

# Partnerships in professional education: a study in archives and records management

ELIZABETH SHEPHERD

## Abstract

The theme of the 1990s is partnership. Government policies and organisational structures encourage collaboration. This trend is reflected in the archives and records management profession. This paper is a study of partnership projects between higher education institutions and four types of partner: employers; professional bodies; a charity; and other higher education institutions. The focus of the study is professional education and training in archives and records management. The paper concludes that a complex environment requires a flexible response and that a small discipline needs to develop partnerships to enable all involved to respond swiftly to change. Collaboration rather than competition must be the basis for future survival and success.

## Introduction

The theme of the 1990s is partnership, seeking benefits for all through co-operation. Many government policies encourage collaboration: employee/employer partnerships in the Investors in People programme; collaboration between the public and private sectors in the Private Finance Initiative and other joint funding arrangements; increasing use of contractors to provide specialist services to government under competitive tendering arrangements; and lifelong learning policies, which are dependent upon the involvement of schools, employers, higher and further education institutions and citizens. This national theme is reflected in the archives and records management profession, especially in the context of professional education and training.

This paper is a study of partnership projects between higher education institutions and four types of partner: employers; professional bodies;

a charity; and other higher education institutions. The focus of the study is professional education and training in archives and records management. As the author has worked in an academic department at University College London (UCL) over the past six years, many of the examples draw on UCL's own experience. However, where possible examples involving other universities are included and all are used to illustrate the general issues.

### Changes in the workplace

The workplace has seen many fundamental changes over the past decade. Employers of archivists and records managers are not immune to changes in employment patterns. One noticeable trend is the emergence of short contracts (typically 12–24 months) following the award of special funding and grants for particular projects. In the era of Heritage Lottery Funding and the Millennium Fund this trend has increased. Archivists and records managers need to respond to this by offering a wider range of specialist skills and greater flexibility: the emergence of the 'portfolio professional' is required. Restructuring and head count reductions have hit every organisation. The successful professional seizes the benefit from job changes by developing new, more and different skills. However, employers are reporting difficulties in recruiting professionals with appropriate skill sets, especially for contract posts.<sup>1</sup>

Public/private sector partnerships are increasingly in evidence. An excellent example is the UK National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD) which opened for public access in March 1998. It is operated by the University of London as agents of the Public Record Office (PRO) to preserve and make available public records which take the form of datasets. The project involves the active partnership of archivists, data specialists and systems designers within both the PRO and the University of London.

National targets for education and training include those set under the Investors in People (IIP) initiative and the S/NVQ (Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications) frameworks, national traineeships and modern apprenticeships.<sup>2</sup> Under government targets set for the year 2000, 70% of large organisations and 35% of small ones should have IIP; while 30% of the population should achieve NVQ level 4, that is the equivalent of graduate professional or managerial qualification.<sup>3</sup> S/NVQs for the archives and records management sectors have been published and assessment centres are gradually being established, for example, at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle (UNN). In an example of partnership, record services at the Department of Social Security based at Nelson, Lancashire, has become a satellite NVQ assessment centre to UNN in Newcastle.<sup>4</sup>

### Changes in the archives and records management profession

The archives and records management profession itself has seen many changes in recent years. External pressures which require change include increased access to records under the Open Government initiative of 1993 and more recent proposals for freedom of information. A new Data Protection Act, implementing the European Union (EU) Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC), will come into force in 1999. For the first time many paper records as well as electronic records containing information about living individuals are covered. The management of electronic records has been an issue facing archivists for several years and is just beginning to be addressed seriously by the UK profession.

New funds in particular sectors have made a major impact. For example, following the Follett Report on special collections in higher education, university archivists were extremely successful in obtaining significant new funds for special projects, particularly in archival description and conservation. These projects have not only benefited the institutions concerned and their users, but also the development work has been shared in the professional community more widely. For example, the Encoded Archival Description project developed at the University of Berkeley was taken up by UK university archivists and has now been disseminated into other sectors, including the PRO.

