty of the individual’s shop, became virtually required for employment.”<sup>15</sup> Miller also suggested that “the gradually increasing feminization of our profession might do more to keep salaries down than any educational system could do to raise them.”<sup>16</sup> The current survey did not include questions about gender or salaries; those issues belong to a future study.

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<sup>9</sup> “Employer’s Brochure Printed,” *ACA Newsletter*, Vol. 24, November 1995, p. 5; Becky Haglund Tousey and Philip F. Mooney, quoted in Academy of Certified Archivists, “An Employer’s Guide to Archival Certification” (Albany, N.Y.: Academy of Certified Archivists, September 2007): panel 7 and 8.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Holland, C.A., The Academy of Certified Archivists Web site home page, screen capture in Christine de Catanzaro, “Archival Certification; To Certify or Not to Certify: That is the Question,” PowerPoint slide show presented to the University of South Carolina Archival Students Guild, Friday, March 24, 2006, School of Library and Information Science (<http://hdl.handle.net/1853/8746>)

<sup>11</sup> James M. O’Toole, “The Archivist’s Perspective: The History of an Idea,” in *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions, Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels*. Edited by Terry Cook (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011): 333, 343.

<sup>12</sup> Richard J. Cox, “Professionalism and Archivists in the United States,” *The American Archivist* 49 (Summer 1986):243.

<sup>13</sup> Richard J. Cox, “The Society of American Archivists and Graduate Education: Meeting at the Crossroads,” *The American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000):374.

<sup>14</sup> Trudy H. Peterson, Patrick M. Quinn, and Hugh A. Taylor, “Professional Archival Training,” *The American Archivist* 40 (July 1977): 317.

<sup>15</sup> Frederic M. Miller, “The SAA as Sisyphus: Education since the 1960s,” *The American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000):234.

<sup>16</sup> Miller, “The SAA as Sisyphus,” p. 235.

Martin Levitt noted in 1999 that leadership in his employing institution, the American Philosophical Society, sees the certification credential “most recently, as a preferential tool for assessing job applicants. . . . For senior staff involved in the hiring process, the presence of the CA on the candidate's CV, or the willingness of candidates to sit for the exam, has become an influential factor in the decision-making process.”<sup>17</sup> William Maher considers the perspective of employers seeking “to determine how the credentials conferred by professional associations relate to actual on-the-job competence.”<sup>18</sup> He adds, “unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the value of certification as an employment credential because there have been few independent assessments of such programs.”<sup>19</sup> The Personnel Accreditation Institute conducted a survey of its certification program and found “there was little correlation between certification and salary scales.”<sup>20</sup> Maher concluded that “it can be very difficult for the goals and programs of a professional society to be translated into personnel decisions by the employers of these professionals.”<sup>21</sup> In 1986, only 29.8 percent of those responsible for hiring archivists indicated that certification would be a factor in decisions on hiring.<sup>22</sup> Maher’s pessimistic—some would say realistic—outlook indicated that “one should not be overly optimistic that the SAA program will have the ‘effective and speedy’ employment benefits that some have hoped.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the realization that certification has not translated into employment or higher salaries will return the focus to professional development and self-assessment.

## Methodology

The initial research project involved reviewing all of the job advertisements at the time they were posted on the Society of American Archivists’ Web site during the calendar year 2011, with the intention of contacting each institution six months later to determine if they had hired a certified archivist. Realizing that this would be time-consuming and a breach of confidentiality, the author instead developed an online confidential and anonymous survey that would solicit responses from a broad array of hiring archivists. In January 2013, the author drafted a twelve-question survey, tested it with in-house archival and library colleagues, and reworked one question for clarity. The survey launched on February 26, 2013 using SelectSurvey and closed on April 26, 2013. A link to the survey was included in an email to the Archives & Archivists Listserv, with a reminder on April 1 that also went out to the MARAC membership listserv.

## Results

The survey elicited seventy-six responses, the overwhelming majority from academic libraries/archives, followed by government/tribal archives, corporate archives, museum archives, historical societies, religious archives, public library, and specialty archives.

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Levitt, C.A., “An Employer’s Point of View,” Academy of Certified Archivists Web page, Other Resources--Articles, originally published in *ACA News*, March/April 1999.

<sup>18</sup> William J. Maher, “Contexts for Understanding Professional Certification: Opening Pandora’s Box,” *The American Archivist* 51 (Fall 1988): 414.

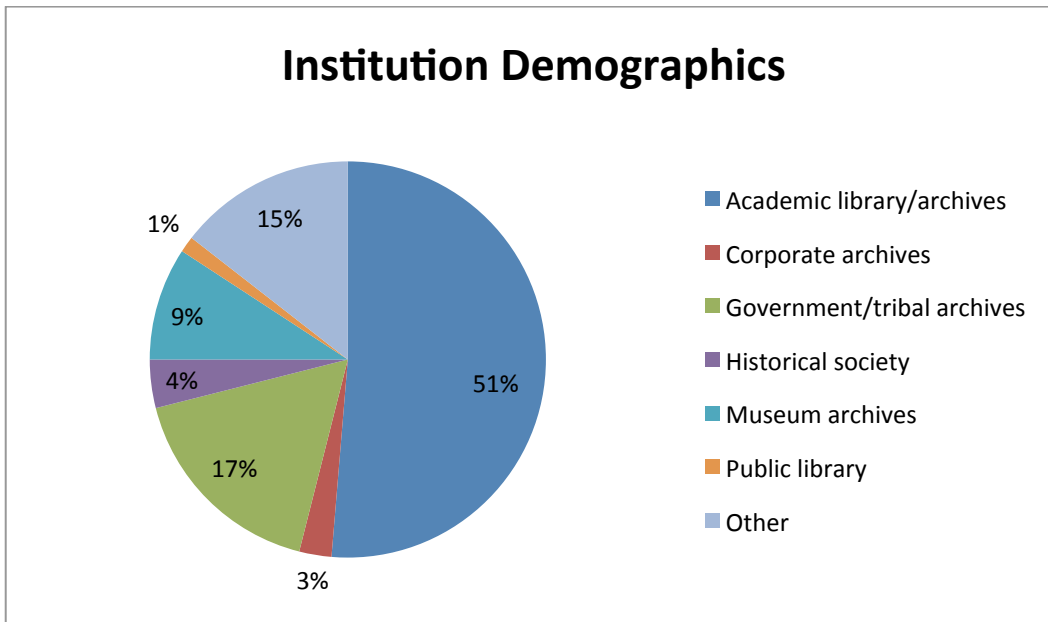
<sup>19</sup> Maher, “Contexts for Understanding Professional Certification,” p. 415.

