

**Developing Archival Context Standards for Functions
in the Higher Education Sector**

Final Report

Funded by Arts and Humanities Research Council

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Project Summary

Developing Archival Context Standards for Functions in the Higher Education Sector was an applied research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and carried out by Glasgow University Archive Services between August 2003 and February 2006.

The aim of the project was to carry out research into the potential impact of a function based approach to archival description. The project's argument was that archival description based on traditional, static interpretations of the principles of provenance and original order has limitations. Such description fails to capture vital contextual information about the purpose and function of records. The project's aim was to test the capture of such information in specially created function and activity descriptions, linked to but separate from descriptions of the records and descriptions of the record creators. It used as a test bed the records of the higher education institutions in Scotland and made the results available on the Gateway to Archives of Scottish Higher Education (GASHE) website (<http://www.gashe.ac.uk>).

1. Project Background

The project arose out of the realisation that archivists were failing in one of their primary goals: the preservation of the context of archives in order to safeguard their evidential value and historical authenticity. The importance of context has long been recognised. In 1990, the Society of American Archivists published *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, a manual prepared by Fredric Miller, part of a new series on basic archival functions. The following definition of archival description distilled thought at the time:

Archival description is the process of capturing, collating, analyzing, controlling, exchanging, and providing access to information about (1) the origin, context, and provenance of different sets of records, (2) their filing structure, (3) their form and content, (4) their relationships with other records, and (5) the ways in which they can be found and used.¹

Indeed, the principle of provenance has been described by Horsman as ‘the only principle’ of archival theory.² Records are not created in a vacuum and their interpretation and significance are dependent on the context of their creation and use. Barbara Reed places context at the very heart of what differentiates records from mere documents.³ She argues that records are ‘a construct, always virtual, consisting of the physical object and its relationships, links and contextual information, defined as much by the processes applied to their management as by the physical object itself’.⁴ She argues that ‘a record has to be linked to doing something – it is inherently transactional in its nature’.⁵ Of course, records, and record series in particular, can be linked to more than one transaction and they can have more than one relationship. They can be created by one organisation or individual for one purpose and then later reused by the same or a different organisation or individual for another purpose. For example, at Glasgow University, student records were created by the University Registry to record biographical and educational information about students. The records

¹ Miller, F.M. Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts. Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 1990, p.7.

² Horsman, P. Taming the Elephant: An Orthodox Approach to the Principle of Provenance. In: Abukhanfusa, K. and Sydbeck, J. (ed) The Principle of Provenance. Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory 1993, Stockholm, 1994.

³ Reed, B. Records. In: McKemmish, S., Piggott, M., Reed, B., Upward, F. (ed.) Archives: Recordkeeping in Society, Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, 2005.

⁴ Ibid, p.106.

were later reused by the Development and Alumni Office in connection with organising reunions and fundraising campaigns. Which is the most important activity? Postmodernists argue that these subsequent uses are of no less importance for our interpretation of the records than their original and very first use. Terry Cook argues that records have multiple and changing contexts, and that records are dynamic, not static.⁶ As Sue McKemmish (quoted by Barbara Reed) puts it, ‘the record is always in a process of becoming’.⁷ Records ‘are not fixed; they are fluid, ever-forming’,⁸ in other words organic. They are created by living organisms, whether institutions or individuals and are therefore liable to change and grow with the living organism. These changing contexts open records quite legitimately to different interpretations at different points in their existence. It is precisely these different contexts that archivists must strive to record. If they choose to favour any one context at the expense of others, then they leave themselves open to justifiable criticism.

Archivists in Australia are meeting the challenge of representing multiple contexts very well. Archival descriptive systems are based upon the Series System first developed by the National Archives of Australia in the 1960s as the Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) System.⁹ Under this system, the record series is taken as the basic unit of accumulation rather than the fonds, and context is entirely separated from content. Series are not fixed in a rigid hierarchical structure. Instead, each series can be linked to any number of contexts, whether creator or activity or related records. The system is therefore flexible enough to capture different and changing contexts.¹⁰

It is still the norm in the UK, however, to describe or represent records in a single, static arrangement, usually based on administrative or organisational structure. The advent of ICT has done little so far to change this. In most examples of online finding aids in the UK, the computer has simply been used to provide an online, albeit searchable, version of a traditional paper-based list. A static arrangement cannot easily (if at all) accommodate multiple

⁵ Ibid, p.102.

⁶ Cook, T. Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives. *Archivaria*, 50, 2000, p.93-116.

⁷ Reed, B. Op. Cit., p.128.

⁸ Reed, B. Op. Cit., p.128.

⁹ For a discussion of the series approach to cataloguing, see McKemmish, S., Piggott, M., Reed, B., Upward, F. (ed.) *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*, Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, 2005, p.168-174.

contexts. These have been sacrificed for the convenience and neatness of a single view, which can only provide a snapshot of the records at a specific point in time. Vital contextual information is being lost if not actually being destroyed by archivists.

Authority records for the creators of records have gone some way towards addressing this problem and enabling the capture of some contextual information. They enable the recording of valuable background information on the creators of the records, whether organisations, office-bearers, individuals or families. Even more importantly, by recording this information separately from but linked to descriptions of the actual records, they open up possibilities for more dynamic descriptive systems. Rather than the traditional static, mono-hierarchical representation based on administrative structure, records can be linked to more than one office bearer or department, removing the need to connect a record series artificially to a single creator. Authority records, however, do not provide all the contextual information that is required. It is not enough simply to equate context with the individual or organisation which created the record. Usual practice in the UK today, however, is to describe the records according to ISAD(G) and the creators according to ISAAR(CPF). This provides the user with the knowledge of what the records are and who created them but this is surely not enough. Users are being short-changed. They are not being provided with all the information they need to interpret the records. Archivists must attempt, as the guarantors of the authenticity and trustworthiness of archives, standing in, by proxy, for the creators of the records, to explain to potential users: the reasons why the records were created and subsequently used ie what transactions they were recording; the purpose or function of the records within the organisation ie what functions and activities they were fulfilling; and the inter-relationship of records within and between creating organisations. The capture and representation of this contextual information must result in what Megan Winget describes as a description of the ‘continuum of relationships and inter-relationships over time and place.’¹¹ Referring to Horsman she continues: ‘To comprehend context, Horsman argues that the archivist not only has to describe and define the structure of the fonds in its series and sub-series, but also to define and describe the relationships between the agency’s characteristics or functions, and the records it has created throughout the range of its

¹⁰ For a practical application of this approach see the online catalogue of the National Archives of Australia at http://www.naa.gov.au/the_collection/recordsearch.html (visited 28 February 2006).

¹¹ Winget, M. [The Archival Principle of Provenance and its Application to Image Representation Systems](http://www.unc.edu/~winget/research/provenance.pdf) (available at <http://www.unc.edu/~winget/research/provenance.pdf> (visited 28 February 2006)).

existence.’¹² Archival representations that include such information will be of far greater value than those that simply provide background information on creators.

In addition to the realisation that archivists are failing to preserve context, it was also evident that they are not providing an adequate retrieval mechanism for potential users of any archive collection. Researchers interested in one particular area or activity of an organisation often have to undertake a great deal of work to guarantee the retrieval of all the records relating to that activity. Usually they are required to find out which office bearers or departments within the organisation were responsible for that activity. Then they must consult a number of different finding aids to ensure that they have tracked down all relevant records. The process can be very time-consuming. An example from the University of Glasgow highlights the issues.

Student Registration at the University of Glasgow

Student registration records are a popular source for both academic and non-academic researchers. The history of registration at the university, however, is a complex one. It has not always been compulsory, different officers of the university have been responsible for it at different times, the format of the records has changed, the level of informational detail in the records has changed, and even the name of the activity has changed.

Using the traditional “original order” based approach to cataloguing, archivists have arranged such records by each creator or custodian of the records, in this case, the Faculty, Clerk’s Press, Library and Registry. A potential user must first work all this out, discovering which creator or custodian was responsible for either the activity or for looking after the records of the activity for the time period in which they are interested, and then look in the finding aids of all these bodies to retrieve all the records relating to student registration. The controlled indexing and free-text searching of online systems help to a certain extent in the retrieval of these records, but they do not guarantee complete records retrieval and they do not help the user to understand the context or relationship of the records retrieved. To be able to fully understand and interpret the records, the user must know why the records were created and understand their original purpose and function.

¹² Winget, M. Op. Cit.

Functional Description: A Complementary Approach

In order to remedy these failings, Glasgow University Archive Services turned to functional analysis and records management practice. Functional analysis has long underpinned records management practice and is used as the basis for classification or arrangement rather than administrative structure. Records managers understand that the fundamental relationship of records is with the functions and activities which brought them into being rather than the office bearers who created them. New departments, offices and committees are created within an organisation all the time, and responsibilities constantly pass from one to another. However, the basic functions of the organisation, i.e. what an organisation does to achieve its goals and strategies, remain the same. In higher education, the main functions that universities undertake to achieve their goals are student administration, teaching, research and governance.

A number of identifiable activities are carried out in the course of each of these functions. Handling student discipline, the administration of student records and student recruitment are all examples of activities carried out under the function of student administration. It is these functions and activities that records managers use for analysing and classifying the records in their care rather than organisational or administrative structure. The thesis of the *Developing Archival Context Standards for Functions in the Higher Education Sector* project was that if a functional provenance approach could be applied equally well to older, historical records and, if that was then used as one strand of an archival descriptive system, it could both provide vital contextual information on the purposes and functions of records and determine a practical outcome of the records continuum model.