Some of the most important professional work has been on standards. In the UK, standards development has concentrated on archival description, building on Michael Cook's work of the 1980s<sup>5</sup> in combination with the growing number of international descriptive standards, in particular ISAD(G).<sup>6</sup> The National Council on Archives has been very active in fostering standards development through its IT Committee, which published the NCA Rules for constructing index terms.<sup>7</sup> A major NCA report, *Archives On-Line*, published in 1998, moves the descriptive standards debate into the larger context of the provision of access to archival resources through a national archival network. Increasingly educational and leisure users use exclusively electronic resources. However, most archival resources are still only accessible on paper. Users believe that they have electronic access to all types of information, but in fact little of the archival heritage is available digitally.

A national standard has been published by the profession in Ireland,<sup>8</sup> setting benchmarks for the further development of the profession there. In the discipline of records management, the first comprehensive national standard was adopted by the Australian profession in 1996,<sup>9</sup> since when there have been discussions about its adoption as an international standard. The International Standards Organisation as the umbrella body, and the British Standards Institution, as the UK representative body, are currently reviewing a re-drafted text as the basis for an international

records management standard.<sup>10</sup> National committee comments were reported to a meeting of the international committee in Washington in November 1998 and a new standard could be published within two to three years.

Linked to the development of standards, the UK profession has also sought to ensure high quality professional conduct by individual members of the profession. For example, the Society of Archivists adopted a Code of Conduct in 1994, which 'set out the standards of professional behaviour expected of archivists, archive conservators, records managers and those occupied in related activities who are members of the Society...'.<sup>11</sup> In 1998, the Society adopted the International Council on Archives *Code of Ethics* to stand alongside its existing Code.

In the specific area of education and training, key developments by the professional bodies include the publication of accreditation frameworks for university qualifications<sup>12</sup> and of training and continuing professional development policies. Bodies such as the Records Management Society, the Society of Archivists and the Business Archives Council offer increasingly comprehensive training programmes of short courses and conferences. The Society of Archivists appointed a dedicated Training Officer for the first time in 1995 to provide better support for training activities and introduced a pre-Registration training scheme for newly qualified professionals in 1996.

After decades of relative stability, higher education has experienced rapid changes following the abolition of the polytechnics and the establishment of all higher education institutions as universities in 1992. Major reports on higher education (the Dearing Report) and further education (the Kennedy Report) were published in 1997.<sup>13</sup> Expansion in capacity for post-18 education in the 1990s has resulted in increases in student numbers and in programmes offered, including at graduate level.<sup>14</sup>

Universities, as spenders of public money, are subject to an increasing number of quality assurance assessments, by internal and external auditors. These include the Research Assessment Exercise (next due in 2001) and teaching quality assessments by subject area: archive and records management courses in history departments and in Wales have been assessed, but those in library and information departments await assessment early in the new millennium. A new Arts and Humanities Research Board was established in the summer of 1998, which will take on responsibility for graduate bursaries from the British Academy, including those for archives and records management students, and provide new funds for research in arts and humanities. Potentially, the Board will provide new resources for academic development in archives and records management.

As an academic discipline, archives and records management is still struggling to create a distinct identity for itself. The programmes have

expanded a little, notably in records management, which is offered by most library schools as an option for library and information students, and new programmes have begun, notably the Masters in Records Management by distance learning at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle (UNN).<sup>15</sup> A number of new academic staff have been recruited, all of whom have professional qualifications and experience not purely academic qualifications. This creates some tensions, as professionals have to demonstrate their academic credentials in research-orientated universities, but is beneficial to the profession's education. These new academics are interested in learning issues such as the development of open and distance learning techniques and planning for continuing professional development as well as first professional qualifications. Both UCL and UNN undertook investigations funded by the Higher Education Funding Council England – Continuing Vocational Education fund in 1996–97 to look at aspects of the continuing development needs of records managers.<sup>16</sup>

This complex environment requires a flexible response: a small discipline needs to develop partnerships to enable all involved to respond swiftly to change. Collaboration rather than competition must be the basis for future survival and success.

