

# Training and Educating Professional Archivists and Records Managers in Belarus

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## *ABSTRACT*

The article is devoted to the formation and development of training and educating system for professional archivists and records managers in Belarus since 1991, when the country became independent. The author defines the conditions in which the educational process started, reveals the basic forms and directions of education and training, as well as the links between the state archives and educational establishments. Taking into consideration that according to the national legislation Belarusian archives are scientific institutions, special attention is paid to the training of scientific personnel in the sphere of archival science and record management. The article does not ignore the problems preventing the better educational and training process in the country, and offers possible solutions.

**Key words:** training, education, Belarus, archival science, records management

Formazione ed educazione degli archivisti professionisti e dei gestori di documenti in Bielorussia

## *SINTESI*

L'articolo è dedicato alla formazione e allo sviluppo d'insegnamento e del sistema d'istruzione per archivisti professionisti e gestori di documenti in Bielorussia dal 1991, quando il Paese divenne indipendente. L'autore definisce le condizioni in cui il processo educativo è iniziato, rivela le forme di base e le indicazioni di istruzione e formazione, nonché i collegamenti tra l'Archivio di Stato e gli istituti di istruzione. Tenendo in considerazione che secondo la legislazione nazionale bielorusa, gli archivi sono istituzioni scientifiche, particolare attenzione è rivolta alla formazione di personale scientifico nell'ambito della scienza archivistica e gestione dei documenti. L'articolo non ignora i problemi che impediscono il processo di miglioramento dell'istruzione e formazione nel Paese ed offre soluzioni possibili.

**Parole chiave:** formazione, educazione, Bielorussia, scienza archivistica, gestione documentale

Usposabljanje in izobraževanje arhivistov in delavcev, ki delajo z dokumentarnim gradivom v Belorusiji

## *IZVLEČEK*

Prispevek obravnava nastanek in razvoj usposabljanja in izobraževanja za arhiviste in delavce, ki delajo z dokumentarnim gradivom v Belorusiji od leta 1991, ko se je država osamosvojila. Avtor opredeljuje pogoje, v katerih se je začel izobraževalni proces, razkriva osnovne oblike in smernice izobraževanja in usposabljanja, kot tudi povezave med državnimi arhivi in izobraževalnimi ustanovami. Ob upoštevanju dejstva, da so Beloruski arhivi v skladu z nacionalno zakonodajo znanstvene institucije, namenja posebno pozornost usposabljanju znanstvenega osebja na področju arhivistike in upravljanja z dokumentarnim gradivom. V prispevku pa so predstavljene tudi težave, ki preprečujejo boljši vzgojno-izobraževalni proces v državi, in ponujene možne rešitve.

**Ključne besede:** usposabljanje, izobraževanje, Belorusija, arhivistika, dokumentologija

Навучанне і падрыхтоўка прафесійных кадраў архівістаў і кіраўнікоў дакументацыяй у Беларусі

### РЭЗЮМЭ

У артыкуле разглядаюцца пытанні стварэння і развіцця сістэмы падрыхтоўкі кадраў прафесійных кадраў архівістаў і кіруючых дакументацыяй у Рэспубліцы Беларусь пасля 1991 г., калі краіна набыла незалежнасць. Раскрываюцца умовы, у якіх адбывалася станаўленне сістэмы падрыхтоўкі кадраў, асноўныя формы і накірункі падрыхтоўкі кадраў, сувязі архіваў з устаноўмі адукацыі. З улікам таго, што у адпаведнасці з нацыянальным заканадаўствам архівы з'яўляюцца навуковымі устаноўмі, асабліва ўвага ў артыкуле надаецца падрыхтоўке навуковых кадраў вышэйшай кваліфікацыі ў галіне дакументазнаўства і архівазнаўства. У артыкуле не пакінуты без увагі праблемы, якія перашкаджаюць якаснай падрыхтоўке прафесійных кадраў архівістаў і кіруючых дакументацыяй у Беларусі, прапануюцца магчымыя шляхі іх вырашэння.