The thesis did not advocate an arrangement based solely on function instead of one based solely on administrative structure; function based descriptions were only to be one strand of a descriptive system. They were to constitute a separate but complementary strand in order to record the multiple and changing contexts of records so that researchers would have as much contextual information as possible to interpret a record at any point in time. The test-bed for this approach was the records of Scottish higher education institutions held on the electronic

*Gateway to the Archives of Scottish Higher Education (GASHE)*¹³. GASHE was a project, funded by the Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP), which ran from 1999 to 2002, and was based at the University of Glasgow. It was designed to open up the outstanding collections of records produced by Higher Education Institutions in Scotland and to make them fully accessible on the web via an integrated gateway. There were ten partners in the project representative of Scottish Higher Education from medieval to modern post-polytechnic universities. The aim had been to provide an on-line resource, describing a variety of educational, intellectual and cultural resources to recognised international standards, allowing seamless searching of archive and manuscript collections across all the educational institutions and their predecessors. The records of these institutions date back to 1215 and they themselves are large, very complex, and constantly evolving organisations. Therefore they make an ideal basis for a test of a function based approach to archival description. In fact, the original GASHE project had undertaken a small-scale test of the approach. The results from this initial test were positive and indicated the value of developing the test further.

¹³ Available at <http://www.gashe.ac.uk> (visited 28 February 2006)

2. Project Methodology

2.1 Function and Activity Model

The essential first step was to identify the functions and activities of the HE sector and to produce a function and activity model which could then be used as a basis for further work. We were fortunate in that a generic model had already been produced - the JISC *HEI Business Function & Activity Model*, compiled by Elizabeth Parker in 2003.¹⁴ This was a revised version of a previous model commissioned by JISC and published by Parker in 1999. The original GASHE project had rejected the 1999 model as not being detailed and comprehensive enough and had, instead, devised a more comprehensive model of its own. However, between the end of the original GASHE project and the beginning of the AHRC funded project, and after extensive consultation with a number of HEIs, the new JISC model was published. It was much more detailed than the original version. It included the same broad functions as the earlier version but added a completely new one – Commercial Enterprise. It also broke down the activities into much smaller units, eg Public Relations, which had originally been a single activity, was now split into the following eleven activities: Public Relations Strategy Development, Public Relations Management Planning, Public Relations Management Performance Management, Public Relations Management Policy Development, Public Relations Management Procedures Development, Public Communication Management, Public Relations Event Management, Corporate Identity & Brand Management, Sponsorship Management, Donation Management and Honorary Award Management. The extra function and activities were welcome and it was felt that the model now provided a much more comprehensive analysis of the HE sector. It was therefore decided to use this model rather than the GASHE model. Furthermore, we left the JISC model largely unchanged. If we had been using it for a single HEI, perhaps as the basis for a classification scheme or retention schedule as Parker envisages in her introduction, we would have tailored it specifically for that institution. We might have added functions and activities unique to that institution and removed others. We might also have renamed or combined or split functions and activities or added more levels of detail. However, we needed the model to be equally applicable to all the HEIs that feature in GASHE so it suited our purposes to keep it generic, to keep it at the level of highest common denominator. We did, however,

¹⁴ Available at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/srl_structure.html. (visited 28 February 2006).

alter some areas. Student Financial Aid was added as an activity performed in connection with the function of Student Administration since the model did not already include anything comparable. It was also felt that, at times, the JISC model was too detailed for GASHE's purposes. In the model, the function of Student Support Services Management (4), for example, comprises five activities (4.1-4.5) which cover the overall management of all student support services within an institution. The remainder of the activities (4.6–4.14) set out a framework for the management of any individual student support service such as welfare services or accommodation services. We felt, though, that to break down the provision of welfare services, for example, into nine separate activities such as Welfare Services Proposal Development, Welfare Services Planning and Welfare Services Performance Management was to make too fine a distinction particularly when describing historical records. Activities such as Performance Management are, after all, relatively recent introductions and so it would be inapplicable and artificial to apply them to older, historical records. In any case, users would probably not understand the distinctions. It was decided, instead, to have a single activity for each student support service, eg Welfare Services Management or Accommodation Services Management which would encompass everything to do with the provision of that service. We therefore altered this section of the JISC model to appear as follows:

Student Support Services Management

- 4.1 Student support services strategy development
- 4.2 Student support services management planning
- 4.3 Student support services management performance management
- 4.4 Student support services management policy development
- 4.5 Student support services management procedures development

- 4.6 Accommodation services management
- 4.7 Careers services management
- 4.8 Catering services management
- 4.9 Childcare services management
- 4.10 Counselling services management
- 4.11 Health services management
- 4.12 Religious services management

4.13 Special needs services management

4.14 Sports and leisure services management

4.15 Welfare services management

2.2 Criteria for Selection of Activities and Institutions

The next step was to select a range of activities from the modified JISC model in order to create a description of each activity, known as an activity description, at a number of different institutions. Time constraints meant that it was impossible to describe every activity carried out by every higher education institution in Scotland. We therefore had to choose a representative sample of both activities and institutions in order to test the functional approach in as many different scenarios as possible.

It was decided that, initially, we would select a limited number of activities and describe each of these at a wide range of institutions. Two functions were selected: Governance and Student Administration. A number of activities performed in connection with each of these functions were then selected, namely Executive Committee Management, Governing Body Management and Legal Framework Development all of which were performed to fulfil the Function of Governance, and Assessment Administration, Award Ceremony Administration, Course Administration, Student Academic Appeal Handling, Student Admission, Student Complaint Handling, Student Discipline, Student Financial Aid, Student Records Administration, Student Recruitment, Student Registration and Student Relations Management, all performed to fulfil the function of Student Administration. These particular functions and activities were chosen because of their relationship to surviving records and their potential to make these records more open and accessible to researchers. Records produced in the course of the governance of the institution survive for most HEIs and are a central source for research of all types. Similarly, records produced in the course of student administration, particularly student records containing biographical details about individual students, are very heavily used. It was decided, therefore, that the provision of information about the activities which led to the production of these popular records would be particularly valuable to researchers.

The selection of institutions was designed to provide a representative sample of those on GASHE. We wanted to include examples of ancient and modern institutions, large and small institutions, those with a complex administrative history and those with a simpler one, those

still in existence and those now defunct. We also wanted to include institutions that had been amalgamated or incorporated with others. We chose the University of Glasgow, founded in 1451, as a good example of an ancient university still in existence today. It is also a large and complex institution which has absorbed a number of other, smaller institutions at various times. We also chose two of these institutions: Trinity College, Glasgow, founded as the Glasgow Free Church College in 1857 and incorporated into the University in 1935, and Queen Margaret College, Glasgow, founded in 1883 and incorporated into the University in 1895. As an example of a much more modern foundation but still with a complex history, we chose the University of Strathclyde, founded in 1964. We also chose several of its predecessors, namely Anderson's College, Allan Glen's Institution, Atkinson's Institution, the College of Science and Arts, the Incorporated Weaving, Dyeing and Printing College and the Young Chair of Technical Chemistry all of which were small 18th or 19th century foundations in Glasgow which amalgamated in 1887 to form the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, which was renamed the Royal Technical College in 1912 and the Royal College of Science and Technology in 1956. In 1964, it became the University of Strathclyde. Also selected, as another example of a modern institution but with a complex history, was Glasgow Caledonian University, founded in 1993. We selected its two immediate predecessors the Queen's College, Glasgow and Glasgow Polytechnic, together with the predecessors of the Queen's College: the Glasgow School of Cookery, founded in 1875, and the West End School of Cookery, founded in 1878. Finally, as an example of an institution with a more straightforward history and administration, we selected the Glasgow School of Art, founded in 1845 and still in existence today. The institutions chosen, therefore, reflected as broad a spread as possible of the institutions on GASHE.

This formed the initial criteria for the selection of activities and institutions. At a later stage in the project, once a description of each of the selected activities had been compiled at most of the selected institutions and a good breadth of coverage had therefore been achieved, we decided to change the criteria in order to extend the depth of coverage. We now chose one single institution out of our original selection, and a number of additional activities. We chose the University of Glasgow because it was the oldest, longest-lived and most complex institution and therefore offered the most scope for testing. This time, we were keen to select as wide a range of activities as possible. We therefore selected several additional functions, namely Alumni Relations Management, Finance Management, Fundraising, Information

Resources Management, Media Relations Management, Public Relations Management, Publishing, and Student Support Services Management and chose a number of activities for each function. As before, the priority in choosing individual activities was the provision of context for surviving records. So, for example, we chose Alumni Data Administration, an activity performed to fulfil the function of Alumni Relations Management, and Honorary Award Management, performed to fulfil the function of Public Relations Management, in order to explain to researchers the contexts in which the various registers of graduates of the University and the records relating to honorary graduates, two well used sources, were compiled. Conversely, the financial records of the University are voluminous but not particularly heavily used although they are a rich research resource. We therefore chose to describe Finance Strategy Development, Financial Audit and Financial Accounting, activities performed to fulfil Finance Management, in order to place the various financial record series in context and therefore make them more accessible to researchers. We were also keen to choose activities of different longevity. In our original selection, we had mostly chosen activities that started at the foundation of the University in 1451 and continued right up until the present day, for example Student Admission and Student Registration. It was particularly important to choose such long-lived activities in order to discover any problems in dealing with them and to test the value of the descriptions, but we were also keen to test the value of descriptions of activities of much more recent date. We therefore now added a considerable number of activities of more recent date, for example Childcare Services Management, which began in 1967 and Fundraising Campaign Management, which began in 1984. This change of criteria allowed us to supplement very effectively our original selection of activities and institutions. The result was a varied and representative range of activities at a varied and representative range of institutions.

2.3 GASHE Standard for Creating Activity Descriptions

Once we had decided on a suitable sample of activities and institutions, the next step was to review the structure and format of the activity descriptions. The original GASHE project had drawn up a standard for the creation of activity descriptions and this had been used, in conjunction with the GASHE Function and Activity Model, to create a small sample of descriptions. Our choice of a new function and activity model as well as the desire to add extra functionality and to make the standard fully compatible with international standards necessitated a number of revisions to the GASHE activity standard. The new GASHE standard is now available at <http://www.gashe.ac.uk/about/standard.html>.