#### Higher education – Employer partnerships

One of the most significant relationships for a higher education institution which provides professional education is the link with the employers of the product of the educational programmes. Although graduates from archive and records management programmes go to work in an enormous range of organisations, including private companies, most industry sectors from banking to pharmaceutical research, charities, local government and the civil service, the scope of the job is generally recognisable as being within the profession. Employers of archivists and records managers have an interest in ensuring that the university education offered to the profession provides the right range of skills and knowledge, both at the initial professional qualification stage (usually a graduate Diploma or MA), in continuing professional development, and increasingly, in para-professional qualifications as well. Equally, it is in the interests of the university to work closely with employers in order to ensure that both the needs of employers and the extent to which graduates meet those needs are well known. Of course, the view of employers is only one influence over the development of higher education programmes, but in the case of professional qualifications it is clearly an important one. Meeting the very varied requirements of employers within the constraints of a university framework provides a useful stimulus or creative tension for academics in professional subject areas.

The Council for Industry and Higher Education in partnership with the Department for Education and Employment recently commissioned some research into Continued Professional Development, in particular looking at the role of employers and higher education institutes in facilitating professional development.<sup>17</sup> The research considered the motivation for continuing professional development, which included the development of effectiveness as a professional, as a manager, as well as for personal and good business reasons. Lifetime learning involves general educational attainments, plus job specific and transferable skills. The study found that a significant factor for success was the motivation of the individuals, although the provision by the employer (through funding, study time etc) and of the university (by effective tutorial support, appropriate learning resources etc) of a supportive environment for study was also important. A number of weaknesses were identified in existing models, in particular employers criticised the lack of choice of provision. Effective collaboration between the individual, the employer and the higher education institution depended on the active involvement of all parties in the partnership.

Part of the research was a series of six case studies which illustrated the huge variety in the practice and provision of continuing professional development in industry and higher education.<sup>18</sup> The case studies covered several industry sectors including large blue chip companies (BT, ICI, Bovis Construction), small and medium sized enterprises (including the Public Record Office), and co-operation between a university and a funding body (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) to provide specific industry skills to science graduates. The range of types of educational provision was also wide, including a traditional modular masters degree taught on university premises with a work-based component; a masters programme tailored to the needs of the employer and offered on their premises; provision designed to specific company needs, delivered by a commercial trainer and accredited by a university; sponsored work placements within a particular industry sector with input from a university; professional development organised and delivered by the employer, but with the support and accreditation of a university; and professional development offered entirely in the workplace using the company's own training staff.

A number of general issues arose from the case studies. The individuals engaged in development varied in age from new graduate recruits to very experienced practitioners. The focus of some schemes was on technical and professional skills, while others focused on personal and management skills. All schemes had quality assessment and control mechanisms built in, and most included a university assessment or accreditation. In all the case studies the relationship between the individual and a tutor or mentor was significant. Most of the programmes were fully funded by employers, with additional funding from the Department of Trade and



Industry and some limited employee contributions. The study noted that the drivers for participation in the schemes were similar in all cases: the employer was seeking to develop particular skills or qualities in its employees; the individuals wanted to enhance their career prospects; the universities were exploiting a market opportunity for revenue, while also trying out innovative methods of delivery and benefiting from involvement with reputable and prestigious companies.

#### UCL-PRO case study

One of the case studies was of a partnership between the PRO and UCL. The PRO has been involved in two major educational partnerships with universities over the three years 1995–98. First, in 1995–97, it contracted UCL to provide the graduate Diploma/MA in Archives and Records Management to a group of eighteen staff. Traditionally the PRO recruited its archive staff with a PhD in history and trained them on a two year in-house curatorial programme. By the 1990s the value of a more portable professional qualification was recognised. A small number of PRO staff had been released to study part-time at UCL, but the UCL programme requires day time attendance in central London and was not convenient for full-time staff based at Kew, in west London. In 1994 six universities were approached by the PRO with a view to providing the first stage: a professional qualification for graduate staff working at the PRO.

In 1995, a two year part time programme began leading to the UCL Diploma/MA in Archives and Records Management, a qualification recognised by the Society of Archivists. The curriculum content and structure were identical to the programme taught to full and part time students at UCL, but were offered as a separate teaching stream at a time and place convenient to the PRO staff, thus causing minimum disruption to normal work schedules. Teaching took place in two three-hour evening sessions a week during academic terms and was run in the training facilities at the PRO, Kew. Teaching was by the usual mix of lectures, seminars, and practical work. In addition, students were released to carry out short projects within the PRO and also for a few half days in year 1 and one week in year 2 to undertake placements in other record offices. Some limited study leave was granted, for example to sit examinations and to write up MA reports. The programme was subject to exactly the same quality controls as all UCL programmes, normal UCL selection criteria were applied to the PRO applicants and the assessment carried out by the PRO students was identical to that performed by their colleagues studying at UCL. Additionally, a liaison group was established which comprised PRO training staff, UCL academic staff and a student representative. This group met termly and dealt with practical issues, finding solutions to any problems and acting as a channel for student comment. UCL recruited an additional half-time