<sup>20</sup> Maher, “Contexts for Understanding Professional Certification,” p. 421.

<sup>21</sup> Maher, “Contexts for Understanding Professional Certification,” p. 421.

<sup>22</sup> William L. Joyce, “The SAA Certification Program,” *SAA Newsletter*, May 1987, p. 8-9, quoted in Maher, “Contexts for Understanding Professional Certification,” p. 425.

<sup>23</sup> Maher, “Contexts for Understanding Professional Certification,” p. 426.

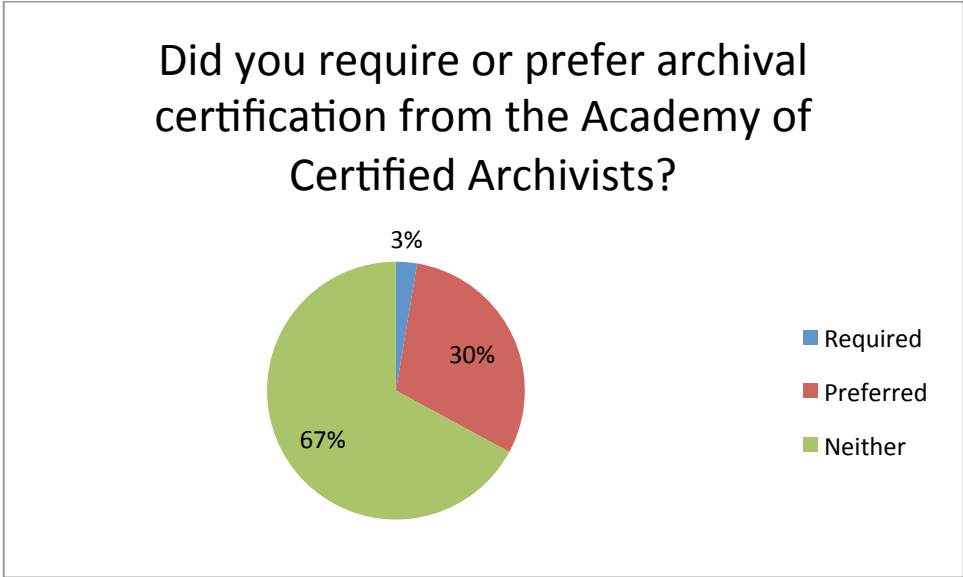


**Figure 1. Institutional Demographics**

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Academic library/archives	39	51
Corporate archives	2	3
Government/tribal archives	13	17
Historical society	3	4
Museum archives	7	9
Public library	1	1
Other: Religious community archives, Science research library and archives, religious archives, Private sector corporation, Special collections library owned and operated by a local government, Manuscript repository/independent library, Religious archives, For profit information resources management services firm, Library system, Independent school library, Archival services firm	11	15

**Table 1. Institutional Demographics**

Of the seventy-six respondents, only two required archival certification, twenty-three preferred it, and fifty-one neither required nor preferred it in job ads.



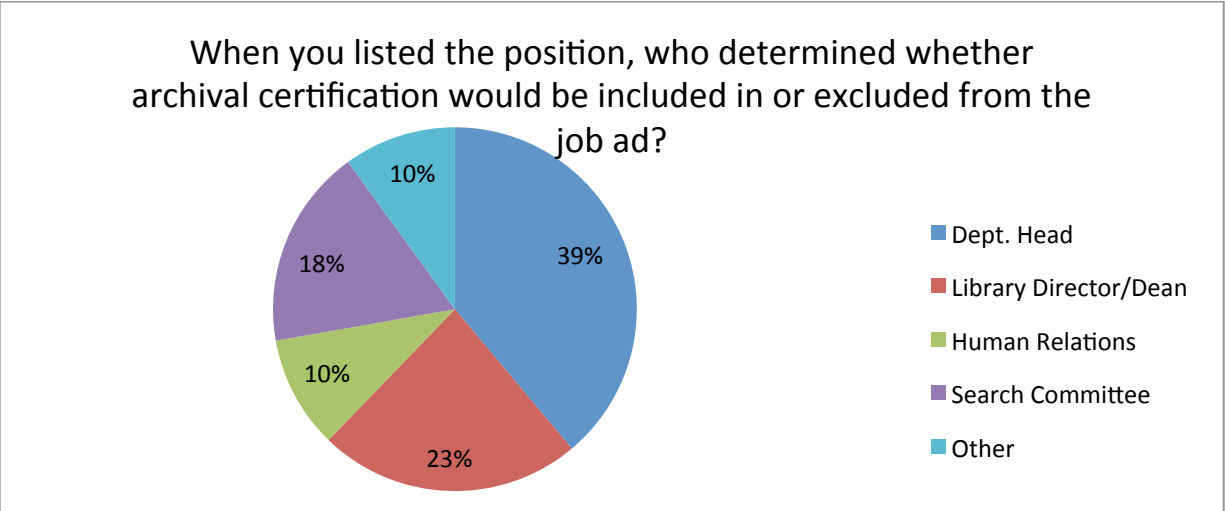
**Figure 2. Require or prefer archival certification in job ad**

<b>Require or prefer certification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Required	2	3
Preferred	23	30
Neither	51	67

**Table 2. Require or prefer archival certification in job ad**

For those who did not specify archival certification in the job ad, forty-one percent (n=31) considered it during the search and screening process while fifty-four percent (n=41) did not, and five percent (n=4) did not remember. The survey asked if having archival certification helped a candidate without a master’s degree or with a recent graduate degree; the overwhelming response was that it did not help either group (sixty-four percent, n=49) while it did help five candidates without a master’s degree, and twenty with a recent graduate degree.