## 1 Introduction

The success of any activity is based on observance of four conditions. The first is precise understanding of the purpose of activity, and also of the tasks to be solved for its achievement. The second is legal framework for corresponding activity. The third shall be availability of the required financial and material resources. And finally the fourth, but no less important condition, is the presence of people who can use the available resources and solve the tasks set.

Archives management is defined as an activity on creation and acquisition of archives, organization of accumulation, storage, stock-taking and use of archival documents [1, point 3.1.2]. Its purpose is preservation retrospective documentary information having scientific, social, economic, political and/or cultural value, and provision of such information to citizens, society and State. The legal basis of archival management is Law “*On Archival and Records Management in the Republic of Belarus*” [2], with its provisions developed in a number of legislative acts [3]. A network of state and territorial (city and regional) archives has been created in Belarus. The archival law demands formation of archives also in all the state bodies and other organizations of the country. The state and territorial archives are financed from the state budget, while archives of the organizations are maintained at its own expense. Archives are stuffed with personnel.

Thus, the necessary conditions are created in Belarus for the solution of problems in the sphere of archives management. However, the tasks the archives are facing recently, have got considerably complicated, the requirements to the quality of performed archival works have been increased. This sets new requirements to the level of knowledge and professional training of archivists. In these conditions education and training of professional staff of archivists and records managers becomes especially topical. For this reason training and professional improvement of the staff are referred by the country's archival law to the basic trends of activity in the sphere of archives and record management [2, Art. 7]. This article is devoted just to the analysis of this major component of the general success in achievement of the purpose and goals of archives management.

## 2 Formation and development of the staff training system in Belarus

The first attempts to organise education and training of professional archivists in Belarus go back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1911 on the initiative of the local scientific archival committee a branch of the Moscow Archaeological Institute was opened in Vitebsk, to train archivists-archaeographers alongside with archaeologists and art historians [4, pp. 48; 5, pp. 120-121].

The branch has been working till 1922. After closing of all archeologic institutes in the Soviet Russia (in Moscow, Petrograd and Kiev), professional training for the Belarusian archives was performed mainly through the archival courses operating at the Central Archive of Russia. The attempts to organise in the middle of the 1920s training of archivists at archival seminars at socio-historical branch of Pedagogical Department of the Belarusian State University (BSU), were not successful: the seminars were conducted irregularly, the circle of their participants was highly limited [5, p. 122].

In 1933 the Central Archival Department of Belarus took the decision on the organisation of the Chair of Archival Science at the Minsk Higher Pedagogical Institute [5, pp.122-123]. In 1939 the

recommendation to raise the issue about training of the archival staff before the corresponding governmental bodies was put forward on one of scientific conferences [6, p. 145]. However, none of these ideas has been realised.

Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the BSSR dated April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1945 assigned the National Commissariat of Education of the BSSR to create within the BSU Historical Department a "*Historical Archival Branch*" with the admission plan of 20 persons. The people graduating from this branch were supposed to be assigned to the management of archival service of Belarus. However, this decision has not been realised because of the negative attitude to it from the All-Union Committee on Higher School in Moscow [4, pp. 48; 5, p. 123]. Only short-term archival practice has been introduced at the BSU Historical Department, and a small optional course of lectures on archival science has been delivered in the late 1950s - the early 1960s [6, p. 175].

Thus, by the early 1990s training of the professional staff for archives of Belarus has been performed only in the Moscow State Historical and Archival Institute (MSHAI) created in 1930. However, the staff prepared in Moscow was drastically insufficient. Only for last 10 years of Belarus being part of the USSR (1980-1990) the number of managers and experts in the state archives having higher historical and archival education has reduced by one and half times. The urgency of the problem was only partially mitigated by the extension courses organised at the Main Archival Department at the Council of Ministers of the BSSR (BSSR *Glavarkhiv*), and also by one-year correspondence courses at MSHAI [6, p. 226].