academic staff member, Geoffrey Yeo from the Royal College of Physicians, to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the PRO programme. Some extra teaching and administrative support were also provided at UCL within the contract.

A diverse group of PRO staff with a range of existing educational achievements and work experience enrolled on the programme. All of the students who began the programme completed the Diploma successfully in 1997, achieving some of the highest marks awarded that year. Over half (ten out of the eighteen) went on to complete the MA by dissertation. One of the most striking aspects of the student group was the level of mutual support it provided its members. It acted as a network of information, ideas and moral support, also providing informal communication links between PRO departments which continued after the end of the programme.

The course was designed to fill particular needs within the PRO at the time, but all the partners derived benefit. As the Case Study reported, the PRO acquired fully professional staff with noticeable benefits in the workplace. The students gained a professional qualification which enhanced their career prospects. The learning promoted a more rounded view of work, leading to greater job satisfaction. Additionally, there were networking benefits for the group. UCL had the opportunity to work cost effectively with the biggest UK employer of archivists and to explore innovative teaching provision.

The partnership benefits are shown in Illustration 1.

The second phase of the PRO staff educational programme was to provide a non-graduate qualification. Again the project was put out to tender, this time won by Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies (LUCAS). (*Editor's note* – for further details see separate article in this issue.) In the academic session 1997/98, LUCAS taught a programme leading to a Certificate in Professional Studies: Archives and Records Management. Again the programme was delivered by university staff on site at the PRO, this time on one evening a week for a year.

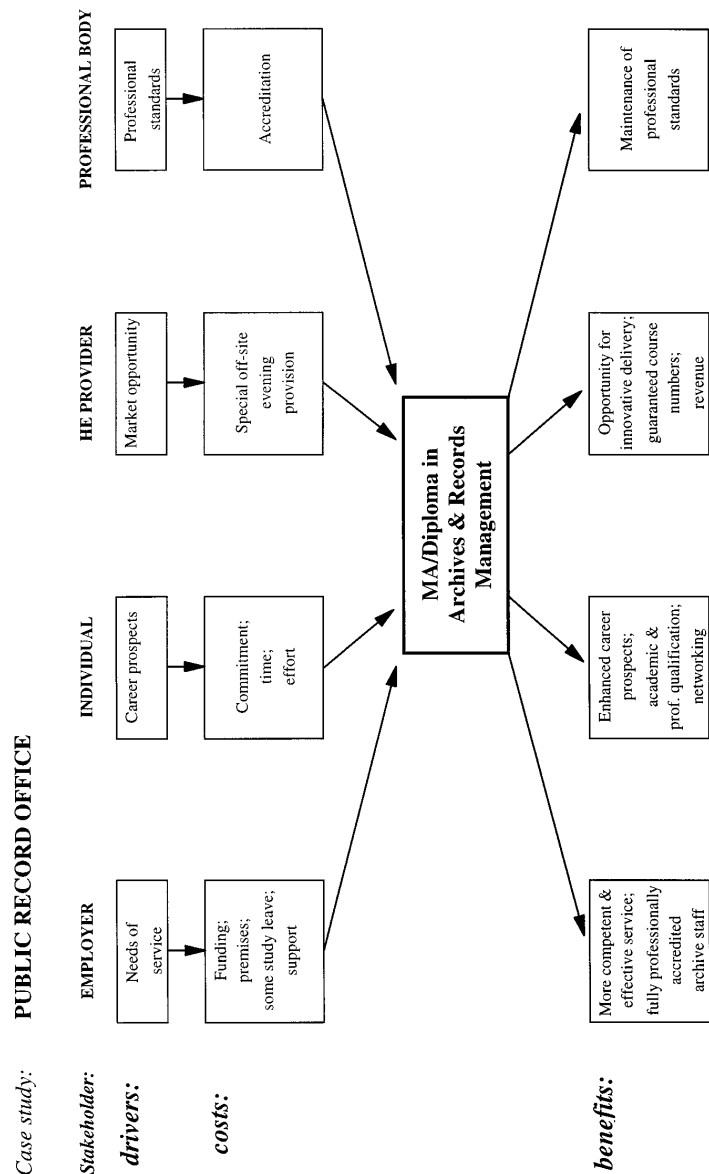
A rather different example of a higher education – employer partnership is provided by the development of the Record and Information Management Intensive Programme (RIMIP). The original development work was carried out by an archive professional, Vicki Wilkinson, seconded from the Royal Bank of Scotland Archives to work with the University of Glasgow, initially funded by a grant from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. 'Thus a unique synergy was effected between an old established seat of learning and a business at the forefront of archival development'.<sup>19</sup> The project began in January 1996 and the first intensive two week programme was launched in September that