Often a position description and requirements for a job fall outside the purview of archivists who may or may not have input in the process. The responses indicate that overwhelmingly the department head or library director/dean determined whether archival certification would be included or excluded from the job advertisement.



Note: The chart shows the percentages of responses that contained each of the possible choices and not the percentages of all possible combinations of responses.

**Figure 3. Who determined whether archival certification would be included or excluded from the job ad?**

Position	Number
Department Head	27
Library Director/Dean	16
Human Relations	7
Search Committee	8
Other	8
Dept. Head & Library Director/Dean	1
Dept. Head, Library Director/Dean & Human Relations	1
Dept. Head, Library Director/Dean & Search Committees	1
Dept. Head, Library Director/Dean, Human Relations & Search Committee	1
Dept. Head & Search Committee	4
Library Director/Dean & Search Committee	1
Search Committee & Other	1

**Table 3. Who determined whether archival certification would be included or excluded from the job ad?**

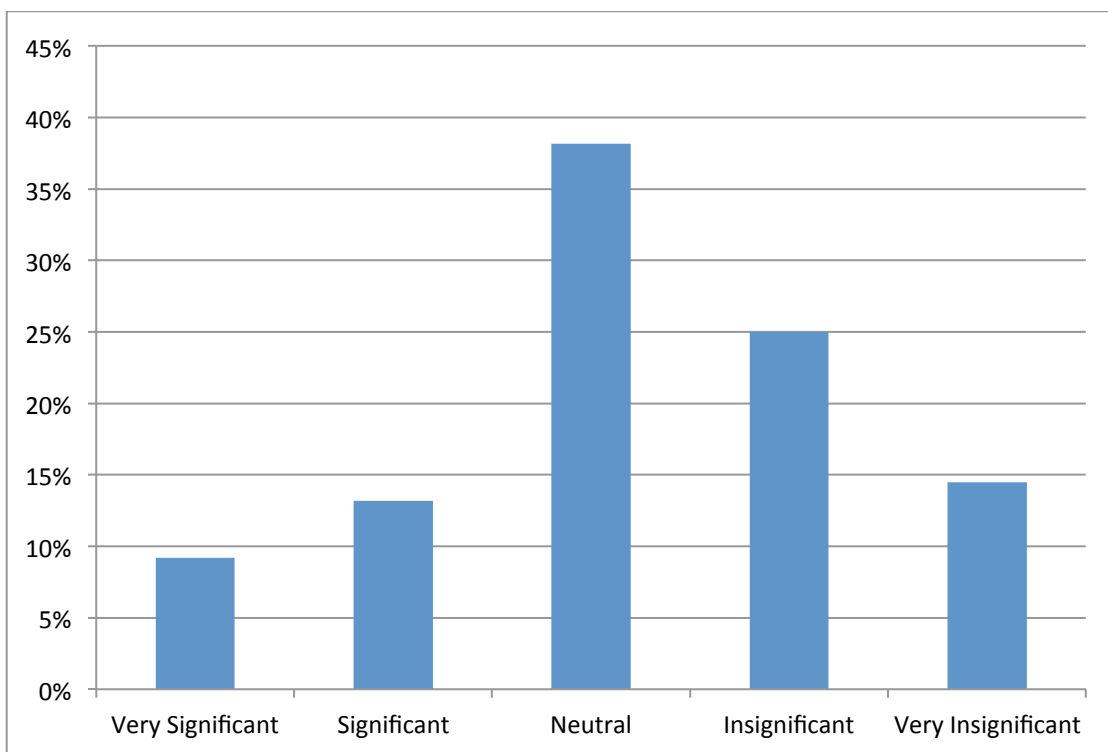
Once the candidates passed the initial screening procedure, were those with archival certification called for an interview? Respondents recalled that thirty-three percent (n=25) of the time they interviewed applicants with archival certification, fifty-one percent (n=39) said they did not, and sixteen percent (n=12) did not remember. Regardless of whether the hiring institution required, preferred, or did not care about certification, fifteen percent (n=11) hired an applicant with archival certification and fifty-five percent (n=42) did not. Sixteen respondents said all candidates lacked archival certification, three did not

fill the position and will re-advertise, and four did not remember. Of those that will re-advertise, none said they would request archival certification.

Twenty-two percent of respondents believe there is a significant or very significant correlation between certification and job performance while the remaining seventy-eight percent are split among neutral, insignificant, and very insignificant.

<b>Significance</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Significant	7	9
Significant	10	7
Neutral	29	38
Insignificant	19	25
Very Insignificant	11	14

**Table 4. Archival certification correlation with job performance.**



**Figure 4. In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?**

When considering archival certification as a criterion for employment, seventeen respondents are in favor of archival certification either as preferred or required, before or after employment, and thirty-one respondents believe it can be one of several factors but not an important criterion, to downright hostility against it (certified archivists as poor performers, a waste of money, shows only test taking ability).



The open-ended question that asked for additional comments about archival certification as a criterion for employment yielded strong responses on both ends of the spectrum.