We were careful, first of all, to ensure that the structure and elements of description set out in the standard mirrored and complemented the structures of the two international archival standards, the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)) and the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR(CPF))¹⁵. The activity standard therefore follows a similar format to ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF). It comprises an introduction giving general guidance for the preparation of activity descriptions together with a list of the elements of description available for use and an explanation as to how each is to be used. The elements of description are grouped in four information areas: the identity statement area, the context area, the allied material area and the note area. An example of an activity description is included as an appendix.

The first area, the identity statement area, comprises a unique *Identity Code*, the names of the *Institution*, the *Function* and the *Activity* and the covering *Dates of the Activity*. All these are considered mandatory in order to provide sufficient identification of the activity. It was decided that, if the institution had changed its name at any point in its history, the latest name should be recorded here together with all previous names. Links from each institution name to authority records prepared in accordance with ISAAR(CPF) would provide the background information on the history of the institution. This therefore made it unnecessary to record any

¹⁵ Both standards are available on the website of the International Council on Archives at <http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/standards.htm> (visited 28 February 2006).

information about the institution within the activity description itself, therefore avoiding unnecessary repetition of information. Consideration was given to whether a separate activity description should be created for changes of name of an institution. The whole point of functions and activities, however, is that they exist independently of organisational structure. An activity might have been performed from the foundation of an institution right up to the present day and, during that time, it might have witnessed many changes both of organisational structure and also of the name of the institution. The activity, however, has remained constant. It was vital not to obscure this. Separate activity descriptions were only to be created for properly new institutions, not mere name changes. So, for example, the Glasgow Mechanics' Institution was founded in 1823. In 1879, following incorporation under the Companies Acts, it changed its name to the College of Science and Arts. Apart from the change of name, it remained fundamentally the same institution. In 1887, however, it was amalgamated with a number of other institutions in Glasgow to form the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College. At this point it became a new institution. One activity description, therefore, would be created for the period 1823-1887, and another from 1887. The recording of the changes of name in the *Institution* element, with links to the relevant authority records, would, it was hoped, make clear the history of the institution during the period of existence of the activity.

The names of the function and activity for the *Function* and *Activity* elements within the identity statement area were to be taken from the JISC model. In the original GASHE standard, there was an additional, optional element for the name of any sub-function. The inclusion of the sub-function element reflected the inclusion of sub-functions in the GASHE Function and Activity Model. As mentioned above, the GASHE model had been developed because the first edition of the JISC HEI business function and activity model was not considered sufficiently comprehensive for the project's needs. It was felt that, in many cases, there was too big a gap between function and activity. GASHE therefore added an extra layer – the sub-function - to its own model to rectify this. When the decision was taken to use the much more comprehensive second edition of the JISC model, however, the sub-function became redundant. It was therefore removed from the GASHE standard.

The second area, the context area, is intended to convey information on how, why and by whom the activity was performed. It comprises two elements: *Activity Performed By* and *Activity History*. Only *Activity History* is mandatory. *Activity Performed By* is intended as a place to list all the office bearers, departments, faculties, organisations or other bodies that were involved in the performance of the activity, together with the dates each was involved. Each name is intended to link to an authority record which will provide the background information on that body, making it unnecessary to record any information about the body within the activity description itself, again avoiding unnecessary repetition of information. As with the name of the institution, all changes of name of a particular department, faculty or any other body are to be recorded here.

The second element within the context area, the *Activity History*, is the place to record the history of the activity from its first appearance within the institution right up until the present day or the date the organisation ceased performing it. Details to be recorded include how and why the activity was performed, any legislation governing or affecting the performance of the activity, the roles played by all relevant office bearers, departments, faculties, organisations and other bodies in the performance of the activity and how this may have changed over time, and the records produced or used in the course of the activity. Particular attention should be paid to the relationships between the records and the activity. The aim is to explain the purpose of the records and the relationships between them by placing them clearly in the context of their creation and subsequent use. It is not necessary to give a definition of the activity itself. Again, to avoid unnecessary duplication of information, a definition is recorded separately from the activity descriptions. It is important to ensure that all the information given in this element is directly relevant to the activity in question. Any information that is more appropriate to another activity should be recorded in the description of that activity and a link added from the *Related Activities* element (see below). Finally, any sources of information used in the creation of the activity history should be cited in order to provide as clear and transparent a source as possible for users.

The whole of the third area, the allied materials area, is optional. It comprises two elements: *Scope and Content*, where all records created in the course of the activity are listed, and *Related Activities*, where any other activity with a significant relationship to the activity in

question can be listed. In the original GASHE standard, this area was different. Firstly, *Related Activities* had not been included. However, it soon became clear that this would be a useful addition. Many activities have an area of overlap either with different activities or the same activity at a related institution. In order to keep each activity description as precise and relevant as possible and so cut down on unnecessary repetition, therefore, it was essential to record the names of these related activities and allow the possibility of linking them to other activity descriptions. Another significant change was made to the original GASHE standard. It had comprised two elements: *Scope and Content*, and *ISAD(G) Records*. The *Scope and Content* element had been intended to provide general, unstructured, information about the type of records created during the course of the activity whereas the *ISAD(G) Records* element had been intended to provide a carefully structured list of each of the record groups. Records at any level ie fonds, subfonds, series, subseries, file or item could be listed here. For each record listed, we had recorded its title, level of description, covering dates and reference code. Experience of creating activity descriptions using the original standard, however, led us to combine these two elements under the title *Scope and Content*. In practice, it had been found that it was not always clear how to split information between the two elements and it often just led to unnecessary repetition. We therefore decided that one, structured list of records under the heading *Scope and Content*, was adequate. We decided to record the title of each record together with its covering dates, reference code and, if required, a brief note on its content or other explanatory note to make quite explicit the relationship of the record(s) to the activity. It was intended that each record listed within this element should link to a full description of the record created in accordance with ISAD(G). Therefore it was not necessary to provide an exhaustive description of the record in the *Scope and Content* element of the activity description. Instead, the idea was to record just enough information to enable it to act as a pointer to the fuller ISAD(G) record. In this way, unnecessary repetition was to be avoided. As before, records can be described here at any level. However, we decided not to record the actual level as we felt that it was not helpful for those unfamiliar with archival jargon. The title and explanatory note make it quite clear whether the record in question is a single item or a larger group, and, by following the link to the fuller ISAD(G) compliant record, the user is clearly shown the position of the record(s) within the hierarchy of the collection.

It was decided that the contents of *Scope and Content* should comprise all records with any connection with an activity whether or not the fulfilment of that activity was the primary

purpose of the record. Many records were created to fulfil more than one activity. The minutes of Glasgow University Senate, for example, were created primarily to fulfil the activity of governing body management. Obviously, they would be included in the *Scope and Content* of that activity description. Each of the individual entries within the minutes, however, was created to fulfil some other activity. The entries deal with a huge range of matters such as student disciplinary cases or complaints or appeals. It was decided that these secondary purposes of the minutes were just as important as the primary purpose and that the Senate minutes should be listed in the *Scope and Content* not only of the activity of governing body management but also of student complaint handling and student appeal handling and student discipline as well as any other relevant activities. In this way, the activity descriptions would be a comprehensive and useful resource for anyone interested in a particular activity.

The fourth and final area, the note area, is mandatory and comprises information on the compilation of the description and the rules and conventions used. The original standard had included an element entitled *Further Notes for the User*, which was intended as a place for highlighting any essential information not covered by any of the other elements. We got rid of this now, since it had not proved necessary during initial tests and we felt that it might prove counter-productive by providing a general dumping ground for information more properly recorded elsewhere. This decision proved justified during the remainder of the project as the element was not needed at any time.

This, then, was the structure we decided on for the activity descriptions, which we proceeded to test by the creation of over two hundred activity descriptions and several hundred linked record descriptions and authority records.

2.4 Integration of Activity Descriptions

The integration of the activity descriptions with the rest of the data on GASHE was fundamental to their success. The plan was to add the activity descriptions to the existing GASHE system to create a third strand to complement the record descriptions and the authority records. Since the informational content of the activity descriptions was, for the most part, entirely new, few problems with overlapping or repetition of content were anticipated. The linking of the activity descriptions with the other two document types was, however, more problematic.

Link between Activity Descriptions and Record Descriptions

The links from the activity descriptions to the record descriptions are provided via the *Scope and Content* element. The aim of this element is to provide access to all records created or used in the course of the activity. Although records can be recorded at any level from fonds down to item, and a link provided from the individual entry in *Scope and Content* in the activity description to the appropriate level of record description, it was decided, after testing various options, that in most cases the best option would be the series or even the individual file level. The overriding aim was, after all, to provide direct access to the actual records created or used in the activity. The higher levels of fonds and subfonds were usually too general and vague to be useful and would involve the user in additional work to identify actual records. It was therefore decided to provide specific references to actual records whenever possible. So, for example, the Senate was one of the bodies involved in the activity of student discipline at Glasgow University. As a result, information on disciplinary cases can be found in many of the records produced by the Senate eg the minutes, meeting papers and letter books. Instead of just describing these records in *Scope and Content* under the general heading 'Records of the Senate' we have listed each relevant series separately.

We were also keen to provide links going the other way, ie from the record descriptions to the activity descriptions, to enable users to find out how or why a particular record or record series was created or used. Links to activity descriptions were provided at series, file or even item level. ISAD(G) did not offer an ideal element in which to record relationships with activities. The Finding Aids element (3.4.5) and the Related Units of Description element

(3.5.3) were both considered but neither was exactly appropriate. Instead, we simply provided links via the EAD <function> element available within the <controlaccess> element. This was not ideal since the activities are not simply index terms. It is recommended that in the future a dedicated element is added to ISAD(G) along the lines of the *Functions, Occupations and Activities* element (5.2.5) already available in ISAAR(CPF).