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Partnerships in professional education



**Illustration 1:** source Dr Roger Warren and Marion Kuipers, Marketing Research and Evaluation Unit, UCL, 'The Case Studies', section 3 of a CIHE/DIEE report *Partnership for the Professions* due to be published autumn 1998

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year. The course was innovative in a number of ways: prior experiential learning was explicitly recognised; the intensive programmes was offered over a short time scale; private and public sector professionals were closely involved in both design and delivery of the programme; the range of qualifications among students ranged from graduate degrees to no post-school education; and the student group was very diverse including records managers, librarians, administrators and IT personnel. The first programme was a success and it has been repeated annually, although in 1998 modules will be offered over a longer time frame.

As well as these major partnership projects, and others like them, universities and employers have a long history of partnership to support professional education. Employers have acted as external examiners for the university programmes, they have supported students during the programmes by taking them on work placements and visits, many have established one year pre-course jobs which provide a firm practical foundation for graduates entering the profession, and some employers have seconded staff for a year or supported them part-time to take a professional qualification. In return the universities have made the programmes as relevant to the reality of the workplace as possible, returning qualified staff to the employer with sound professional understanding and useful skills.

#### Higher education – Professional body partnerships

Professional bodies have always had a strong influence on higher education in archives and records management. It is possible that the UCL archives programme would not have started without the British Records Association (BRA). The BRA had developed a scheme for educating archivists in the early 1940s and this formed the foundation of the programme inaugurated at UCL by Hilary Jenkinson in 1947. Other bodies have exerted pressure for new educational developments to meet identified professional needs: for example, the Business Archives Council's involvement in the establishment of the Diploma in Archives Management at the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education in 1977<sup>20</sup> and the Records Management Society's support on the PG Diploma/MA-MSc in Information and Records Management when it was set up in 1993 at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most striking examples of a partnership between the universities and a professional body in the UK is the collaboration between the universities and the Society of Archivists to develop accreditation frameworks for professional and para-professional qualifications.<sup>22</sup> From the 1960s to 1990s the Society of Archivists exerted a strong influence on the university courses. In 1963, a Committee for liaison with the archive training schools was set up to discuss 'the mutual problems of the

profession and the archive training schools in the recruitment and training of archivists which are of cardinal importance to the development of archive services in the UK'.<sup>23</sup> A symposium held in 1970 at Churchill College, Cambridge, brought the UK archive academics together for the first time and led to the formation of the Society's Training Committee.<sup>24</sup> This new committee acted as a forum for communication between the academics and the professional body. In its early years the Committee focused its energies on creating a new qualification to sit alongside the university programmes for archivists who were already in post and wanted to study by correspondence. The experience of establishing this programme gave the Society the confidence to seek the right to approve or recognise the university archive courses. Initial discussions began in 1980 and the first full round of recognition visits took place in 1984/85. Since then they have taken place on a quinquennial cycle, with revised accreditation criteria introduced in 1994. The recognition procedure has two main functions: one 'to ensure that courses provide professional education of appropriate content and standard' and the second 'to ensure the maintenance of a dialogue and mutual influence between the Society and relevant courses, so that each course can contribute as fully as possible to the creation of an educated and trained profession'.<sup>25</sup>

The process of assessment begins with the submission of written material by the course director to the assessment team, comprising course brochures, syllabus and timetable, cvs of staff and examiners and examples of assessment materials. This is followed by a one or two day visit by the assessment team to the university, during which they meet with the course director, other teaching staff, and faculty and college officers, such as the Dean or Principal, as appropriate. The team also visits the learning facilities to see the resources available and has a meeting with current students. Following the review, the team makes a report to the Society's Accreditation Panel, which is approved by the Council. The team may recommend three outcomes:

- recognition of a course
- qualified recognition subject to specific improvements within a specified timescale or
- no recognition (for a new programme) or loss of recognition (for an existing one).