- I encourage young archivists to obtain certification because it forces them to address knowledge categories that they will not cover in a master's program. On the other hand, I would never make certification a requirement when conducting a job search because it artificially limits the potential applicant pool.
- I grandmothers in for certification when the ACA first started, but did not renew and have no interest in requalifying (though I certainly have done everything necessary to qualify to take the exam, and more). When evaluating candidates for open positions, ACA certification plays no role in my screening decision.
- We listed it as preferred for two reasons. The former archivist being replaced thought very highly of her own certification, and although she was not on the search committee and those of us on the committee find it unnecessary, we respected her wishes. Secondly, our institution is located in the same city as a Public History masters program, and we do think that the certification shows more with archivists who have that degree over ones with an MLS because it proves that they have the practical and technical skills required for the job, which are focused on less in their schooling.
- I am completely against another credential for a \$40,000 a year job and refuse to pay another dime for a phony certification. Two advanced degrees is enough. After an MA in history, I had to get an MLIS and everyone knows that is a joke. It is the over professionalization of the position. Just because librarians did it, archivists don't have to. Don't get sucked in. Enough already.
- We did not require that candidates be certified prior to employment, but we required they pursue certification after hired.
- We look at the candidate's experience, knowledge of subject matter, etc. Certification is a small portion of the criteria we consider.
- We interviewed simultaneously for two entry level positions with certification as a preferred qualification. There were nearly 60 applicants, about 8 of whom were certified. Of the two we hired, one was a new graduate who plans to sit for the exam next. The other had 2 years experience but is preparing to take the exam this year. The understanding was that both would become certified because the when these job descriptions are revised, certification will be a requirement.
- I think training in their master's program (e.g., did they do an internship) and real life experience are more important.
- Not relevant for an ARL library requiring ALA-accreditation for professional staff
- It is crucial to insure that the Archivist is well-versed in 'best practices'.
- Absolutely no criteria whatsoever. With the proper education such, as a MLS/MSIS with an emphasis in archival studies, I see absolutely no need for certification, and I am certified. Likewise, previous work reference are more important that certification. I do not hire those without experience, even if certified.
- I generally ask for either an MLS with a concentration in archives, OR a Master's degree in another field with archival certification. I think certification can help determine if a candidate without formal archival training has the required knowledge, but otherwise it is not necessary.
- It provides a criteria to provide that the candidate has a sound understanding of archival principals and practices. The candidate knows the basics and has a firm educational background.
- The reading list for the exam is great (in fact, better than what I read in library school) but I'm not sure how much it would correlate to actual job performance.
- We considered archival certification when evaluating final candidates after the interviews. In the end, we went with someone with an archival-specific degree and strong writing skills. Not sure about question #6, as a master's degree is now required for certification.

- I work in an academic setting and they are big on having extra letters behind your name. A C.A. gives me a little more clout within the institution. I was hiring either an MLS or MA (public history) but the public history candidates had to show more experience and either a CA or that they plan to take the CA in the very near future. It was the Library administration that required it not the department head
- Certification only became a factor when comparing candidates with similar qualifications. It was never considered a requirement but if one had it but another did not it helped somewhat.
- As an archivist, I'm against certification and would never require it for employment or factor that into the decision for hiring.
- My position required certification. For the full-time professional position we hired several years ago archival certification was listed as preferred. The most recent, part-time temporary position we recently advertised for was designed as an entry-level position and it was thought that the new professional would not have certification and that it was not necessary to fulfill the requirements of the job duties.
- Archival certification is simply another hoop that this field has imposed upon itself in the pursuit of making itself look more legitimate. What is the purpose of having a MLIS and being certified? One is redundant onto the other. I feel, as do my colleagues, that certification is simply another way for an organization to get their hands into your pockets. As an archivist and as a librarian, I am surrounded by books all day long. Imagine that some of those books help me do my job better. Imagine that some of these books hold technical information that I will never commit to memory because I will NEVER be working in an environment where I cannot get to my books. What then is the point of testing my knowledge, in a 100 question multiple choice test of all things, to see how much I know? The thought that a multiple choice test can somehow gauge an individual's ability in a field is ridiculous. The only people seeking certification are recent graduates. They are eager to please and fall for the scam that is certification. Archival certification is as laughable as a bartender that has a Certificate of Mixology.
- I know certified archivists who I would not trust with an archival collection, and I know non-certified archivists who have years of training and experience and a high degree of skill - and vice versa. Aside from passing a multiple-choice test that in no way measures one's true ability to manage historical records collections/repositories, certification is essentially a collection of other credentials and experience that I would be evaluating independent of the CA credential and therefore tells me nothing that I won't be specifically looking for anyway: what degree(s) do you have, what types of archives have you worked with, what archival functions have you performed, what are your areas of expertise (management, technology, A&D, appraisal, etc.), what archival education/workshops have you attended, what professional activities/leadership have you engaged in, etc. etc. etc.
- Our archivist positions are tenure-track and an MLS is the basic requirement. Being a CA is an indication of professionalism, but it is not necessary for our applicants and does not substitute for the MLS.
- It shows commitment to the profession, but isn't always a good indicator of work ethic or real-world archival ability.
- I don't think this matters anymore.
- I actually view certification negatively just a waste of money. Many certified archivists I would never consider for hiring.
- I have hired both certified and noncertified archivists. My experience with certified archivists has been abysmal (I am still digging out from the huge mess one certified archivist created). I will no longer consider certification as a criterion for hiring and it will not guarantee an increased salary. I will no longer support certification as it is now. The best candidates and employees have been those who have had master degrees in archival administration and or history.
- I believe experience carries more weight than certification.