Initially, we provided links to every activity that a record or record series was connected with. However, it soon became clear that for certain classes of records this would prove too unwieldy. As already discussed, records are often created to fulfil more than one activity. The minutes of governing bodies are one example. The purpose of the series as a whole is to fulfil the activity of governing body management but the individual entries within the minutes are often created to fulfil other activities such as handling student complaints or appeals. In fact, the minutes probably contain information on most of a university's activities and it would be unworkable and confusing to provide links to all of these. Instead, it was decided just to provide links to the activity that the series as a whole was designed to fulfil, in this case governing body management.

Link between Activity Descriptions and Authority Records

The links from the activity descriptions to the authority records are provided via the *Activity Performed by* element. This element is intended to comprise the names of all office bearers, departments, faculties, organisations or other bodies involved in the performance of the activity. In the original version of GASHE, we had only created authority records for institutions. Information about office bearers, departments etc had been recorded in the ISAD(G) *Administrative History* element of the relevant record description. It now became clear that this information needed to be recorded independently of the record descriptions in order to allow for greater flexibility. A number of authority records were therefore created for office bearers, departments etc and the information removed from the record descriptions. The timescale of the project did not allow the removal of all such information from the record descriptions already on GASHE. Instead, we removed authority information from the record descriptions and created separate authority records only for those bodies which carried out the activities we had selected for inclusion in the project. In this way, we could produce an interconnected set of document types to test.

It would have been highly desirable to have also provided links the other way round, ie from the authority records to the activity descriptions. We were not able to do this, however, because the XML DTD designed by the project for authority records did not allow for this. The original GASHE project had predated the release of the Encoded Archival Context (EAC) DTD and so GASHE, in conjunction with the Navigational Aids for the History of Science, Technology and the Environment (NAHSTE) project¹⁶, another RSLP funded project with which GASHE collaborated, had designed its own authority DTD. Although it would have been desirable to have upgraded to EAC in the course of the new project and to have migrated all the existing authority records into this new format in order to take advantage of the increased functionality on offer, it was not possible within the project's remit. An upgrade to the EAC DTD would, however, allow links from the authority records to the activity descriptions to be added in the future. ISAAR(CPF) includes the element *Functions, Occupations and Activities* (5.2.5) where the functions and activities performed by the entity can be recorded. From here, a link could be provided to each relevant activity description.

Link between Record Descriptions and Authority Records

The removal of contextual information on record creators from the *Administrative History* element of the record descriptions and the creation of separate authority records meant that it was now necessary to provide links from the record descriptions to the authority records. This was done via the ISAD(G) *Name of Creator(s)* element where the names of the organization(s) or the individual(s) responsible for the creation of the record is recorded. Again, it would have been desirable to have provided links the other way round, ie from the authority records to the record descriptions, but an upgrade to the EAC DTD would be necessary to implement this.

The integration of the activity descriptions with the other two document types did, in fact, raise fundamental questions about general cataloguing practice. In order to provide a fluid, dynamic system, the three document types had to be properly integrated. It became clear very early on that it was not enough, simply to tack a third strand on to the existing descriptive system. Instead, there had to be a clear distinction between the types of

¹⁶ Available at <http://www.nahste.ac.uk> (visited 28 February 2006).

information recorded in each of the three document types. Information had to be recorded in the appropriate place and unnecessary repetition of information avoided. To this end, we separated context from content as much as possible. Contextual information on the creators of the records was removed from the *Administrative History* element of the record descriptions and recorded only in the authority records. Similarly, contextual information on the activities which brought the records into being was recorded only in the activity descriptions. In this way, an efficient and flexible descriptive system was achieved. Despite this, our system still had some limitations. This was due to the conventional arrangement of the records by fonds. Records are still grouped and presented in a hierarchical arrangement based on the creators of the records. Although the limitations of this are minimised because of the ability to link records to as many other creators and activities as necessary, it would be more effective to get rid of this static hierarchy completely. It became increasingly clear to the project team that the only way to separate context from content completely, and therefore to achieve complete flexibility, would be to abandon the fonds-based approach to archival description in favour of a series-based approach, as is the practice in Australia. Records would then be freed from any sort of artificial, rigid arrangement. Instead, each series could be linked to any number of contexts, whether creator or activity or related records. It is a recommendation of this project that a series-based approach be tested in the UK. Glasgow University will, in fact, be doing this in a new research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council due to start in May 2006¹⁷.

¹⁷ The project is entitled 'Empowering the user: the development of flexible archival catalogues'.

2.5 XML

All the data in the original GASHE project was created in Extensible Mark-up Language (XML), which is a simplified version of Standard Generalized Mark Up Language (SGML), a generic coding language used for analysing and marking up the structure of texts. It was chosen because it is international, non-proprietary and platform independent and is being adopted by an increasing number of professional organisations. It facilitates electronic data exchange and interoperability as well as data manipulation and searchable online delivery.

A specific Document Type Definition (DTD), or set of rules applying XML to the mark-up of documents of a particular type, was used for each particular type of document in GASHE. There are three types of document: traditional record descriptions, authority records and activity descriptions. The traditional record descriptions used the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) DTD¹⁸. The authority records used a DTD which had been specifically designed for GASHE and the Navigational Aids for the History of Science, Technology and the Environment (NAHSTE) project, another RSLP funded project with which GASHE collaborated¹⁹. The projects had designed this DTD because, at the time, the Encoded Archival Context (EAC) DTD, specifically developed by an international group of archivists²⁰ for the mark-up of archival authority records, had not yet been released. Although it would have been highly desirable to have switched to EAC in the course of the new project and to have migrated all the existing authority records into this new format in order to take advantage of the increased functionality on offer, it was not possible within the project's remit. However, EAC was carefully studied and all new output was designed to be fully compatible with it. The third type of document in GASHE, the activity descriptions, used another specially designed DTD. The original GASHE project team had designed a fairly simple DTD to govern the creation of descriptions. At the start of the new project, this was radically revised, both in order to enable increased functionality and flexibility and to be compatible with the recently released draft version of EAC. The changes to the activity DTD consisted of alterations to a number of existing elements and the addition of a number of new elements. A summary outline of the structure and semantics of the DTD is available in the Appendix. Glasgow University Archive Services will offer this DTD to the international

¹⁸ The official EAD website is available at <http://www.loc.gov/ead/> (visited 28 February 2006).

¹⁹ Available at <http://www.nahste.ac.uk> (visited 28 February 2006).

²⁰ For EAC resources see <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/eac/> (visited 28 February 2006).

archive community for further testing when the formal development of a function and activity DTD is underway. The Provisional Section on Standards and Best Practices of the International Council on Archives is currently working on the creation of a new standard on functions and activities. The final version of this is due for completion in 2008. It seems likely that the development of a DTD to complement this standard will follow soon afterwards.

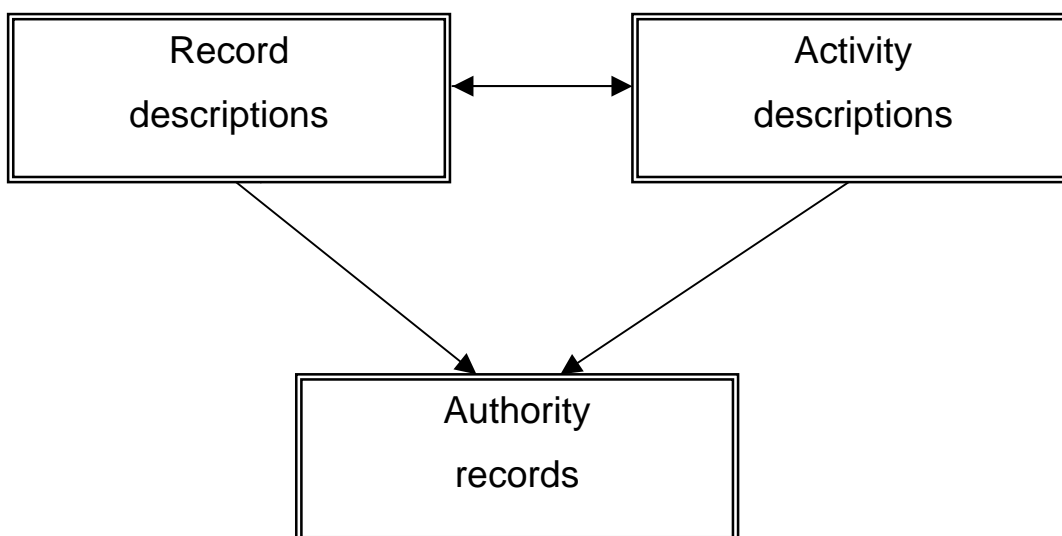
2.6 Technical Specifications

The development of the web interface for the original GASHE project was designed in collaboration with the NAHSTE project by EDINA, the JISC-funded national data centre based at Edinburgh University Data Library²¹. EDINA used the PERL programming language with a number of third party modules and a CGI script. It designed simple navigation between the various data components, free-text and index controlled searching based on the underlying structure of the XML formatted data and an easy means of updating existing data. The technology behind the original GASHE and NAHSTE sites is described in detail in Higgins, S. and Inglis, G. Implementing EAD: the experience of the NAHSTE project. *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 24, 2003, p.199-214.

In the *Developing Archival Context Standards for Functions in the Higher Education Sector* project, we asked EDINA to work with us again. During the original GASHE project, we had enjoyed a very productive relationship with EDINA, and EDINA was now in the unique position of already being familiar with GASHE. Developments and adaptations of the interface by EDINA should therefore prove more straightforward than by a newcomer.

The first stage was to draw up a list of specifications detailing our requirements, which, broadly, were to incorporate the new activity descriptions into GASHE and to provide a dynamic and flexible system with the three types of document (ie record descriptions, authority records and activity descriptions) interlinked. Our requirements were that the user must be able to enter the system via either the record descriptions or the activity descriptions and then to be able to navigate from either of these to either of the other two document types as required. This is represented in the diagram below.

