Archival Appraisal in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

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INTRODUCTION

- 336 university archives (UAs) in the UK.
- UAs function as in-house custodians of university records.
- Some UAs also acquire specialist fonds/collections.
- Stakeholders: governing bodies; university & external researchers; local and national communities; depositors.

Record-keeping framework & guidelines:

- The majority of HEIs seek to preserve their archives.
- UAs are not covered by the Public Records Act.
- No mandatory guidelines on records management and appraisal for HEIs.
- Some guidelines have been formulated.



KEY LEGISLATION & AUTHORITIES

- Records retention and disposition policies (HEI).
- Collection policies.
- Legislation & regulations governing record keeping & access.
- Guidance on academic & scientific research.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH TO APPRAISAL (JISC)

- Identification of records as archives at the earliest possible stage in record life cycle.
- Functional analysis using
 JISC's Business Classification
 Scheme (BCS) as a
 framework.
- Macro-appraisal by applying retention decisions at series level using JISC's generic retention schedule as a model.



KEY APPRAISAL VALUES

HEIs seek to build a picture of the institution as:

- A corporate entity.
- A teaching and learning organisation.
- A research and innovation organisation.
- A contributor to economic and cultural development.
- A member of local, national and international communities.
- A part of the community at large.

FINDINGS

There are no figures as to how many HEIs have appraisal policies, but many examples to be found via websites.

Common elements include:

- Adoption (or moving towards adoption) of a functions-based BCS.
- Commitment to macroappraisal as far as possible, though some correspondence and subject files still appraised at micro level.
- Media-neutral approach to appraisal.
- Appraisal of digital records still developing techniques.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The EU Erasmus Intensive Programme: http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc900_en.htm. The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education: http://www.siu.no/eng. Photograph courtesy of World ORT Archive