- We were looking for an entry level archival position. Since experience is required for the certification it did not seem right to us to require it. We do have employees with archival certification, however performance of employees in no way correlates to the certification.
- Our requirement was that either (1) candidate must have certification or (2) candidate must be willing to sit for certification.
- I am more interested in someone coming through a graduate program and getting a graduate degree, preferably an MLS with an archives focus. The only time I interviewed someone with the certification, the candidate had a contemptuous attitude toward SAA, and a rather unprofessional demeanor in general. Perhaps not a fair example, however.
- There were, in fact, three archivists on our search committee, only one of whom was a certified archivist. It was included in the job description as preferred to help weed out otherwise unqualified applicants, but was largely an insignificant factor. Past positions and job experience (specifically in the area of digital archiving) were the primary consideration. We would not have interviewed anyone without a master's degree, nor would we have interviewed recent graduates even if they were certified archivists.
- Archival certification is appropriate for folks who have been working in the professional for a significant number of years, but for whatever reason do not have 1 or more graduate degrees and related coursework. A multiple choice exam is no predictor of job performance nor does it demonstrate knowledge and skill.
- Some of the best archivists I know are not certified, and some of the weakest archivists I know are certified. I believe archival certification can be a useful secondary factor in assessing a candidate's qualifications, but I would never want to rank it above professional training, on-the-job experience, or strong references.
- One entry-level position for which we advertised attracted over 70 applicants. When we winnowed the field down based on candidates with master's degrees in archival management and two years of archival experience, we still had about 30 good candidates to select from. At that point, you are looking for things to distinguish candidates and certification becomes a very significant factor. A candidate with certification not only has demonstrated professional knowledge, but he or she has demonstrated a commitment to growing in and contributing to the profession. All other things being equal, I would hire someone with certification over someone without it. One of the reasons that we do not require or prefer certification in our job advertisements is that there are few CAs in the Northeast (where we are) and we do not want to unduly limit our initial pool of applicants.
- During the period in question I hired 37 archivists; to date one received full certification and several have discussed their interest in becoming certified. Although we do offer a \$500 salary bump for becoming certified, most do not feel it is worth their time and effort. In fact one told me last week that she thought the expense was just a money-making scheme by the ACA. In my experience archival certification has no correlation with archival ability. I have had certified archivists who could not do their jobs (were let go, in fact due to performance problems) and non-certified archivists who were excellent archivists, in both the technical and theoretical realms.
- It's not an educational credential; it's just a test that only applies while you pay for the results to be available. We don't consider it at all; it's more like a club membership.
- This was a temporary grant-funded position which did not pay very well. In the future, I would prefer certification for a full-time permanent position, but not require it.
- It's just another hoop to jump through
- Hiring someone with certification made that person over-qualified for the pay grade, but ensured that we had an excellent choice. We received over 100 applications for a processing archivist position: at least 10 were certified. Even if out-of-state, the certified archivists were considered in a distinct review round. The final decision making tool was the type of archival experience on

their resume (academic, governmental, religious, corporate) - as this appeared to indicate a specialty area that could best match our type of archive.

- Experience and professional development more than compensate for certification.
- Although archival certification offers a nice reassurance, it does not guarantee the best candidate to fill the position. Knowledge of archival science can be demonstrated effectively by showing educational background, participation in ongoing education, project management, performance achievements, professional affiliations, and participation in leadership development, mentoring, and professional publications.
- I have never been fortunate enough to hire someone positioned below me with archival certification, so cannot speak to correlation with job performance in that sense. I myself am certified and like to think it makes me a better archivist, but you would have to consult with MY supervisor to confirm that.
- The archival certification doesn't mean much to me when looking for employees. If they have attended a archival program, that means something. In all the years I have worked in archives, I have never found an archival certification has made a difference in hiring.
- NARA does not make it a criteria for employment. We look at schooling, whether the applicant has a Masters or a Bachelors degree, if they graduated from an archival program, what courses they took, what job experience do they have that relates to the position, etc.
- Over the years in which experience related to the management of digital assets has become more important, related knowledge and skill sets are being given more weight in the consideration of candidates than is ACA certification. In fact, it appears to me that the newly developed certification in digital resources is likely to surpass ACA certification except and unless there is an effort to ally the two.
- CoSA needs to push this more....marketing at the Professional Schools is lacking.
- In an academic institution where we conduct all-day interviews with multiple stakeholders having time with the candidates, certification is less important as a gauge of the person's qualifications.
- Our institution will not require or prefer candidates with certification until there are professionally agreed upon standards for repository certification.<sup>24</sup>

## Findings

Did the presence of an archivist or a certified archivist on the search committee make a difference in the preference for hiring a certified archivist? Ninety-three percent (n=71) of the search committees included an archivist. Looking at the correlation between whether having a certified archivist on the search committee or not made a difference in requiring or preferring certification in the job ad, with a certified archivist on the search committee one committee required certification, fifteen preferred it, and fifteen did not. The even split indicates no strong preference for candidates' certification.

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<sup>24</sup> The responses were edited for spelling and punctuation corrections.

		Does that archivist have archival certification?					
		Yes		No		There was no archivist on the Search Committee	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?	Required	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%
	Preferred	15	65.2%	8	34.8%	0	0.0%
	Neither	15	29.4%	33	64.7%	3	5.9%

**Table 5. Comparison of Responses to Question 1 (“When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?”) and Question 4 (“Does that archivist have archival certification?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 4, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 23 individuals who responded preferred to Question 1, 65.2% responded yes to Question 4, while 34.8% responded no and 0.0% responded there was no archivist on the search committee. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value < .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 4 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	17.617 <sup>a</sup>	4	.001	.003		
Likelihood Ratio	14.825	4	.005	.003		
Fisher's Exact Test	13.619			<b>.003</b>		
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.033 <sup>b</sup>	1	.045	.061	.032	.020
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

b. The standardized statistic is 2.008.

**Table 6. Chi-Square Tests for Table 5.**

Of the thirty-three percent who required or preferred certification, six hired a certified archivist and thirteen did not. Having a certified archivist on the search committee did not ensure that a candidate with archival certification was hired.

Comparing the responses of those who neither required nor preferred archival certification, and whether they considered it during the search and screening process, the results indicate they did not.

		If you did not specify archival certification in the job advertisement, did you consider it during the search and screening process?					
		Yes		No		Don't Remember	
		Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?	Required	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Preferred	15	65.2%	4	17.4%	4	17.4%
	Neither	14	27.5%	37	72.5%	0	0.0%

**Table 7. Comparison of Responses to Question 1 (“When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?”) and Question 5 (“If you did not specify archival certification in the job advertisement, did you consider it during the search and screening process?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 5, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 23 individuals who responded preferred to Question 1, 65.2% responded yes to Question 5, while 17.4% responded no and 17.4% didn’t remember. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value < .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 5 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	26.573 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000	.002		
Likelihood Ratio	29.006	4	.000	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test	26.061			.000		
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.033 <sup>b</sup>	1	.045	.061	.032	.020
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

b. The standardized statistic is 2.008.

**Table 8. Chi-Square Tests for Table 7.**

For those who neither required nor preferred archival certification, and responded if they interviewed applicants with archival certification, of those who required or preferred certification, only half interviewed certified archivists. Of those who neither required nor preferred certification, one quarter interviewed certified archivists and the rest either did not or did not remember.