Generally, the assessment process is fruitful for both sides, while also being a rigorous examination of the health of a particular programme from a professional viewpoint. Contact is maintained between the recognition visits and has led to wider discussion about professional education, the range and depth of the syllabus needed, the relationship between the primary professional qualification and continuing professional development,

the role of practicals in a university education and the development of newer disciplines, such as records management. The recognition process has had benefits for the Society's educational programmes. For example, following the first round of visits, the Training Committee set up a task force to review the Society's Diploma syllabus and structure. The Diploma was revised and re-written in the mid-1990s and the Society's Diploma board includes an academic representative, currently Elizabeth Danbury of UCL.

#### Higher education – Non-governmental organisation/charity partnership

Some of the most important international development work in the field is being done by a small non-governmental organisation and charity called the International Records Management Trust. The Trust is a UK-based non-profit organisation that seeks to develop new approaches for managing public sector records in developing countries. The Management of Public Sector Records Training Programme (MPSR) was instituted in 1994 by the Trust to 'create a heightened awareness of the value of public records as a strategic resource for administrative, legal and financial purposes, and to provide the tools to manage this resource effectively.'<sup>26</sup> The project consists of a series of activities including the development and delivery of an integrated distance learning programme in records and archives management by self-study; the development of case studies and other supporting materials; the production of video films illustrating key issues; and the delivery of awareness-raising seminars to archivists, senior managers and decision-makers focusing on the role of information in accountability, transparency and efficiency in government.<sup>27</sup>

Over the period from July 1997 to January 1998, a research project was carried out at UCL's School of Library, Archive, and Information Studies, funded by the Trust.<sup>28</sup> The project considered the adaptability of the MPSR core training modules to a formal educational context, specifically UCL. MPSR is primarily a training programme taken by self-study. However, the core materials can be used in an educational context as part of the open learning resources available to students taking structured and tutored programmes. The status of university accredited programmes depends on rigorous quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms. The value of MPSR as an educational tool will be significantly enhanced if university programmes use its material as part of the learning resource. Universities also have frameworks for recruiting and managing students, for tutorial systems and for providing access to a range of learning resources including libraries and technological resources. The knowledge and expertise of academic staff delivering programmes is unique and specialised. Neither MPSR nor its parent body, the Trust, has the capacity, or the need, to build such an educational

structure. However, in partnership with a university it could take advantage of the formal educational context to ensure wider dissemination of its materials and messages.

There are also benefits to a university from partnership with MPSR. The self study materials offer a valuable new learning resource to students and staff. The materials bring together the expertise of an international group of contributors in a way that would be difficult for a small university department to do. The level of collaboration required to produce MPSR materials has been time and resource intensive and includes major contributions from working practitioners, which is essential in an applied professional discipline. MPSR has released a funding stream, including money from the United Nations Development Fund and Canadian International Development Agency, which would not be directly accessible by a university. Collaboration with MPSR and the Trust will also help a university to identify and recruit international students, especially if it offers a flexible framework of learning, combining in-country study, open and distance learning and face-to-face learning at the university. Following the UCL project, recommendations were made on closer cooperation between UCL and the Trust and possible use of the learning materials by UCL.