For improvement of the situation, in the 1980s some central and regional state archives have been assigned as basic ones for traineeship of students of the Belarusian, Grodno and Gomel state universities. Since 1981 the course "Bases of Soviet Archival Science" has been launched at the Grodno University for the students of historical department, and since 1987 the course "Archival Science" - at the Gomel University for correspondence department students [6, pp. 226-227].

After disintegration of the USSR in 1991 the inflow to the Belarusian archives of experts with higher archival education from Moscow has stopped at all. Creation of the system of training of professional archivists became one of the priority tasks of the archival service of Belarus. According to the resolution of the Ministry of Education and Science of Belarus, since September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1992 the section of archival science has started its work at the BSU Historical Department, and on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1993 speciality "*Historical Archival Science*" was approved by the order of the Minister of Education [4, p. 48].

In the 1990s up-to-date technologies have been more widely used in the work with documents, having set new goals before archives connected with reception, stock-taking, preservation and use of electronic documents. The solution of these problems at a qualitative level is only possible in the conditions of management of full life cycle of the electronic document, starting from the moment of creation and ending by the organization of its use after receipt for storage in archive. Therefore in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the archival service began to pay heightened attention to the issues of records management, which has also demanded to provide training of the professional record managers. In 2001 under the initiative of archival service a professional training in speciality "*Records Management*" was started at the BSU Historical Department [5, p.123].

### 3 Basic forms of education and training of the professional staff

Training of professional staff is carried out in two basic forms: high school education of experts and professional improvement of workers of state archives and record management services.

3.1 High school education makes the basis for staffing the archives with the young personnel. The annual admission plan for the state budgetary higher education at the BSU Historical Department is 15 students to speciality "*Historical Archival Science*" and 15 students to speciality "*Records Management*". About the same number of students can annually receive free (state budgetary) education in both specialities by correspondence. Substantial number of students is trained for their own means, and such students give priority to the latter speciality.

The first graduation of historians-archivists in BSU took place in 1996, and records managers -

in 2006. All in all within the 1996-2013 period 581 persons have received the diplomas of historians-archivists, and 590 - records managers. The university graduates who has received education at the state budget expense, are assigned to the state archival institutions, and also to the archives and services of records management of the state bodies, other state organizations. The graduates trained for their own means also come to archival institutions.

Since 2006 education of archivists and record managers in the BSU has been also carried out within the framework of a post-graduate (master's) programme, which assumes a profound training of the expert. Since 2012 the master's course has been divided into scientifically-focused and practice-focused. Within the first one the candidates for a master's degree pass the curriculum in speciality "*Documentation science, Records Management, Archival Science*" and receive the degree of the Master of Historical Sciences. Training in the scientifically-focused magistracy assumes preparation of students to the future scientific activity and includes passing of qualifying examinations for getting a degree of the Candidate of Science. Within the framework of the practice-focused programme the candidates for a master's degree are trained in speciality "*Records and Archives Management*" and receive the degree of the Master of Management. Such training assumes preparation of students to the future practical activities in the sphere of records management in various organizations, including archives. 13 persons have received the Master's Degree within the 2007-2013 period.

Education of experts is coordinated by the Chair of Source Studies. The basis of professional training of the future archivists and records managers are historical subjects. The subjects connected with special archives and records management training are studied by students mainly in their senior years. The Master's Course deals exclusively with specialized subjects. In the scientifically-focused section such general educational subjects as philosophy, foreign language and bases of information technologies are added.

Close cooperation is maintained between the BSU Historical Department and the state archival institutions. Curricula and courses of lectures on many archival science and records management subjects are developed and read to students by the most qualified experts of the Department on Archives and Records Management of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus (Department on Archives), the Belarusian Scientific and Research Institute for Documentation and Archival Science (BelNIIDAD), the Belarusian Research Center of Electronic Documentation (BelNITsED), the state archives. Workers of archival service have taken especially active part in the development of curricula and courses of lectures in the first years after opening of profile specialities, which was owing to the absence of corresponding qualified scientific and pedagogical staff among the Chair personnel and in the Historical Department as a whole.

