



# Peer Pals Handbook

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## **Change Log**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Role</b>
0.5	19 November 2017	Fahema Begum	SfNP Careers Officer
0.4	3 May 2016	Katrina Madeley	SfNP Careers Officer
0.3	30 May 2013	Kate Bevan	Careers Officer
0.2	27 May 2012	Zoe Cartwright	Careers Adviser
0.1	1 April 2011	Lindsay Ince	Communications Officer



## **Introduction**

The Archives and Records Association (ARA) Section for New Professionals (SfNP) represents the interests of prospective and current students, and newly qualified professionals.

In order to support those entering a career in archives, records management or archive conservation, we have set up a virtual mentoring programme, known as 'Peer Pals'. The programme is offered to ARA members only, and aims to help bridge the gap between those starting out or considering training options, completing a postgraduate course or entering the work place. Through encouraging the sharing of experiences we believe that the Peer Pals programme will demystify the process of getting started in the profession.

The Peer Pals relationship will be conducted online and between parties aged 18+. The role of the SfNP will be to provide co-ordination services and general support and guidance. Please remember that the programme is what you make of it: the length of the relationship will depend on the circumstances of both parties involved, but the SfNP anticipates that both parties will be spending around an hour of their time per week at the beginning of the relationship, which may reduce to once per month depending on the support required.

There is no expectation of timescale. You and your pal may decide to keep the relationship going longer term, or you may decide that you have given or received appropriate support in a shorter timeframe, and end the partnership via mutual consent. In general, a period of between 3 to 6 months is an average for a partnership.

## **The aims of the Peer Pals Programme**

- To put prospective and current students in touch with recent graduates or other qualified professionals within five years of achieving their qualification, enabling both sides to develop professional and networking links in their geographical and/or professional area.
- To provide an opportunity for prospective and current students and graduates to exchange experiences of job searching and working practice, and to enable those considering starting in the profession to ask specific questions about the processes of training and qualification.
- To allow newly qualified archivists and records managers to share their knowledge and develop mentoring skills as a precursor to managing staff/volunteers in the future.



## Who can be a Peer Pals mentor?

If you have graduated from a postgraduate qualification within the last five years, and are employed in any kind of archives, records management or archive conservation role, you can be a Peer Pals mentor, and can remain one until five years after graduation.

### Role and responsibilities of mentors

- Support and encourage a prospective or current student by sharing your experiences and knowledge of getting started and developing in the profession.
- Act as a role model, and demonstrate professional behaviour for mentees.
- Ask your mentee questions to provoke discussion.

### What is expected from the mentors

- To respond to your mentee's questions and provide them with advice and guidance as required.
- If you cannot maintain minimum communication requirements for any reason please keep the SfNP and your mentee informed. This way we can reassign your mentee if necessary.

### What's in it for you?

- Experience of mentoring, as a precursor to managing staff in the future.
- Sharing knowledge of your experiences, e.g. placements, applying for accredited courses, studying, applying for jobs, etc.
- Engage with new people as passionate about their profession as you are.

## Who can be a Peer Pals mentee?

If you are exploring the possibility of becoming an archivist, records manager or archive conservator, a volunteer aspiring to progress, a trainee considering professional training or a current student on an archives course, then you can become a mentee.

### Role and responsibilities of the mentee

- Ask questions: it will be easier for your mentor to guide you if they know what you want advice about.

### What is expected from mentees

- Be proactive and make an effort to contact your mentor.
- If you want to end the mentoring relationship please keep your mentor and the SfNP informed, so that we can keep track of programme participation.



### What's in it for you?

- Help with specific questions about applying for courses, interviews, course content and options after graduating.
- Access to specialised information based on your own circumstances (e.g. working in a particular sector, such as business or local authority repositories.)
- The opportunity to acquire new contacts in the archive/records management sector.

### The matching process

All prospective mentors and mentees are asked to complete a profile form. The details collected on these profile forms will only be viewed by the SfNP Careers Officer and the Section Chair if required. We will use these forms to match mentors with mentees. We will not share your contact details without your consent. When we think we have found a suitable match, we will contact both parties and provide details about your experiences. Both the prospective mentor and prospective mentee will need to approve the match before any names or contact details are shared. The more information you can provide us with, the better a match we can make.