²¹ EDINA's website is at <http://www.edina.ac.uk> (visited 28 February 2006).



In order to facilitate these dynamic links, it was vital that each individual record description (ie each <c> component in EAD), each activity description and each authority record was assigned its own unique identifier. This identifier could then be recorded within designated elements in the other two document types whenever a link to a different document type was required.

We specified the following links:

1. From Activity Descriptions

(a) to multiple record descriptions (in EAD).

The unique identifier of each record, corresponding to the identifier of that record in the EAD <c> component, was recorded in the id attribute of the <unitid> element within the <archunit> element within the <resourcerel> element (see Appendix).

Example of encoding in activity description:

```

<resourcerel>
  <archunit>
    <unittitle>Minutes of Faculty of Medicine</unittitle>
    <unitdate>1856-1996</unitdate>
    <unitid id="gb-0248-gua-med-1">GB 0248 GUA MED 1</unitid>
  
```

```
</archunit>
</resourcerel>
```

(b) to multiple authority records.

The unique identifier of each authority record was recorded in the authfilenumber attribute of the <corpname> element within the <eacrel> element (see Appendix).

Example of encoding in activity description:

```
<eacrel>
  <corpname authfilenumber="C1786">Senate</corpname>
</eacrel>
```

(c) to multiple other activity descriptions.

The unique identifier of each activity record was recorded in the authfilenumber attribute of the <function> element within the <funactrel> element (see Appendix).

Example of encoding in activity record:

```
<funactrel>
  <function authfilenumber="C0740-F003-016">Student administration/Assessment
  administration, University of Glasgow</function>
</funactrel>
```

2. From Record Descriptions

(a) to multiple authority records.

The unique identifier of each authority record was recorded in the authfilenumber attribute of the <corpname> element within the <origination> element.

Example of encoding in EAD:

```
<origination>
  <corpname authfilenumber="C0843">Anderson's College, Glasgow</corpname>
</origination>
```

(b) to multiple activity descriptions.

We recorded the activity or activities that gave rise to a record as index terms by using the EAD <function> element available for use within the <controlaccess> element. The unique identifier of each activity description was recorded in the authfilenumber attribute of <function>.

Example of encoding in EAD:

```
<controlaccess>  
  <function authfilenumber="C0843-F016-004">Governance/Executive committee  
  management, Anderson's College, Glasgow</function>  
</controlaccess>
```

3. From Authority Records

Although we specified links to the authority records from both the record descriptions and the activity descriptions, the project's remit did not allow us to make these links two way. This, however, would be a highly desirable addition in the future, which would be made possible by an upgrade from the project's own authority DTD to the EAC DTD.

We did, however, specify that users should be able to access the authority records independently of the other two document types. This was an important requirement as our own experience, backed up by Wendy Duff's ongoing research at the University of Toronto²², led us to believe that these records could become an important scholarly resource in their own right.

²² See <http://www.fis.utoronto.ca/content/view/43/560/> (visited 28 February 2006).

2.7 Search Options

We included two types of search facilities: free-text searching and controlled index searching. These are intended to complement each other and to provide alternative ways of querying the system.

Free-text Search

The free-text searching is the most comprehensive search option. It offers the user the option to find every occurrence of a term or combination of terms of his/her own choice in designated elements in all three of the document types (ie record descriptions, authority records and activity descriptions). The designated elements are those elements that provide information about the content and history of the archives rather than purely administrative information. Example of elements included are the *Administrative History* and *Scope and Content* in the record descriptions and the *Activity History* in the activity descriptions. The purpose of this was to be as comprehensive as possible, while, at the same time, trying to filter out as much unnecessary 'noise' as possible.

Controlled Index Search

The controlled index searching, which covers the record descriptions and the activity descriptions, is more selective and is aimed at guiding users directly to sources of significance for a particular subject or name. Users are offered four separate alphabetical indexes, one each for subjects, persons, places and corporate names. In order to maintain consistency both within the project and more widely within the archival community, all the index terms have been constructed according to recognised standards. Personal, place and corporate names are constructed according to the *National Council on Archives rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names*, 1997²³ and subjects are taken from the UK Archival Thesaurus (UKAT)²⁴, supplemented where necessary by the British Education Thesaurus²⁵ and, in a few cases, by the project's own terms. All such terms have subsequently been incorporated in UKAT.

²³ Available at <http://www.ncaonline.org.uk/materials/namingrules.pdf> (visited 28 February 2006).

²⁴ Available at <http://www.ukat.org.uk/> (visited 28 February 2006).

²⁵ Available at <http://brs.leeds.ac.uk/%7Ebeiwwww/beil.html> (visited 28 February 2006).

Within the record descriptions, we indexed everything down to series level and a few, particularly important sections, below this. The aim was to provide a broad and comprehensive summary of the contents of the collections not an exhaustive guide to specific items of information within them, a time-consuming and unfeasible task. Indexing to series level provided a sensible balance. It offered a much more useful level of detail than simply indexing at the broader fonds or subfonds levels but was still a feasible thing to achieve for all collections. It was, after all, vital to give equal treatment to every collection. To have indexed any one collection or part of a collection in a great deal more detail than any other or to have left anything out would have produced a very unbalanced and biased result. We were also careful to follow general ISAD(G) rules and to index from the general to the specific and avoid unnecessary repetition of information. So, for example, the Glasgow School of Art collection was assigned the terms 'Architecture education', 'Art colleges', 'Art education' and 'Design education' at fonds level. These are all broad, general terms that apply to the collection as a whole. Within this collection, one of the subfonds is the records of the Board of Governors. The terms chosen for this were 'Educational governing boards' and 'Educational management'. One of the series within this subfonds is a series of annual reports. The term 'Annual reports' was selected together with other terms to represent the types of information found within the annual reports such as 'Curriculum', 'Educational statistics' and 'Financial statements'. In this way, the terms move from the most general at fonds level to the most specific at series level and there is no repetition of information. The selection of any one of these index terms by the user would lead directly to the most relevant part of the collection.

The indexing of names (ie personal, corporate and place names) in the record descriptions was relatively straightforward. We avoided mere passing references and indexed only significant occurrences that would lead to the retrieval of records of direct relevance for that name. This, in fact, was our overriding aim with all the indexing – that any index term should lead the user to relevant records. If every single occurrence of a name were required, whether it led to useful records or not, then the free-text search option could be used. The indexing of subjects, while having this same aim, was more complex. Subjects and concepts are not always explicitly mentioned in record descriptions so a free-text search cannot be relied on to retrieve everything relating to a particular subject. Instead, it is up to the indexer to select the most appropriate terms. Clearly, this places an enormous responsibility on the indexer. He/she must be impartial and objective since, otherwise, there is the real danger that

certain subjects will be privileged at the expense of others. In order to be as objective as possible, we decided to confine subject indexing to the content and format of the records not their interpretation or meaning. So, for example, a series of student registers was simply indexed as 'Student records'. This is, after all, what they are. Terms such as 'Genealogy' or 'Student mobility' were actively avoided. The registers are, indeed, an excellent source for genealogy and the study of student mobility but they are open to many other uses and interpretations as well. It would be very misleading and biased to pick out some uses and omit others. The result would be a very subjective snapshot of only some of the records' meanings and interpretations.

Within the activity descriptions, we indexed the name(s) of the institution at which the activity was performed and the activity itself by selecting appropriate subject terms. It did not prove necessary to index any personal, family or place names. We recorded index terms within a <controlaccess> wrapper element, modelled on the EAD element of the same name. Subjects were recorded in the <subject> element and corporate names within the <corpname> element, both contained within <controlaccess>. We were particularly keen for the indexes to cover the activity descriptions as well as the record descriptions so that users only entering GASHE via the indexes would not miss these valuable sources of extra contextual information. We were unsure how many users would go directly to the function and activity descriptions part of the search pages, since it would be an unfamiliar concept to most, so it was vital to be able to introduce these descriptions via other routes.

It would have been desirable to have indexed the authority records as well as the record descriptions and the activity descriptions but the project's authority DTD did not allow for the possibility of including controlled access points. An upgrade to the EAC DTD would, of course, make this possible and allow index terms to be added in the future.

We were also keen that the results of searches, both free-text and index controlled, should be presented in a meaningful and user-friendly way. In the original version of GASHE, search results were presented simply in chronological order. Each hit gave the name of the record, the covering dates and the name of the institution. This meant that records were given a certain amount of context so that the user could tell what a record was and where it came from. However, it became clear, particularly as more content was added to the site resulting in longer hit lists, that simply presenting the results in chronological order was not very

helpful. Often, users had to wade through several pages to find items of interest. Also, related items from the same institution were often scattered throughout the list, resulting in a loss of important context. The proposed inclusion of activity descriptions and authority records in the results of searches (these had not been covered either by the free-text search or the index search in the original version of GAHSE) would only compound the problem. The results needed to be presented in such a way that the user did not have to wade through masses of undifferentiated hits. This meant both that different document types needed to be differentiated and that sufficient context had to be provided so that hits could be readily understood. Our solution was to specify that the results should be grouped by the name of the archive collection, which was either an institution or a person. Each institution or person was to be given its own heading. Under this heading, any records were to be listed first, in chronological order, followed by any activity descriptions. Collection headings would be presented in alphabetical order. Authority records were to be presented on their own after the list of collections. A single authority record can, of course, be associated with more than one archive collection which would mean that one authority record could potentially appear more than once in the list of hits, under two or more different collections. We felt it was preferable to group the authority records on their own, meaning that any authority record would only appear once in the list of hits.