The links strengthened between the university and archival service have resulted in the opening of a branch of the Chair of Source Studies in BelNIIDAD in 2012.

Students have their training on a regular basis in the state archives, BelNIIDAD, BelNITsED. Close cooperation allows the heads of the state archival institutions to select the most promising students and to offer them the job already in their senior years at the university.

It should be noted that the historians-archivists educated in the BSU have better general historical background, more profound knowledge of the history of archives and archaeography, better trained in the sphere of scientific use of documents and documentary information. Records managers have better command of information technologies, are more qualified in the sphere of electronic document and circulation of records, have better legal background.

3.2 The second important form of education and professional training is professional improvement of archivists and records managers. Various forms and methods are used for achievement of this goal.

3.2.1 The key form of professional improvement is holding of training seminars organized by the Department on Archives with involvement of the most qualified experts of archival institutions. Whenever possible, experts from foreign states are invited to participation in seminars. Periodicity of seminars is not established, as a rule, they are organized annually.

The themes of seminars are diverse. In the recent years the emphasis has been made on the range

of problems connected with introduction of modern information technologies in the practical work of archives. The focus on this sphere is not occasional and is caused by the objective needs of archives. At the 20<sup>th</sup> International scientific and practical conference “Documentation in an Informational Society: Efficient Control of Electronic Documents” held in Moscow in November, 2013, Mr. O.V.Naumov, Deputy Head of the Federal Archival Service of Russia, marked that at present in a number of archives the need for IT experts already exceeded the need for traditional archivists. In the conditions of low-level wages in the archives one of the ways of solution of this problem could be training of archivists in information technologies [7, p. 22].

Another important subject of training seminars is preservation of documents. The most challenging issue here is restoration of documents. The lack of qualified restorers has always been a painful point of archival service, which was highlighted as far back as 1970-80s [6, p. 209]. In this context we should note a joint Belarusian-Russian seminar held in May, 2013 in Minsk, with participation of experts of Laboratory of Microfilming and Restoration of Documents of the Russian State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation. The master-class on restoration of the integrity of documents by the method of manual fill-up of paper mass was given within the seminar framework. All interested persons could participate directly in this process [8].

The seminars are also focused on other kinds of archival work, including those connected with the analysis of changes of the normative and methodological base regulating this sphere. The training seminars on professional improvement of workers of the state archives are also held in the regions.

3.2.2 An important form of professional improvement is participation of the Belarusian archivists in the international training seminars, courses, etc.

Among them the primary importance have the seminars organised by the All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute of Archives and Records Management (VNIIDAD) which is assigned as the basic organization on retraining and professional improvement of staff in records management and archival science of the Commonwealth of Independent States. All in all 18 Belarusian archivists have taken part in VNIIDAD's training seminars within the 2005-2013 period.

The Belarusian archivists also raise their qualification at correspondence, full-time and short-term courses on Archival Science and Records Management, held by the VNIIDAD Sectoral Training Centre. In 2005-2013 10 persons have been trained at these courses.

Archivists of Belarus periodically participate in the international technical training in France, held for French and international experts in the field of archival work, had training within the framework of the Autumn Archival School organized by the International Institute of Archival Science in Trieste and Maribor (IIAS).

3.2.3 One of the forms of professional improvement of archival workers is their participation in scientific and practical conferences on the problems of archival science and records management. Participation in the conferences allows archivists not only to get familiar with urgent problems of archival work, but also with possible ways of its solution, including foreign practice. It is not occasional that for the students trained at the Autumn Archival School in Trieste, participation in the preceding scientific conference of the International Archival Day is obligatory.

In Belarus the scientific archival conferences are organized mainly by BelNIIDAD. Archival conferences in Belarus are held no less than once in three years, with collections of materials published on their results.