### Possible Discussion Topics

You may want to look at these topics during your initial contacts with your mentor/mentee to get you started:

- Introductions and sharing of background and pre-course experience
- Sharing of aspirations and expectations from the programme
- The process of choosing different universities – strengths and weaknesses of different courses
- The application and interview process
- Module choices at university
- Worries about skills or experience
- The job hunting process

Meet Ups – Although the programme is intended to act as a 'virtual' relationship, you may live close enough to your mentor or mentee that a real life meeting is a possibility. Please see the guidelines for personal safety information. Your mentor may be able to arrange a visit to their place of work, if the mentee would be interested in visiting different types of archival/records management institutions. You may be able to go along together to an ARA meeting or training session which means the room contains a friendly face and not just strangers. Mentees should not expect this however, and mentors should not feel under undue pressure to provide such experiences. Mentors could also highlight local or regional ARA meetings which the mentee may want to join.



**Archives & Records  
Association**  
UK & Ireland

## **Section for New Professionals**

If there is interest from those involved in the programme, the SfNP may be able to arrange a group meeting for members of the programme.



## How to join the Peer Pals programme

If you have any questions prior to joining the programme, please address them to the SfNP Careers Officer who coordinates the scheme at [newprofessionals@archives.org.uk](mailto:newprofessionals@archives.org.uk), indicating 'Peer Pals Programme' in the subject line.

To join the programme please fill in either the mentor or mentee profile form.

## Peer Pals Mentor profile form

If you would like to be a mentor please fill in the form below. Please return completed forms to [newprofessionals@archives.org.uk](mailto:newprofessionals@archives.org.uk), indicating 'Peer Pals Programme' in the subject line.

The Peer Pals programme provides mentors with the opportunity to share their experience and specialist knowledge with interested individuals. We would like to hear from you if you think you have advice and guidance to offer to those at an earlier stage in their career. Please note you must be within five years of your graduation to take part as a mentor.

The purpose of this form is to understand a little more about your professional experience and interests. We also want to understand what you expect from the scheme so that we can make the most appropriate match.



<b>Peer Pals Mentor Profile Form</b>	
<b>Name, email address</b>	
<b>ARA membership number</b>	
<b>University Attended</b> <b>Qualification</b> (BA/MA/Hdip) <b>Mode of Study</b> (FT/PT/DL <sup>1</sup> ) <b>Date of qualification</b>	
<b>Why do you want to be a mentor and what do you hope to get out of the programme?</b>	
<b>What topics do you think you could share with a mentee?</b>	
<b>What are your professional/special interests?</b>	
<b>Current Employment</b> E.g. Organisation and Job Title	
<b>Past Employment</b> E.g. Organisation and Job Title	
<b>Volunteering/Placement</b> E.g. Organisation and Job Title	

<sup>1</sup> FT = Full Time, PT= Part Time, DL = Distance Learning



<p>Is there any other information you would like to share?</p>	
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**Disclaimer:**

I understand that my details will be stored and used for the purposes of matching me with a mentee on the Peer Pals programme. Once my involvement in the process finishes, the SfNP will remove my details from their records.

Signed..... Date.....





## **Peer Pals Mentee profile form**

If you would like to be a mentee please fill in the form below. Please return completed forms to [newprofessionals@archives.org.uk](mailto:newprofessionals@archives.org.uk), indicating 'Peer Pals Programme' in the subject line.

We would like to hear from you whatever stage you are at: whether you're just starting out, been volunteering for a number of years or already a student on a professional course. The SfNP Peer Pals programme provides mentees with the opportunity to get answers to their questions, advice around career options and entry routes to the profession, networking opportunities and career progression guidance.

The purpose of this form is to understand a little more about what stage you are at in terms of your career in archives, records management or conservation. We also want to understand what you expect from the scheme so that we can make the most appropriate match.