#### Higher education – Higher education partnerships

##### *Educators forum*

There are many examples of co-operation between universities. Since 1978 the university archive teachers have assembled once a year to discuss matters of common interest, generally associated with student progress, jobs, and with course developments. The Heads of Archive Courses meeting has provided a useful forum for the exchange of news and views and has responded to government policy papers on matters such as the Research Assessment Exercise and the Quality Assessment Agency. The meeting also enabled the universities to prepare better for the Society of Archivists recognition visits and has given support to programme developments in individual universities. There is a proposal under discussion to develop the role of this meeting and rename it the archival educators forum. If the idea is accepted, the forum will have a more formal role to act as a voice for archive and records management educators on research and teaching issues, particularly seeking to promote and support developments in teaching and learning and to promote national research strategies. This will mirror similar developments internationally, such as in Australia where a national forum already exists. The Australian forum has had a strong role in developing a national research strategy, codification of professional competencies and standards development. At an international level, an invitational meeting of

archival educators convened in November 1997 by the International Records Management Trust in Malta to discuss open and distance learning, proposed the establishment of a framework for an international archival educators forum.<sup>29</sup> Such a forum might be supported by ICA and the Trust and would seek to develop networks including both face-to-face meetings and electronic and print communication through which to disseminate materials, discuss learning innovations and exchange news about local activities.

### *Research strategy*

One of the co-operative activities between UK universities in 1998 was the drafting of a proposal for a research strategy for archives and records management. The discussion paper was written by academic staff from UCL (Elizabeth Shepherd) and LUCAS (Sarah Westwood) and submitted for consideration to the Society of Archivists and the Heads of Archive Courses meeting. Although only a first step, the paper suggests that the development of research in the discipline is important not only to the universities, but also to the profession at large. The creation of a research environment within the UK profession will help to maintain and develop the high quality of professional practice, encouraging good quality entrants, and ensuring a good international profile. If adopted, the definition will lay the foundation for the development of a national research strategy for the profession, which will strengthen the academic discipline and also encourage working professionals to consider their activities in a wider context and disseminate their expertise through articles and conference papers. UK professionals are comparatively reluctant to examine their ideas in public and much excellent individual work consequently fails to make an impact on professional thinking nationally and internationally.

### *Teaching and curriculum development*

Increasingly universities work in partnership with others for research and teaching purposes. For example, UCL has a formal Link programme funded by the British Council with the University of Ghana in Legon. The programme, which was renewed for a further three years in 1998, enables two members of academic staff from Legon to visit UCL each year, usually for three weeks, to catch up on the recent literature which may not be available in Ghana, to discuss programme and research proposals with UCL staff, to visit working professionals to see innovative projects and to teach graduate students at the School, enabling them to gain an appreciation of professional issues in Ghana. Twice a year academic staff from UCL go to Ghana, usually for one week, to teach graduate students in specific areas (such as IT or preservation management). Wherever possible,



literature and teaching materials are donated to the university. The visits give UCL staff an opportunity to see and experience the profession in Ghana, both in the academic department and also by meetings at the National Archives of Ghana, the Records Centre and elsewhere.

Other universities have partnership projects in Europe, under EC funded programmes such as Socrates. Such collaborative research projects have included one linking University of Tampere in Finland, University of Northumbria in Newcastle, Fachhochschule Potsdam in Germany, and the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, to develop a university curriculum for education in the management of electronic records. (*Editor's note* – reported fully in a separate article in this issue.) This project reflects the fact that the matter of electronic records cannot be restricted to one country and explores the extent to which universal issues and solutions can be identified. Several universities, including UCL, the Dutch Archive School, and the Archivschule Marburg, Germany, are also ready to co-operate in developing training programmes in electronic records.

### Conclusions

The work environment of the late 1990s is very complex. All sectors change increasingly swiftly and are subject to greater intensity of external scrutiny and to more challenging targets. Individuals, organisations and professions need to be able to respond to the changing environment rapidly in order to develop and prosper. One approach which enables professionals to respond more flexibly is to establish partnerships with others who offer complementary skills and resources. Together, the partners derive joint benefits which exceed the possibilities of independent work.

This article has considered four different types of partnerships in the context of professional education and training in archives and records management. In each case the starting point is a higher education institution involved in professional education. One of the key partners for universities offering professional qualifications is with the employers of the graduates. The partnership between a university and an employer used as a case study here is the collaboration between the Public Record Office and first UCL then LUCAS to provide qualifications in archives and records management to staff at the PRO.

A second type of partnership examined is between the university and professional bodies. Professional qualifications offered by universities have been subject to some influence by the regulating bodies. In particular, the Society of Archivists has established an effective scheme for accreditation of archives and records management programmes. The accreditation frameworks have been developed jointly over about 20 years and are now an accepted part of the external scrutiny of university programmes in the discipline.