Belarusian archivists also participate in the international archival conferences on regular basis. For example, they are permanent participants in annual conferences of the Euroasian Regional Branch of the International Council of Archives EURASICA (held by rotation in different member-countries of this regional MCA branch), conferences under the general name “Documentation in an Information Society” (held by the Federal Archival Service of Russia and VNIIDAD in Moscow), the conferences of the International Archival Day organized by IIAS in Trieste. Participation of representatives of the Belarusian archival institutions in the international conferences of archives of the Slavonic countries in Ljubljana and Lipica has already become traditional.

3.2.4 The institute of tutorship remains the major form of professional improvement of the archival staff. The quality of high school education of profile experts and their readiness for practical work in archives do not fully correspond to the current requirements. Besides, some archives, due to specificity of its profile, are actively stuffed with graduates from other university departments and high schools, not only from the BSU Historical Department. For example, the Belarusian State Archive-Museum of the Literature and Art regularly invites to work the experts with the higher philological education, the Belarusian State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation - with technical one.

It is obvious that for full-fledged mastering of archivist profession young workers need to receive not only basic knowledge, but also practical skills, experience which can be passed to them most effectively by more skilled colleagues.

3.2.5 Self-education has still been an indispensable condition of professional improvement of the modern archivist. Self-education is a multidimensional concept including education in higher school by correspondence, participation in seminars and scientific conferences, and consultations with colleagues on practical issues of archival work. However, it also assumes independent studying of normative and methodological acts in the sphere of archival work and records management, of special scientific and practical literature.

The importance of self-education has long been realised by the Belarusian archivists. As far back as 1956 “with a view of professional improvement of the staff, replenishment of shortage of the methodological literature and exchange of experience” the joint resolution of the Council of Ministers of the BSSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus authorised the Archival Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the BSSR (the main archival body of Belarus at that time) to publish its own “Newsletter” [6, p. 175].

At present quite a sufficient number of periodicals is published in the system of archival service of Belarus, in which theoretical and methodical issues of archival work and records management are reflected. From the methodological point the leading position is occupied by “*Arkhivy i spravavodstva*” (“*Archives and Records management*”) journal, founded by the Department on Archives and Record Management (published since 1999 once in two months). Since 2000 BelNIIDAD has published “*Belaruski arkheografichny shtogodnik*” (“*Belarusian Archaeographic Yearbook*”), in which the priority is given to theoretical problems of archival science, records management and archaeography (published once a year). Since 2001 the National Historical Archive of Belarus has been publishing year-book “*Arkhyvnyyus*” (“*Archivist*”), in which documents and scientific articles on the history of Belarus and its archives since the most ancient times up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are published.

All three editions were assigned the international standard number of the serial edition by the ISSN International Centre, and all of them are also included in the List of scientific editions of the Republic of Belarus for publication of the results of dissertational research in historical science.

One of the actions stimulating self-education of archivists is contest “*The Best Archivist of Belarus*”. It has already become traditional. The contest is conducted by the Department on Archives and the Belarusian Society of Archivists (BSA) once in two years in the on-site and off-site forms. By its results the winners are awarded the diplomas of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degrees, prizes of the BSA Board and money reward for account of the corresponding state archival institution.

3.2.6 Actions on professional improvement should not cover only workers of the state archives. The archival law obliges all the state bodies, and also other organizations of the country to create archives for storage of the archival documents formed in their activity [1, Art. 12]. The principles of continuity in the work in the state archives and in the archives of organizations are stipulated in the legislative acts regulating their work [9, points 81, 145, 156; 10, points 206, 232]. In these conditions training and professional improvement of workers of archives and services of records management of the organizations are no less important than professional development of workers of the state archives.

Professional improvement of this category of workers is mainly realised by means of thematic training seminars. BelNIIDAD occupies the leading positions in the organization of such seminars:

only in the 2005-2013 period 78 seminars have been conducted, with over 2000 persons trained. Regional state archives conduct similar practice-focused seminars.