A typical search result page (the result of a free-text search for ‘cookery’) showing hits arranged in this order can be seen at:

<http://www.gashe.ac.uk:443/cgi-bin/search.pl?term=cookery&mode=and&results=10>

3. Project Outcomes

The creation and use of activity descriptions to document over time the record-creating activities of Scottish higher education institutions has led to two major outcomes. Firstly, it has resulted in a much more flexible and more objective system of representation. Activity descriptions provide the vehicle for the extra contextual information that slips through the net with standard cataloguing. Record descriptions can be linked to as many activities as necessary, thereby allowing records to be described in multiple contexts. Instead of providing a highly subjective snapshot of records at a single point in time, we can now provide a whole series of images of records showing their changing uses and functions within the organisation. Activity descriptions allow the seamless description of records from their origin right up to the present. Users can see how the organisation evolved and how the purpose and use of records evolved with it. Furthermore, activity descriptions are fluid and can be easily updated when the responsibility for an activity or the creation and maintenance of a record series changes, appropriately reflecting the fluid and dynamic nature of the records themselves. They also provide very useful, additional retrieval points for the user.

Secondly, and equally importantly, the project has resulted in a practical outcome of the concept of the records continuum. Activity descriptions enable a holistic approach to be taken to record-keeping. Traditionally, records managers at the University of Glasgow have handled current records but have not necessarily understood the historical origin and evolution of these records. Conversely, archivists have cared for historical records but have not necessarily had an awareness of how they linked to current records. Similarly, records managers have used one set of standards for the classification and identification of records and, on the metamorphosis of these records into archives, archivists have used another set to produce archival descriptions or representations. The two approaches failed to join up. Activity descriptions, however, enabling the seamless description of records from their origin to the present, have proved the perfect means of joining them up. This project provided a 'eureka moment' when it became clear that the records continuum is not just a model but can be applied to produce tangible results. The potential of this new concept is transforming record-keeping practice within Glasgow University Archive Services. Activity descriptions are becoming the heart of a system embracing information about both past and current records. There are many potential developments that are beginning to be explored further,

such as linking activity descriptions to retention schedules in order to eradicate unnecessary duplication, or using activity descriptions as a tool to facilitate access under Freedom of Information legislation, acting like the UK government's information asset registers. The project has already, however, led to radical developments. The sudden realisation of what now appears blindingly obvious, namely that the records continuum provides the constant between records management and archives management, has led to a re-think and re-design of the approach to records management support within the University of Glasgow. Archivists and records managers have merged into record-keeping professionals whose roles can move seamlessly between the present, future and past. Archival trained records professionals are being utilised to carry out basic record survey work using archival documentation. This enables records of long-term evidential value and potential value as corporate and/or societal memory to be documented to archival standards of representation from the time of creation or as early as possible after creation. The use of archival standards to describe the records of an organisation as they are created not only saves the migration of information from a records management system to an archival system but also ensures adequate documentation of records right from the start, enabling subsequent archival activities such as appraisal and selection also to be adequately documented. This holistic approach to record-keeping, which came about directly as a result of the creation and use of activity descriptions, has been a dramatic outcome of the project.

4. Project Dissemination

A range of dissemination activities aimed primarily at academics and archive professionals but also at family and local historians was carried out throughout the course of the project. Activities included the creation of a leaflet advertising the project which was printed at the start of the project and updated and reprinted at the end of the project, as well as a number of conference papers, articles and regular bulletins.

Conference Papers

Papers were delivered at the following conferences and meetings:

New Tools for University History conference, Ghent, October 2003.

Annual Conference of Society of Archivists, Glasgow, September 2004.

Annual General Meeting of Society of Archivists' EAD/Data Exchange Group, London, April 2005.

Annual Conference of Association of Canadian Archivists, Saskatoon, June 2005.

'To Boldly Go!' conference organized by Archives Hub, Manchester, July 2005.

The Continuum of Care: Recordkeeping at Universities session of the Annual Conference of the International Council on Archives Section on University Archives, 2005.

Articles

The following articles were published:

Peters, V., 'Developing Archival Context Standards for Functions in the Higher Education Sector.' *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, Vol. 26, No. 1, April 2005, pp 75 – 85.

Peters, V., 'Developing Archival Context Standards for Functions in the Higher Education Sector.' *ARC (Newsletter of the Society of Archivists)*, No. 186, February 2005.

Peters, V., 'Launch of new Gateway to Archives of Scottish Higher Education'. *Retour* (Newsletter of the Scottish Records Association), Spring 2006.

Peters, V. and Richmond, L. Divided no More: A Descriptive Approach to the Record-keeping Continuum. In Moss, M. and Tough, A. (eds.) Record keeping in a hybrid environment: managing the creation, use, preservation and disposal of unpublished information objects in context, Chandos Publishing (Oxford), due Spring 2006.

Bulletins and Mailshots

Regular updates on the project were published on the GASHE website, Glasgow University Archive Services website and the online newsletter of Glasgow University's Humanities and Advanced Technology and Information Institute. Mailshots advertising the completion of the project and the relaunch of GASHE were posted to as wide an audience as possible including archivists, academic researchers and family and local historians. Archivists and other information professionals were targeted through the archives-nra jiscmail list (the UK discussion list for archivists and records managers), ScotArch (the discussion list for archivists and records managers in Scotland), the list serve of the Association of Canadian Archivists, the list serve of the Society of American Archivists, the list serve of the International Council on Archives (ICA) Section on University and Research Institution Archives, the list serve of the Scottish Universities Special Collections and Archives Group (SUSCAG) as well as the UK archive training schools. Researchers were targeted through the National Archives (TNA), the Scottish Archives Network (SCAN), the Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (SCRAN), the Scottish Records Association (SRA) and a large number of Scottish local and family history societies. Academic researchers in particular were targeted through specific JISC mail list serves for historians, educationalists and sociologists.

5. Project Evaluation

A qualitative evaluation of the GASHE website was carried out via an online questionnaire²⁶. This method was decided upon as being likely to reach the widest number of people, with the widest variety of interest in the site. The questionnaire was kept short in order to encourage participation and comprised the following five questions:

Did you find what you needed on GASHE?

What did you like about GASHE?

What did you dislike about GASHE?

How would you improve GASHE?

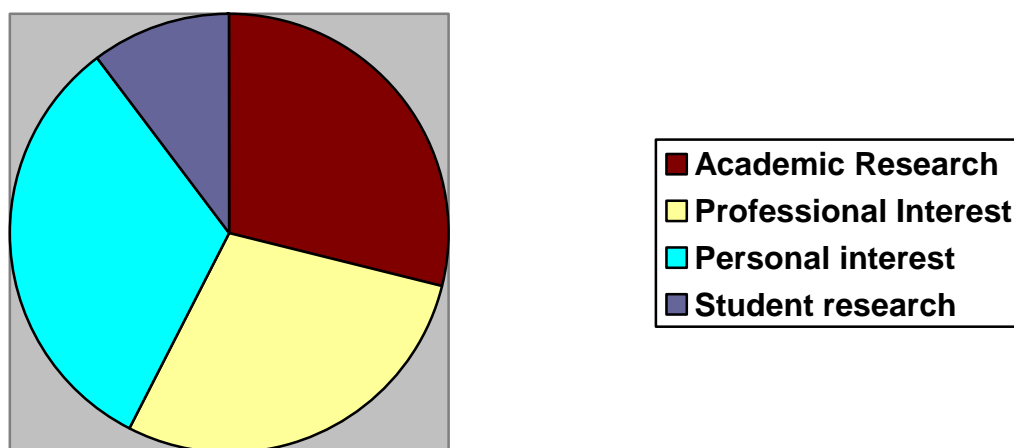
Do you have any other comments about the website?

The questions were deliberately kept general in order to elicit genuine, unprompted responses and to give users the chance to say what they wanted. In particular, we did not ask specifically for opinions on the activity descriptions because we were keen to find out whether users had discovered this part of the site for themselves.

Four categories of user were targeted: academic researchers; students; those with a professional interest in the site eg archivists and other information professionals; and those with a personal interest in the site eg family historians. Respondents were asked to classify themselves as belonging to one of these four groups. Emails and a printed flyer advertising the site and requesting feedback were sent to representative bodies of all four categories mainly within the UK but also within other parts of Europe as well as Canada and the USA. A £50 book token was offered as an incentive to encourage participation. In order to make the feedback form both as noticeable and as accessible as possible, a link was provided to it at the top of every page of the website as well as a prominent notice about the book token on the home page.

By the date of this report, 60 feedback forms had been received. The breakdown of respondents by category is shown in the following diagram.

²⁶ Available at (<http://www.gashe.ac.uk/contact/feedback.html>) (visited 28 February 2006).



The spread between academic researchers (18 respondents=30%), those with a professional interest (17 respondents=28%) and those with a personal interest (19 respondents=32%) was very even. There was a small number of students (6 respondents=10%).

The comments have been broken down into four broad areas: the general value of GASHE; content and coverage; navigability and ease of use; search facilities.

Value of GASHE

With regard to the general value of the site, the majority of respondents gave a favourable response. Academic researchers, in particular, liked the fact that information about records they perceived as difficult to access was now available. Comments included:

‘It was interesting to see what was out there. It can be quite difficult locating archives and resources in my discipline [architecture] – and this looks like it could be a useful resource.’

[What did you like?] *‘Availability of difficult to access materials...A fantastic contribution to an area of growing scholarly interest (the architecture of education). Having this archive makes designing courses on the topic more possible and it supports early archival research at both doctoral and post-doctoral levels.’*

‘Very useful resource....a great help to all aspects of research.’

‘Really interesting.’

These views were shared by those with a professional interest in the site. Comments included:

‘A really interesting site. I shall be coming back again.’

‘GASHE is a really useful research tool...’

The site had more of a mixed reception from those with a personal interest. Favourable comments included:

‘I didn’t expect to find anything but was really quite fascinated by what was available.’

‘Useful to Family History researchers as well as Academics and others doing professional research.’

‘Very good idea, the whole project is extremely interesting.’