		Did you interview applicant(s) with archival certification?					
		Yes		No		Don't Remember	
		Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?	Required	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%
	Preferred	11	47.8%	11	47.8%	1	4.3%
	Neither	13	25.5%	27	52.9%	11	21.6%

**Table 9. Comparison of Responses to Question 1 (“When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?”) and Question 7 (“Did you interview applicant(s) with archival certification?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 7, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 23 individuals who responded preferred to Question 1, 47.8% responded yes to Question 7, while 47.8% responded no and 4.3% didn’t remember. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value > .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is not a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 7 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	5.970 <sup>a</sup>	4	.201	.172		
Likelihood Ratio	6.806	4	.147	.166		
Fisher's Exact Test	6.050			<b>.147</b>		
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.489 <sup>b</sup>	1	.019	.025	.013	.008
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

b. The standardized statistic is 2.343.

**Table 10. Chi-Square Tests for Table 9.**

Looking at the correlation between whether an archivist was on the search committee and whether the committee interviewed certified archivists, the data indicate that the presence of an archivist did not significantly influence the inclusion of certified archivists among those interviewed.

		Did you interview applicant(s) with archival certification?					
		Yes		No		Don't Remember	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Was an archivist on the Search Committee?	Yes	23	32.4%	36	50.7%	12	16.9%
	No	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	0	0.0%

**Table 11. Comparison of Responses to Question 3 (“Was an archivist on the Search Committee?”) and Question 7 (“Did you interview applicant(s) with archival certification?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 7, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 3. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 71 individuals who responded yes to Question 3, 32.4% responded yes to Question 7, while 50.7% responded no and 16.9% didn’t remember. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value > .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is not a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 7 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 3.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	1.006 <sup>a</sup>	2	.605	.707		
Likelihood Ratio	1.785	2	.410	.707		
Fisher's Exact Test	.682			1.000		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.605 <sup>b</sup>	1	.437	.515	.337	.207
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .79.

b. The standardized statistic is -.778.

**Table 12. Chi-Square Tests for Table 11.**

Comparing the responses of those who neither required nor preferred archival certification, and whether they hired an applicant with archival certification, slightly more than half did not.



		Did you hire an applicant with archival certification?									
		Yes		No		No, all candidates lacked archival certification		Did not fill the position and will re-advertise		Don't remember	
		Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?	Required	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Preferred	5	21.7%	12	52.2%	5	21.7%	1	4.3%	0	0.0%
	Neither	5	9.8%	29	56.9%	11	21.6%	2	3.9%	4	7.8%

**Table 13. Comparison of Responses to Question 1 (“When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?”) and Question 9 (“Did you hire an applicant with archival certification?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 9, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 23 individuals who responded preferred to Question 1, 21.7% responded yes to Question 9, while 52.2% responded no, 21.7% responded no, all candidates lacked archival certification, 4.3% responded did not fill the position and will re-advertise and 0.0% didn’t remember. As noted above, there were no did not fill the position and will request archival certification in the re-advertisement responses to Question 9. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value > .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is not a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 10 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	5.906 <sup>a</sup>	8	.658	.575		
Likelihood Ratio	6.938	8	.543	.541		
Fisher's Exact Test	7.251			<b>.549</b>		
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.451 <sup>b</sup>	1	.063	.064	.030	.013
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 11 cells (73.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

b. The standardized statistic is 1.858.

**Table 14. Chi-Square Tests for Table 13.**

Evaluating the type of archival institution based on whether they required or preferred archival certification in the job ad, shows that the overwhelming majority neither required nor preferred it.

		For demographic purposes, is your institution													
		Academic library/archives		Corporate archives		Government/tribal archives		Historical society		Museum archives		Public library		Other	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?	Required	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
	Preferred	9	39.1%	1	4.3%	4	17.4%	1	4.3%	3	13.0%	1	4.3%	4	17.4%
	Neither	30	58.8%	1	2.0%	9	17.6%	2	3.9%	4	7.8%	0	0.0%	5	9.8%

**Table 15. Comparison of Responses to Question 1 (“When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?”) and Question 12 (“For demographic purposes, is your institution?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 12, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 23 individuals who responded preferred to Question 1, 39.1% responded academic library/archives to Question 12, while 4.3% responded corporate archives, 17.4% responded governmental/tribal archives, 4.3% responded historical society, 13.0% responded museum archives, 4.3% responded public library and 17.4% responded other. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value > .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is not a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 12 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	17.060 <sup>a</sup>	12	.147	.176		
Likelihood Ratio	13.087	12	.363	.280		
Fisher's Exact Test	16.423			.180		
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.777 <sup>b</sup>	1	.005	.005	.004	.001
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 17 cells (81.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

b. The standardized statistic is -2.789.

**Table 16. Chi-Square Tests for Table 15.**

Looking at the correlation between having a certified archivist on the search committee and whether the institution hired an applicant with archival certification, the overwhelming majority still did not hire a certified archivist from the applicant pool.

		Did you hire an applicant with archival certification?									
		Yes		No		No, all candidates lacked archival certification		Did not fill the position and will re-advertise		Don't remember	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Does that archivist have archival certification?	Yes	6	19.4%	13	41.9%	9	29.0%	2	6.5%	1	3.2%
	No	3	7.3%	28	68.3%	6	14.6%	1	2.4%	3	7.3%
	There was no archivist on the Search Committee	2	50.0%	1	25.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

**Table 17. Comparison of Responses to Question 4 (“Does that archivist have archival certification?”) and Question 9 (“Did you hire an applicant with archival certification?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 9, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 4. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 31 individuals who responded yes to Question 4, 19.4% responded yes to Question 9, while 41.9% responded no, 29.0% responded no, all candidates lacked archival certification, 6.5% responded did not fill the position and will re-advertise and 3.2% responded they didn’t remember. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value > .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is not a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 9 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 4.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	11.808 <sup>a</sup>	8	.160	.150		
Likelihood Ratio	11.211	8	.190	.221		
Fisher's Exact Test	11.751			.103		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.183 <sup>b</sup>	1	.669	.726	.372	.065
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 10 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.

b. The standardized statistic is -.428.

