

INFS 332

Introduction to Archives Administration

Session 4 – Professional Ethics And Associations

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2016/2017

Session Overview

As managers of information, a code of ethics sets standards of behaviour for members of a profession to follow in their desire to achieve their goals. This section examines specific ethics as well as identifies some professional associations related to the archival profession.

Session Objectives

After completing this Session, the student should be able to:

- Define the term ethics
- Comment on the need for codes of ethics for information profession (the archivist).
- Identify some of the codes of ethics and comment on the relevance of the codes
- Identify some professional associations in the archives profession.

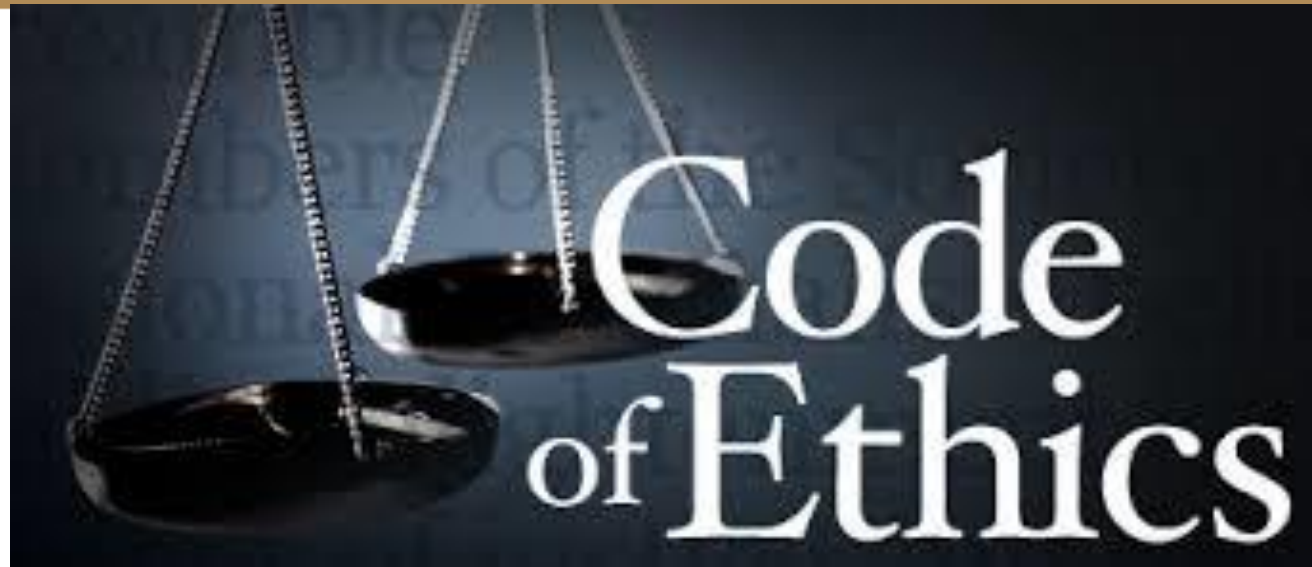
Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic one : Definition and Purpose of Codes of Ethics
- Topic two : Key Principles of Codes of Ethics
- Topic three : Professional Archives Association

Reading List

- *Millar, L. A., (2010) Archives: Principles and Practices. Indiana University: New Schuman Publishers.*
- *Roper, M. and Millar, L. (1999). Managing Archives. International Records Management Trust. IRMT: London.*
http://www.irmt.org/documents/educ_training/public_sector_rec/IRMT_manage_archives.pdf



Topic One

DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF CODES OF ETHICS

Code of Conducts for Archival Professionals

Definition of Ethics

- the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular group, culture, class of human action
- moral principles as of an individual
- that branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to certain right or wrong actions and the good and bad side of the motive and ends of such actions (Bradsher, 1988)
- A professional code of conduct is simply the rules of conduct or behaviour recognized in respect to a particular group such as archivists.

Purpose of Code of Ethics

- The purpose of a code of ethics is to define for the members of the particular profession and for the general public, issues of greatest concern and areas of potential conflict between individuals and the group.
- It is also to ensure that the special expertise of the group, here archivists, will be used for the good of society.
- A code of ethics therefore sets standards of behaviour for the members of a profession to follow, and establishes boundaries within which they should operate to achieve its goals.



Purpose of Code of Ethics Cont..

- Regardless of the scope of their responsibilities, the records manager and archivist in the public sector has an obligation to serve the public.
- A records manager or archivist has an obligation to perform his or her work in a manner that shows both commitment and good behaviour.
- Both records and archives managers should individually and as a group follow the code of ethics designed by the International Council on Archives (ICA), as well as to any similar code adopted by the appropriate professional body in their country.



Topic two

KEY PRINCIPLES OF CODES OF ETHICS

Key Principles of a Code of Ethics

- Archivists should protect the integrity of archival material and thus guarantee that it continues to be reliable evidence of the past.
- Archivists should pursue professional excellence by systematically and continuously updating their archival knowledge, and sharing the results of their research and experiences.



Key Principles of a Code of Ethics

Cont..

- Archivists should ensure the continuing accessibility and intelligibility of archival materials
- Archivists should appraise, select and maintain archival material in its historical, legal and administrative context, thus retaining the principle of provenance, preserving and making evident the original relationships of documents.
- Archivists should use the special trust given to them in the general interest and avoid using their position to unfairly benefit themselves or others.

Key Principles of a Code of Ethics

Cont..

- Archivists should respect both access and privacy, and act within the boundaries of relevant legislation.
- Archivists should promote the widest possible access to archival material and provide an impartial service to all users.
- Archivist should protect the authenticity of documents during archival processing, preservation and use.



Topic Three



PROFESSIONAL ARCHIVES ASSOCIATION

Professional Archives Associations

- A professional association is usually a non-profit making organization which seeks to develop a particular profession, ensure the interests of individuals engaged in that profession and the interest of the general public. Professional associations are also called professional bodies, professional organizations and professional societies.



Professional Archives Associations

Cont..

- It may also be defined as **a group of people in a learned occupation who are entrusted with maintaining control and oversight of the legitimate practice of the occupation.**



Types of Professional Associations

- International Council on Archives (ICA)
- The Society of American Archivists (SAA)
- Association of Canadian Archivists
- Australian Society of Archivists Inc.
- Archivists and Records Managers Association of Ghana (ARMAG)

Summary

In this session you learned that

- A professional code of conduct is simply the rules of conduct or behaviour recognized in respect to a particular group such as archivists.
- A code of ethics sets standards of behaviour for the members of a profession to follow, and establishes boundaries within which they should operate to achieve its goals.
- A Professional Association is a group of people in a learned occupation who are entrusted with maintaining control and oversight of the legitimate practice of the occupation.

Reading List

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