Others with a personal interest, however, commented on their difficulties in using the site to trace their family history. One respondent commented:

‘I was expecting actual lists of names...’

Another said that she had expected that *‘the GASHE site could provide details of ancestors who studied at universities in Scotland. However, all I could find was information about a handful of well-known people...’*

Two feedback forms were also received which were simply requests for help in using the site for genealogical research. Both requests betrayed a lack of understanding of how the site might be used for this type of research. The comments and requests clearly indicate that more explanation and guidance need to be provided and carefully targeted at this type of user. There were indications that this sort of approach ie having information pages specifically

aimed at different types of researcher would be welcomed. One suggestion for improvement from an academic researcher, for example, was:

‘Perhaps consider having subject gateway area pages which are more easily accessible from the main page-something that might be bookmarked eg for my interests, a page on architecture that would act as a gateway to research on that area.’

This could certainly be an area for future development.

Encouragingly, therefore, the site was welcomed as a valuable resource by all categories of respondent, but most of all by academic researchers, who were, after all, the site’s primary target audience. There is no doubt that the records described by GASHE can also be valuable resources for the study of family history. However, the comments received from family historians indicate that more explanation and guidance needs to be provided for this type of user.

Content and Coverage

All four categories of respondent were agreed on the need to continue to develop GASHE by adding more content. Comments included:

[How would you improve GASHE?] *‘add more material – as ever – and this is a sound foundation to build an expanded resource on.’* (Academic researcher)

[How would you improve GASHE] *‘More lower level descriptions. More descriptions in general.’* (Professional interest)

[How would you improve GASHE?] *‘Additional content.’* (Professional interest)

‘A good start but it needs extending if it is to be really useful.’ (Personal interest)

[How would you improve GASHE?] *‘By adding more records, and informing interested people by email when they have been added.’* (Personal interest)

'As always. Access to data online is appreciated. However, this is a great step in the right direction.' (Student)

The lack of comprehensive coverage was pointed out several times. All categories of user clearly wanted complete coverage both in breadth and depth. Confusion was also shown about the rationale behind the current coverage, why, for example, some Scottish HEIs were included and others were not and why some famous Scots had their own biographical entry but others did not. Comments included:

[What did you dislike?] *'Wasn't comprehensive...Expand to include all Scottish Archive Collections in HE.'* (Academic researcher)

[What did you like?] *'Could be a good source.'* **[What did you dislike?]** *'Incomplete and therefore disappointing.'* (Professional interest)

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above comments. The first is that it would be well worth adding more content to the site. The existing GASHE partners together with additional higher education institutions should be encouraged to submit data and it is recommended that ways of facilitating this are explored. The second is that more guidance is needed to explain what is currently included on the site and why.

Interestingly, several comments were made specifically about the biographies, indicating that many of the respondents were using these as information resources in their own right, not simply to provide contextual background for the records. One student, for example, commented:

'The biographies, both personal and corporate provided a useful summary without the need to consult documents themselves.'

Similarly, an academic researcher said that the biographical essays were helpful for his research (tracing prosopographical and archival resources to throw light on ecclesiastical traditions in the UK). Moreover, two respondents, with relevant areas of expertise, volunteered to correct or supplement information in the biographies. This was a particularly

interesting and valued response. The participation of academics in contributing to historical information on the site could perhaps be further encouraged and exploited in the future.

There was also an indication that those with a personal interest in the site were interested in the biographies, although, as already mentioned, a number of family historians had false expectations with regard to the types of people warranting a biographical entry. In addition, one respondent commented that he found the *'biographical information pages especially awkward and cluttered.'*

Still within the broad area of content and coverage, several comments were made on the gallery section of the site. These comprised five comments from academic researchers, four from those with a professional interest, two from those with a personal interest and one from a student. These comments were particularly interesting since the provision of images was not the primary purpose of the site. The gallery section was merely included to provide users with a flavour of the types of documents described in GASHE. All those who commented on the images welcomed their inclusion. The following observation by a respondent with a personal interest in the site sums up opinion:

'I like the uniqueness of the images-how they document Scottish culture.'

Overwhelmingly, however, respondents wanted this part of the site to be developed. They all wanted the images to be bigger and for more to be added. The student respondent suggested that the images be put to a more dynamic use by being linked to the appropriate record description whilst one academic wanted to be able to purchase copies of the images. Clearly, the provision of digital images, in addition to textual descriptions, is very much desired by all categories of user. Again, this is something that could perhaps be developed in the future.

Disappointingly, very few comments were made specifically about the activity descriptions. The following were all from archive professionals or students taking archive courses:

'The function/activity description area is useful in providing individual records with greater context and therefore understanding the reasons for their creation and use.'

'I liked the various ways of linking between collections and institutions via people and functions.'

‘Liked the new added function search method’

Clearly, the feature is welcomed by professionals although one professional commented that the terminology of ‘Function and activity descriptions’ might be off-putting to researchers. Interestingly, though, none of the researchers actually said this.

None of the researchers as opposed to those with a professional interest in the site made any specific comment about the activity descriptions. This is an interesting result and could indicate either that researchers found this feature of the site easy and straightforward to use or that they overlooked it. In any case, it is too early, at this stage, to draw any conclusions, and more evaluation and investigation needs to be done on an ongoing basis into how researchers use the new site and their search strategies. It is intended to continue to gather information after the end of this project, both from the online feedback form, which will now be amended to include a specific question about the function and activity descriptions, and perhaps also from web statistics. This data will be analysed and used to inform the AHRC funded project ‘Empowering the user: the development of flexible archival catalogues’ one objective of which is to continue to explore the application of a functional approach to archival description.

Navigability and Ease of Use

The majority of all four categories of respondent felt that the site was easy to use and navigate. Comments from academic researchers included:

‘Overall it is attractive and intuitive to use.’

‘Clear interface.’

‘Quite clearly and orderly set out.’

[What did you like?] *‘Simplicity and ease of use.’*

‘Easy to navigate.’

However, two academic researchers, interestingly both from Australia, did not like the fact that the 'Record Descriptions' part of the site was organised by repository. They both observed that this limited the use of the site. One even observed that it resulted in '*total obscurity*' and that '*Your website is unfortunately designed for those inside your institutions not outside*'. They both wanted an easier way to get a complete overview of all the collections on GASHE. Clearly, more thought needs to be given to making the collections as open and accessible as possible, particularly for those from outside the UK. It is recommended that an additional browse facility is added to the site to enable a complete overview of all the collections on GASHE.

Another academic, also from Australia, observed that '*It seemed to take a long time and a fair number of links to get to where I wanted to go.*'

The majority of those with a professional interest in GASHE found the site easy to use. One comment from a professional in Canada in response to the question 'What did you like?' was particularly positive:

'Clarity. It is very easy to understand how the site is structured. The information is very easy to read and I appreciate that the sources for information and description are included. This is such a good site that I think it could certainly be used as a template for other institutions. It reads beautifully.'

Other comments from professionals included:

'Searching is simple and fast.'

'It was nicely laid out and easy to navigate in order to find what I was looking for.'

'Clear structure and user-friendly design.'

'Well constructed and clear navigational structure for name authorities which puts them in context.'

'Very easy to move between information pages.'

Some respondents with a professional interest were more critical. One commented that *'the ease of browsing means it is sometimes easy to forget how I came across a certain page and then to re-find it again on another visit.'*

Another said that it was *'not always clear how to locate the item from the description given.'*

Another respondent suggested the addition of a *'link through from name authorities directly to catalogue entries.'* This could certainly be implemented in the future, following an upgrade to the EAC DTD.

Those with a personal interest in the site shared many of the same views. Favourable comments included:

'It's easy to navigate and the links to the help guides are well placed.'

'Easy navigation and plain English.'

'Easy to use, fast.'

'Nice and clear to follow and read. Pages not too busy and cluttered, as are so many others.'

One respondent with a personal interest, disagreed, however, observing that the *'web interface is not especially intuitive and sometimes inconsistent.'*

The majority of comments from students were also positive. Comments included:

[What did you like?] *'The simplicity of the site, how easy it was to always get back to the home page.'*

'It seems to be quite easy to navigate around; it's quite 'clean' and easy to read It seems very user friendly.'

'I appreciated the speed of the site. The access was very quick, especially considering the access from overseas (Canada). I like the format. The web site is very well laid out, robust and accurate.'

'The layout was clear and the links were easy to navigate and follow logically. The help section provides useful explanations.'

One student made the following suggestions for refinements to the navigation:

'I would give a way of getting back to the previous page (rather than clicking on the back button on the internet toolbar) so you could go back to the index pages...The hierarchy at the top of the page could perhaps be a little clearer - it could perhaps be represented in a diagram at the side of the page.'

On the whole, respondents from all four categories were very positive about the ease of use and navigability of the site.

Search Facilities

Comments on the free-text and index search options were much more mixed. Although one academic researcher commented on the *'Good search facilities'* many other academics were confused by the search options. One academic observed:

'...if you type in some topics ... there are no references returned e.g. diet, feminism, migration.'

Another academic was disappointed to find no index terms for *'student mobility (foreign students, international relations etc)'*.

There are, in fact, rich resources on GASHE for all these research topics. However, many academic researchers were not finding records relevant for their research, revealing a lack of understanding both of what to expect from the free-text searching and of the indexing principles employed. Clearly, more explanation of how to search on GASHE, including the indexing principles, needs to be provided on the site. It is recommended that this is added to

the search help pages, together with some example searches. One respondent with a professional interest, did, in fact, suggest that example searches would be a useful addition.