**Table 18. Chi-Square Tests for Table 17.**

For the comparison of whether an institution hired a certified archivist to the type of institution, in sixty-four percent of the cases (n=27) the forty-two responding academic libraries/archives did not hire a certified archivist.

	For demographic purposes, is your institution													
	Academic library/archives		Corporate archives		Government/tribal archives		Historical society		Museum archives		Public library		Other	
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
Yes	4	36.4%	1	9.1%	3	27.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	27.3%
No	27	64.3%	1	2.4%	3	7.1%	1	2.4%	4	9.5%	1	2.4%	5	11.9%
No, all candidates lacked archival certification	5	31.2%	0	0.0%	6	37.5%	1	6.2%	2	12.5%	0	0.0%	2	12.5%
Did not fill the position and will re-advertise	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%
Don't remember	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	1	25.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

**Table 19. Comparison of Responses to Question 9 (“Did you hire an applicant with archival certification?”) and Question 12 (“For demographic purposes, is your institution?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 12, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 9. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 42 individuals who responded no to Question 9, 64.3% responded academic library/archives to Question 12, while 2.4% responded corporate archives, 7.1% responded government/tribal archives, 2.4% responded historical society, 9.5% responded museum archives, 2.4% responded public library and 11.9% responded other. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value > .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is not a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 12 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 9.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	25.489 <sup>a</sup>	24	.380	. <sup>b</sup>		
Likelihood Ratio	25.280	24	.391	.307		
Fisher's Exact Test	29.584			.119		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.203 <sup>c</sup>	1	.652	.664	.328	.016
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 30 cells (85.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

b. Cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.

c. The standardized statistic is .451.

**Table 20. Chi-Square Tests for Table 19.**

For those archival institutions that neither required nor preferred archival certification, their responses to how archival certification correlates with job performance indicates that those who required certification ranked it significant/very significant, those who preferred certification also ranked it significant/very significant, but with slightly more than one-third ranking it neutral. Respondents who neither required nor preferred certification overwhelmingly ranked it insignificant/very insignificant, and between one-third to one-half ranked it neutral.

		In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?									
		Very Insignificant		Insignificant		Neutral		Significant		Very Significant	
		Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?	Required	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
	Preferred	1	4.3%	3	13.0%	8	34.8%	6	26.1%	5	21.7%
	Neither	10	19.6%	16	31.4%	21	41.2%	3	5.9%	1	2.0%

**Table 21. Comparison of Responses to Question 1 (“When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?”) and Question 10 (“In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 10, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 23 individuals who responded preferred to Question 1, 4.3% responded very insignificant to Question 10, while 13.0% responded insignificant, 34.8% responded neutral, 26.1% responded significant and 21.7% responded very significant. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value < .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 10 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 1.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	23.924 <sup>a</sup>	8	.002	.004		
Likelihood Ratio	23.674	8	.003	.001		
Fisher's Exact Test	21.958			.001		
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.133 <sup>b</sup>	1	.000	.000	.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 9 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.

b. The standardized statistic is -4.374.

**Table 22. Chi-Square Tests for Table 21.**

Comparing whether a certified archivist served on the search committee and how archival certification correlates with job performance, the majority who were certified tended to rank certification as more highly significant/very significant than the uncertified archivists, while slightly more than one-third of both groups ranked certification as neutral.

		In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?									
		Very Insignificant		Insignificant		Neutral		Significant		Very Significant	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Does that archivist have archival certification?	Yes	3	9.7%	4	12.9%	13	41.9%	5	16.1%	6	19.4%
	No	8	19.5%	15	36.6%	15	36.6%	3	7.3%	0	0.0%
	There was no archivist on the Search Committee	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	1	25.0%

**Table 23. Comparison of Responses to Question 4 (“Does that archivist have archival certification?”) and Question 10 (“In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 10, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 4. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 31 individuals who responded yes to Question 4, 9.7% responded very insignificant to Question 10, while 12.9% responded insignificant, 41.9% responded neutral, 16.1% responded significant and 19.4% responded very significant. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value < .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 10 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 4.

**Table 23. Chi-Square Tests for Table 22.**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	20.850 <sup>a</sup>	8	.008	.008		
Likelihood Ratio	23.606	8	.003	.003		
Fisher's Exact Test	19.805			.003		
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.482 <sup>b</sup>	1	.115	.118	.068	.020
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 9 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .37.

b. The standardized statistic is -1.575.

**Table 24. Chi-Square Tests for Table 23.**

Looking at the correlation between hiring a certified archivist and the significance of archival certification to job performance, those institutions which hired a certified archivist ranked it significant/very significant compared to those who did not hire a certified archivist.

	In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?									
	Very Insignificant		Insignificant		Neutral		Significant		Very Significant	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Yes	1	9.1%	1	9.1%	2	18.2%	3	27.3%	4	36.4%
No	8	19.0%	14	33.3%	14	33.3%	5	11.9%	1	2.4%
No, all candidates lacked archival certification?	1	6.2%	2	12.5%	9	56.2%	2	12.5%	2	12.5%
Did not fill the position and will re-advertise	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't remember	1	25.0%	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

**Table 25. Comparison of Responses to Question 9 (“Did you hire an applicant with archival certification?”) and Question 10 (“In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 10, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 9. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 42 individuals who responded no to Question 9, 19.0% responded very insignificant to Question 10, while 33.3% responded insignificant, 33.3% responded neutral, 11.9% responded significant and 2.4% responded very significant.

The results of Fisher's Exact Test (p-value > .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is not a difference in the distribution of individuals' responses to Question 10 based off of survey respondents' answers to Question 9.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	23.651 <sup>a</sup>	16	.097	. <sup>b</sup>		
Likelihood Ratio	22.929	16	.116	.175		
Fisher's Exact Test	19.690			<b>.097</b>		
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.610 <sup>c</sup>	1	.204	.223	.111	.017
N of Valid Cases	76					

a. 20 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .28.

b. Cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.

c. The standardized statistic is -1.269.