The third partnership given as a case study here is that between the International Records Management Trust and its links with UCL and other universities internationally. A project at UCL in 1997–98 examined the ways in which the Trust's training materials might be set into an educational context. Additionally, the Trust organised an international educators meeting in November 1997 to discuss open and distance learning. The way forward for the Trust's educational activities must be by partnership with higher education institutions internationally.

Fourthly, the article considers partnership between universities. Increasingly universities cooperate in teaching and research activities. There are many examples of joint projects, many of them bringing together universities within Europe and within the Commonwealth. Partnerships are especially important in a small discipline such as archives and records management where there is only a handful of academics nationally, scattered between five universities. Collaborative projects enable individual universities to build on their strengths and learn from others' expertise, developing synergies and enabling the discipline to achieve sufficient mass to move forward swiftly. Some particularly exciting work is being done in partnership to prepare the profession to meet the challenges of electronic records.

Partnerships bring together professionals from a range of backgrounds, with multiple skills, to address key issues. Four models have been examined here which bring universities engaged in professional education together with employers, professional bodies, a charity and other universities to seek new approaches to education in archives and records management. In effective and active partnerships, all partners derive benefit while also pushing the profession forwards.

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12. Society of Archivists, *Accreditation of Post-graduate Courses in Archives and Records Management* and *Accreditation of Post-graduate Courses in Records Management* both published 1994; accreditation criteria for para-professional courses in records management were approved in November 1996 and for archives management in September 1997.
13. Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, *Higher Education in the Learning Society* (the Dearing Report), 1997; Report of the Committee on Widening Participation, *Learning Works* (the Kennedy Report on further education), 1997.
14. See 'Research preserve of rich or sponsored' in *THES*, 7 August 1998, pp. 1,3 which reports that numbers of taught Masters degrees rose 6.5% between 1993 and 1996, with student numbers on such MAs rising from about 22,000 to 24,000. Of these increasing numbers paid for their own study (1993, 12,135; 1996, 13,796 a 14% increase); and those funded by industry rose 87% from 529 in 1994 to 993 in 1996.

15. University of Northumbria at Newcastle web page. URL: <http://www.unn.ac.uk/>
16. King, L. Continuing Vocational Education (CVE): the training needs of records management practitioners. Report of a research project. *Records Management Journal*, vol 6 no 2, August 1996, pp. 93–109. Shepherd, E. Continuing Vocational Education: a project progress report from University College London. *Records Management Journal*, vol 7 no 2, August 1997, pp. 131–146.
17. Initial results were presented at a series of workshops organised by the EdExcel Foundation, attended by representatives from industry and higher education. The author attended the London workshop, held on 18 February 1998, which included a presentation on 'Continued Professional Development' by Dr Paul Gibbs and Patricia Porter, the authors of a report *Partnership for the Professions* commissioned by CIHE and DfEE from EdExcel, due to be published autumn 1998.
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20. See University of London Palaeography Room, Board of Studies in Library, Archive and Information Studies, mins 1974–84, AC 8/34/1/3, meeting 2 March 1977, min 166.
21. RMS Executive Committee members acted as advisors to the university during the planning of the programme and the RMS/SoA model syllabus for records management of 1992 was influential.
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24. London Metropolitan Archives Acc/3787 Society of Archivists' archive, ref SA 83/1/1/2 Honorary Secretary's Minutes 1967-71 Annual Report 1969/70.
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#### Author

Elizabeth Shepherd is a lecturer in Archives and Records Management in the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies at University College London, where she is tutor to the UK graduate students in archives and records management. Her teaching responsibilities include records management. Her research interests are in the management of electronic records and archives and in the development of the British archival profession, including professional education. She sits on the BSI Committee IDT/2/17 which is considering the text of an international records management standard.

*Elizabeth Shepherd, Lecturer in Archives and Records Management, School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.*

*Tel: +171 504 2945/ 380 7204; fax: +171 383 0557*

*Email: [e.shepherd@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:e.shepherd@ucl.ac.uk); <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/SLAIS/slais.htm>; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uczcw09/>*