It is also recommended that research into the value of subject indexing is undertaken. Clearly, at present, the indexing, which was carried out in accordance with traditional indexing theory, does not meet academic user expectations. In order to remain impartial and objective and therefore not influence research we were careful to index the content of records not their meaning or interpretation. So, for example, student records were indexed simply as 'Student records' (a recognised term in UKAT). No attempt was made to index the topics of research the student records might be used for such as student mobility, migration, family history, prosopography etc. The list of possible research topics is a long one. Indeed, it is impossible to try to predict all likely research topics and listing some while omitting others opens the archivist to the charge of privileging certain types of information above others. In any case, it simply would not be feasible to carry out this type of indexing for every record on GASHE. Instead, we can only aim to provide a broad, balanced summary of the content of the records. This being the case, it would be worth investigating whether the index, in its current form, actually provides a useful service. Would it be worthwhile, for example, to supplement or even replace the current subject index with pages targeted at specific research topics, a feature suggested by one academic researcher:

'Perhaps consider having subject gateway area pages which are more easily accessible from the main page-something that might be bookmarked eg for my interests, a page on architecture that would act as a gateway to research on that area.'

Those with a personal interest in the site were similarly confused by the search facilities and often could not find what they wanted. Only one respondent said that the site was '*easy to search*'. Others, as has already been mentioned, had unrealistic expectations of what they could use the site for and were hoping to find names of individual students in the personal name index. Again, the addition of more explanation as to how to use the search options and pages targeted specifically at family historians could help resolve this.

Interestingly, those with a professional interest in the site were less critical of the search options. Comments included:

'[the new look site] allows for various searching methods which is fantastic and opens up the site to a wider audience.'

'The different searches make it easier to locate topics of interest - there is less guess work involved in deciding whether a class of records may contain useful information or not.'

'Quick and easy to search.'

'Searching is simple and fast.'

No-one with a professional interest commented on the search options not meeting their needs. There were critical comments from this category of respondent but these were largely confined to suggestions for refining the existing search facilities, for example altering the layout of the 'search collections' page or adding a statement saying that there were no results in response to an unsuccessful free-text search (a view shared, in fact, by all categories of respondent). One professional respondent did request *'an advanced search facility that was wider in scope than index search'* but, for the most part, the information professionals seemed content with the type of options on offer.

There is clearly, therefore, a divergence of opinion between information professionals and researchers on the effectiveness of the search options. This is quite revealing, indicating that archivists' views of the needs of users and users' actual needs are somewhat out of kilter. Clearly, traditional free-text searching and subject indexing, on their own, are not meeting users' needs. It was anticipated that the creation of the activity descriptions and the resulting additional access points would supplement the traditional forms of searching and help users locate relevant material much more easily. There is not enough feedback yet, however, to conclude whether or not they have been successful in this. As already mentioned, more evaluation needs to be done on an ongoing basis into how researchers use the new site and their search strategies.

6. Project Recommendations

The project makes the following recommendations:

Archival Descriptive Practice

1. that context is separated entirely from content in archival descriptive systems
2. that a review of the value of subject indexing is undertaken
3. that a series-based approach to archival description is tested in the UK
[Action: Glasgow University Archive Services (GUAS) to test series-based approach in AHRC funded project ‘Empowering the user: the development of flexible archival catalogues’, May 2006- April 2009]
4. that a function-based approach is applied to and tested on the records of other sectors
[Action: GUAS to apply function-based approach to business records in AHRC funded project ‘Empowering the user: the development of flexible archival catalogues’, May 2006- April 2009]
5. that EAC is implemented and tested in the UK
[Action: GUAS to implement and test EAC in AHRC funded project ‘Empowering the user: the development of flexible archival catalogues’, May 2006- April 2009]
6. that a holistic approach to record-keeping is extended and developed
7. that a suitable element is added to ISAD(G) along the lines of the *Functions, Occupations and Activities* element (5.2.5) in ISAAR(CPF) in order to record the activity or activities with which a record was associated
[Action: GUAS to contact ICA Provisional Section on Standards and Best Practices to request addition by end 2006]

8. that a suitable element is added to EAD in order to record the activity or activities with which a record was associated and to correspond with the element recommended for IASD(G) in 1. above
[Action: GUAS to contact Society of American Archivists to request addition by end 2006]

9. that the experience and outcomes of the project inform the AHRC funded project 'Empowering the user: the development of flexible archival catalogues'
[Action: project to run from May 2006 to April 2009]

10. that the experience and outcomes of the project inform the development of a general standard for functions and activities by the Provisional Section on Standards and Best Practices (SPS) of the International Council on Archives
[Action: Victoria Peters to attend meetings of ICA SPS Working Group on Record Creators' Functions, 2006-2008]

11. that the XML DTD for activities developed by the project is offered to the international archive community for further development
[Action: GUAS to offer DTD to ICA SPS after completion of new standard for functions and activities in 2008]

GASHE Project

12. that the online feedback form on GASHE is amended and more information on the reactions of users to the activity descriptions is collected
[Action: GUAS to implement by end 2006]

13. that sophisticated web statistics are gathered to track the searches performed by users of GASHE
[Action: GUAS to implement by end 2006]

14. that more content is added to the GASHE site to make it a comprehensive resource
[Action: GUAS to investigate sources of funding 2006-2007]

15. that more explanation regarding the current coverage of GASHE is added to the site
[Action: GUAS to implement by end 2006]

16. that more explanation of how to search on GASHE, including example searches, is added to the site
[Action: GUAS to implement by end 2006]

17. that more explanation of the indexing principles is added to the site
[Action: GUAS to implement by end 2006]

18. that help pages for specific research topics are added to the GASHE site
[Action: GUAS to implement (ongoing)]

19. that a statement informing users that there are no hits appears in response to an unsuccessful free-text search
[Action: GUAS to implement by end 2006]

20. that an additional browse facility is added to the GASHE site to enable a complete overview of all the collections on GASHE
[Action: GUAS to implement by end 2006]

21. that researchers are encouraged to add information to GASHE
[Action: GUAS to implement GASHE BLOG by end 2006]

22. that digital images of records are added to the GASHE site
[Action: GUAS to investigate by end 2007]

Appendix

Summary Outline of Structure of Activity DTD

The structure of the DTD is designed so that each element of description in the *GASHE Standard for Creating Activity Descriptions* maps to an equivalent XML element. The reference numbers of elements of description from the GASHE standard are recorded here in bold in parentheses immediately following the XML element name.

Please note - this is only a summary of the structure of the DTD. Only the most important subelements are noted.

The overall wrapper element for an activity description is **<functionactivity>**. This contains three mandatory elements: **<funcheader>**, **<frontmatter>** and **<functiondesc>**.

<funcheader>. Required. A wrapper element for the recording of information about the activity description document rather than the activity being described. It is modelled on the EAD **<eadheader>** element. It contains the following subelements:

<funcid> Required. Contains a unique identification code for the activity description.

<filedesc> Required. Contains bibliographic information about the activity description. Contains two required subelements: **<titlestmt>** which contains the document's author, title and subtitle and **<publicationstmt>** which contains details of the publisher and date of publication.

<profiledesc> Required. Contains information about the encoding of the activity description.

<revisiondesc> Optional. Contains statements about significant revisions to the activity description.

<frontmatter> Required. A wrapper element for the recording of prefatory information for the generation of a title page. It is modelled on the EAD **<frontmatter>** element. It contains one subelement: **<titlepage>** which contains bibliographic information about the encoded activity description.

<functiondesc> Required. A wrapper element for the bulk of the activity description instance. It contains five subelements: **<identityarea>**, **<contextarea>**, **<alliedmatarea>**, **<notearea>** and **<controlaccess>**.

<identityarea> (*GASHE Standard 1*) Required. Contains information to identify the activity. Contains the following subelements:

<fadid> (*GASHE Standard 1.1*) Required. Contains a unique code to identify the activity description..

<institution> (*GASHE Standard 1.2*) Required. Contains the name(s) of the institution performing the activity.

<functitle> (*GASHE Standard 1.3*) Required. Contains the name of the function the activity was performed to fulfil.

<activitytitle> (*GASHE Standard 1.4*) Required. Contains the name of the activity.

<funcdate> (*GASHE Standard 1.5*) Required. Contains the covering dates for the period the activity was performed..

<contextarea> (*GASHE Standard 2*) Required. Contains information on how, why and by whom the activity was performed. Contains the following subelements:

<eacrels> (*GASHE Standard 2.1*) Optional. Contains the names of all office bearers, departments, faculties, organisations or other bodies involved in the performance of the activity, together with covering dates. It is modelled on the EAC element **<eacrels>**. Contains one or more **<eacrel>** which may contain **<corpname>** or **<persname>** and **<date>**.

<history> (*GASHE Standard 2.2*) Required. Contains an administrative history of the activity from the time the institution first began performing it right up until the present day or the date the institution ceased performing it.

<alliedmatarea> (*GASHE Standard 3*) Optional. Contains information on the records created or used in the course of the activity and any related activities. Contains the following subelements:

<resourcerels> (*GASHE Standard 3.1*) Optional. Contains details of all the records created or used in the course of the activity. It is modelled on the EAC element **<resourcerels>**. Contains one or more **<resourcerel>** which contains **<archunit>** for the description of an archival unit. **<archunit>** may contain **<unittitle>**,

<unitdate>, **<unitid>**, **<scopecontent>** and **<note>**.

<funactrels> (*GASHE Standard 3.2*) Optional. Contains details of all related activities. It is modelled on the EAC element **<funactrels>**. It contains one or more **<funactrel>**.

<notearea> (*GASHE Standard 4*) Required. Contains information on the preparation and revision of the activity description, and the rules and conventions used. Contains the following subelements:

<archnote> (*GASHE Standard 4.1*) Required. Contains notes for other archivists.

<rules> (*GASHE Standard 4.2*) Required. Contains the conventions or rules followed in creating the activity description.

<creationdate> (*GASHE Standard 4.3*) Required. Contains the date(s) the activity description was prepared or revised and the person(s) by whom the description was prepared.

<controlaccess> Optional. A wrapper element that designates key access points for the described activity and enables authority-controlled searching. It is modelled on the EAD element **<controlaccess>**.