<b>Peer Pals Mentee Profile Form</b>	
<b>Name, age, email address</b>	
<b>ARA membership number</b>	
<b>What stage are you at in terms of your career in archives, records management or conservation?</b>	
<b>Why do you want to be mentored, and what do you hope to get out of the programme?</b>	
<b>Do you have any specific questions?</b>	
<b>Are you interested in any of the professional courses? If so which one(s).</b>	
<b>Experience to date</b> E.g. Organisation and Job Title, Organisation and placement length.	
<b>What are your professional/special interests?</b>	



<p><b>Is there any other information you would like to share?</b></p>	
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**Disclaimer:**

I understand that my details will be stored and used for the purposes of matching me with a mentor on the Peer Pals programme. Once my involvement in the process finishes, the SfNP will remove my details from their records.

Signed..... Date.....



### Tips for a successful Peer Pals relationship

- *Method* - Decide which method of communication you most prefer, whether this is through email, instant messaging, private message on Facebook or Twitter, Skype chat or the occasional meeting for a coffee.
- *First Contact* – Mentees should make the initial contact to their mentors, and both parties should attempt to keep in touch at least once a month, depending on work/life commitments. You may want to include some background about your professional life.
- *Manage Expectations* - You should always try to manage expectations of your mentee or mentor. Mentees should have patience and not always expect an immediate answer to emails. Mentors should manage expectations in their emails, if work is busy, tell a mentee ‘I’ll get back to you next week’, or ‘I’ll be quiet for a couple of weeks because...’
- *Confidentiality* – Neither party should disclose confidential information to the other. If mentors and mentees are referring to third parties in order to access information or advice, the name of your mentor/mentee should not be disclosed.
- *Professionalism* – It goes without saying that in a professional style mentoring relationship, you should keep to professional standards in all communications.

### Leaving the Peer Pals Programme

As a mentor or mentee you are entitled to leave the Peer Pals programme at any time. We would ask that you inform the SfNP if you would like to leave the programme via the email address [newprofessionals@archives.org.uk](mailto:newprofessionals@archives.org.uk). The SfNP would also ask that you inform your mentor/mentee of your intention to leave the programme if you have been matched.

If the SfNP is kept informed of your intended departure we will:

- Notify your mentor/mentee (if applicable).
- Not match you up with prospective mentors/mentees.
- Remove you from the list and delete your personal information.
- Stop sending you updates about the scheme.

If you feel that your Peer Pals relationship is not working for any reason, please let the SfNP know at the email address above, and we will reassign you to a different mentor/mentee.



## Guidelines for the Peer Pals Programme

### Personal Safety

Please take responsibility for your personal safety, especially if face to face meetings between mentors and mentees take place. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust has some great information on maintaining personal safety when meeting someone you've met on the internet (<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety/personal-safety-tips/internet-safety/>). Above all, do not feel under pressure to meet up in person.

The programme is only open to ARA members. A certain amount of personal information is required to participate in the programme. The aim of the programme is to match adult participants, but this does not form a recommendation about the character or trustworthiness of individuals participating. A sensible approach to sharing personal information is recommended, beyond names and email addresses which will be exchanged as part of the programme.

### Data Protection

The SfNP will hold details about you on the mentoring Expression of Interest form, the profile form you complete and the matching spreadsheet used to link mentors and mentees. This data is only accessible to the programme co-ordinators. We will attempt to keep your information up to date by periodically checking your details with you. If you request your details to be deleted from the scheme, this will be completed within 5 days. Otherwise your details will be deleted when you inform us of the end of a Peer Pals relationship or when you are no longer eligible for the programme.

### Programme Co-ordination

The Peer Pals programme was set up by the Section for New Professionals, and is co-ordinated by the SfNP's Careers Officer. The Careers Officer is available to contact via the SfNP email address [newprofessionals@archives.org.uk](mailto:newprofessionals@archives.org.uk). Their role on the Peer Pals programme involves making the initial matches between mentors and mentees, providing guidance and assistance via email where needed and keeping in touch with participants on a regular basis to make sure that the programme is running smoothly.