

FARMER: supporting the evolving educational needs of the profession

Whilst the individual programmes for studying archives and records management are well known to ARA members, the overarching body which represents the individual programmes is perhaps less well publicized. The Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research (FARMER) is the representative body for educators in recordkeeping in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It exists to promote professional education in recordkeeping and to advocate for archival and records management research as an essential part of a professional discipline. Key to the work of this body is to link education, research and practice. As such we are delighted to contribute to this themed ARC edition.

The members of FARMER consist of all those educational establishments which offer programmes accredited by ARA. Currently the members are the universities of Aberystwyth, Dublin, Dundee, Glasgow, Liverpool, Maynooth, Northumbria and UCL. Maynooth is the most recent member joining in 2018 and now delivering a Historical Archives Masters level programme.

Each programme offers education which delivers core recordkeeping skills that align to the ARA Competency Framework and the Quality Assurance Agency's Subject Benchmark. However, there are distinctions in the teaching and expertise at each institution including in particular the additional optional elements. This means that together we provide an educational offering which delivers professionals with strong core skills but also bespoke expertise to meet the increasingly wide-ranging challenges of information management. In addition, the programmes are delivered on campus and as distance learning which again supports different routes of studying in order to enter the profession. We are always keen to better understand the needs of professionals in practice and to offer support for continuing professional development. A number of modules are available as short courses. Over the last decade we have had to review the skills recordkeepers need, for example for digital curation, information rights law delivery, information security and research.

As the recognition of ARM as a research discipline has developed, we have been able to secure funding for delivering research to provide new knowledge and solutions for our practice. This has included work on a wide range of issues including community archiving, electronic records management, research data management, social care recordkeeping and recordkeeping toolkits. In delivering research learning we link to our international communities. Increasingly we are seeing PhD studies in our discipline. In July this year, Liverpool University will host the international Archive and Education Research Initiative/ FARMER Conference (<http://aeri.website/>) to discuss research on contemporary issues and support doctoral students' studies. We have a strong programme of conferences, for example in 2018 Dundee delivered an international event on Memory Identity and Trust, Glasgow reflected on the professional placement as a process for teaching and learning at a teaching conference, and UCL delivered a GDPR Symposium for practitioners in conjunction with ARA. All of the lecturers try to disseminate their work at events and through publications including as a few examples, Facet publications challenging our thinking such Jennie Hill's (Aberystwyth) Reader on the *Future of Archives and Recordkeeping* and Caroline Brown's (Dundee) *Archival Futures*, Elizabeth Mullin's (Dublin) work on the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland published in *Archives and Records* or Julie McLeod's (Northumbria) work on using the cloud for record storage published as an open source article in *Archival Science*. Every year we engage students with research during their studies and a FARMER dissertation prize is awarded with ARA support.

Our website (<https://archivesandrecordsmanagement.wordpress.com/>) is currently a work in progress but in 2019 we will be significantly revamping this to provide a better holistic portal for all our activities. We hope this will provide another tool which will underpin our discussions with the profession and aid the links between education, research and practice. We are keen to expand and promote these discussions so please do not hesitate to get in contact with me.

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