**Table 26. Chi-Square Tests for Table 25.**

In a comparison between how archival certification correlates with job performance and the type of institution which responded, among those that did not believe certification correlated with job performance (ranking it as insignificant/very insignificant) were twenty of the thirty-nine academic libraries/archives; fourteen others ranked it as neutral and only five ranked it as significant/very significant. The two corporate archives split between insignificant and significant, while most of the other types of archival institutions ranked it neutral.



		For demographic purposes, is your institution													
		Academic library/ archives		Corporate archives		Government / tribal archives		Historical society		Museum archives		Public library		Other	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?	Very Insignificant	4	36.4 %	0	0.0 %	3	27.3 %	0	0.0 %	1	9.1 %	0	0.0 %	3	27.3 %
	Insignificant	16	84.2 %	1	5.3 %	1	5.3 %	0	0.0 %	1	5.3 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
	Neutral	14	48.3 %	0	0.0 %	6	20.7 %	2	6.9 %	4	13.8 %	1	3.4 %	2	6.9 %
	Significant	3	30.0 %	1	10.0 %	1	10.0 %	0	0.0 %	1	10.0 %	0	0.0 %	4	40.0 %
	Very Significant	2	28.6 %	0	0.0 %	2	28.6 %	1	14.3 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	2	28.6 %

**Table 27. Comparison of Responses to Question 10 (“In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?”) and Question 12 (“For demographic purposes, is your institution?”).**

The table above shows the distribution of responses to Question 12, based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 10. The percentages are row percentages. For example, of the 29 individuals who responded insignificant to Question 10, 48.3% responded academic library/archives to Question 12, while 0.0% responded corporate archives, 20.7% responded government/tribal archives, 6.9% responded historical society, 13.8% responded museum archives, 3.4% responded public library and 6.9% responded other. The results of Fisher’s Exact Test (p-value < .05), circled in the table below, indicate that there is a difference in the distribution of individuals’ responses to Question 12 based off of survey respondents’ answers to Question 10.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.179 <sup>a</sup>	24	.149	. <sup>b</sup>	
Likelihood Ratio	34.251	24	.080	.071	
Fisher's Exact Test	31.158			<b>.031</b>	
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.762	1	.097	. <sup>b</sup>	. <sup>b</sup>
N of Valid Cases	76				

a. 31 cells (88.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.

b. Cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.

**Table 28. Chi-Square Tests for Table 27.**

Academic libraries/archives rate certification insignificant or very insignificant more so than other archival institutions. Certification carries little or no weight in hiring practices except in corporate archives. Because corporate archivists work in businesses that understand credentialing and archivists need to justify their value to the company, archival certification seems to be more of an asset in the corporate sphere than in the historical and academic realms, where the Master's degree and relevant work experience prevail.

## **Conclusion**

Given the responses to this survey, the data show that archival certification has a lukewarm to hostile response from hiring managers. Even currently employed certified archivists prefer previous employment experience over archival certification when serving on a search committee. If employers do not require or prefer certification, of what benefit is the credential?

On one hand, we have the Academy of Certified Archivists encouraging archivists to sit for the examination, and on the other hand, we have archival institutions not interested in considering archival certification as a highly desirable qualification for employment. This raises the question of what is or should be the importance of archival certification. Additional studies could tease out the motivations for archivists to become certified to see if their perceptions of the C.A. resonate more with self-assessment and professional development or if they believe certification will give them an edge in employability.

As noted earlier, this survey did not investigate the feminization of the profession nor salaries. Thus, one can draw no conclusions about whether certified archivists command and receive higher salaries than their non-certified colleagues, or if it is common—as one respondent noted—to get a salary bonus after passing the certification examination. A future survey to study salary structures, gender, and certification may provide more detail on who is being certified and if there is a correlation with higher salaries. With women traditionally paid less than their male colleagues, does a female with certification earn a higher salary than her non-certified female colleague, and how does her salary compare to a certified or non-certified male colleague?

In these tight economic times, and with a plethora of newly-minted graduates flooding the applicant pools for fewer and fewer permanent archival positions, we as a profession need to assess the role of archival certification. Are we promising archivists who pass the examination a credential that will give them an edge on their resume, are we attesting to their knowledge of archival theory (with no assessment of their ability to apply it to real-world situations), are we providing a fee-based self-assessment for the highly motivated, or are we perpetuating an outmoded system of credentialing that the marketplace ignores? Future research through additional studies could help to answer these questions and provide the Academy of Certified Archivists with a tool for its own self-assessment.

## **Resources**

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## Appendix: Archival Certification Survey Questions

1. When you listed the position, did you require or prefer archival certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists?  
Required  
Preferred  
Neither  
Don't remember
2. When you listed the position, who determined whether archival certification would be included in or excluded from the job ad?  
Dept. Head  
Library Director/Dean  
Human Relations  
Search Committee  
Other, please specify
3. Was an archivist on the Search Committee?  
Yes  
No
4. Does that archivist have archival certification?  
Yes  
No  
There was no archivist on the Search Committee
5. If you did not specify archival certification in the job advertisement, did you consider it during the search and screening process?  
Yes  
No  
Don't remember
6. Did archival certification help a candidate  
Without a Master's Degree  
With a recent graduate degree
7. Did you interview applicant(s) with archival certification?  
Yes  
No  
Don't remember
8. Is the archivist position  
Full time  
Part time  
Permanent  
Temporary (grant-funded, fixed term)  
Supervisory  
Non-supervisory

9. Did you hire an applicant with archival certification?
  - Yes
  - No
  - No, all candidates lacked archival certification
  - Did not fill the position and will readvertise
  - Did not fill the position and will request archival certification in the readvertisement
  - Don't remember
  
10. In your opinion, how does archival certification correlate with job performance?
  - Very Significant
  - Significant
  - Neutral
  - Insignificant
  - Very Insignificant
  
11. Additional comments about archival certification as a criteria for employment.
  
12. For demographic purposes, is your institution
  - Academic library/archives
  - Corporate archives
  - Government/tribal archives
  - Historical society
  - Museum archives
  - Public library
  - Other, please specify