#### 4 Training of personnel with the higher scientific qualification

Since 1994 the archival law has assigned to the state archives the status of the research and methodological centres for the work with documents of the National Archival Fond of the Republic of Belarus [11, Art. 20]. The status of the state archive as a scientific organization poses increased requirements to the qualification level of its workers. In these conditions the issue of training for archival institutions of not only practical professionals, but experts of the higher scientific qualification (scientists) becomes the priority.

During Soviet time the basic scientific potential of the state archives was composed of the scientists, who have defended the dissertations on the history of Belarus. This category of scientists, as a rule, was not connected with an archival problematic and perceived it mainly from the point of the user of archival documents. The research in the field of source study, diplomatics and other special historical subjects is the closest to the purposes and problems of archives; however, training of professional scientists of corresponding specialization in Belarus up to the late 1990s was carried out only by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and some universities. No training of scientists-archivists and records managers was performed in Belarus at all.

To satisfy the needs of the state archival institutions in the scientific staff of the highest qualification, it was decided to open post-graduate study at BelNIIDAD. Since 1999 training of scientific workers of the highest qualification has begun at BelNIIDAD's post-graduate course in specialities 05.25.02 - Documentation Science, Records Management, Archival Science (historical sciences) and 07.00.09 - Historiography, Source Study and Methods of Historical Research (historical sciences) [12, pp. 23-24]. 65 persons have entered the post graduate course at BelNIIDAD within the 1999-2013 period.

Since 2010 training of scientific staff in speciality 05.25.02 has also been started in the BSU post-graduate course (professional training in speciality 07.00.09 in the BSU was carried out before). 1-2 persons are accepted annually for training in speciality 05.25.02 to the BSU post graduate course.

Upon termination of a post-graduate course its graduates receive the diploma of the researcher, and on condition of defence of dissertation they are conferred a scientific degree of the Candidate of Historical Sciences, which is an intermediate step between scientific degrees of the Ph.D. and the Doctor of Sciences.

#### 5 The basic problems

Despite the successes reached in the recent years in the sphere of education and professional training, there is a number of unresolved problems.

5.1 For many years the problem of retaining of the young professionally trained staff in the state archival institutions has been the main one. The analysis of their personnel structure shows that the portion of experts with the higher profile education in the total number of heads and experts remains low and has varied within 12 to 18% in the last 10 years. Moreover, the young specialists educated for the budgetary funds, are obliged to work for no less than two years in the state archival establishments of the country, which theoretically should promote their staying in archival institutions for longer term.

This problem is obviously outside the sphere of professional training as such and is mainly caused by the social and economic reasons. The major one is the low level of wages of archival workers. In the conditions when external demand for the qualified archivists and records managers is very high, outflow of young experts from the state archives to higher paid jobs in archives and services of records management of commercial organisations (for example, banks) is observed.

5.2 The level of university education of archivists and records managers leaves much to be desired (first of all, its practical component).

The principal cause of it seems to be the fact that in Belarus till the present day the national scientific schools of records management and archival science are only in a stage of formation. Scientific schools create the basis for the solution of various professional issues, including provision of continuity in the educational process and in its content.

The level of high school education of experts is also affected by other factors: lack of quality guidance manuals (textbooks, training aids, etc.), though the management of the BSU Historical Department has recently undertaken effective steps for solution of this problem; high workload of teachers, which does not allow them to give enough attention to scientific and methodological work; the general educational level of university entrants, which has essentially reduced in the recent years, in many respects owing to sometimes inconsistent reforms of the general secondary education.

5.3 The issue of over-all professional improvement of archivists remains a problem. Thematic seminars are short-term (organised for 1-2 days), they do not cover the whole range of the problems facing the archives, they have a narrow target audience and therefore allow solving only local problems. At the same time in the conditions of constantly changing normative and technological environment of the activity of archives, and also inflow to archives of the workers without basic archival education, periodic training of archivists in the whole range of archival work is required.

In Soviet time this problem was solved by means of the extension (refresher) courses for archival workers, which operated at the *BSSR Glavarkhiv*. After adoption in 2002 of new version of Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Education" such form of professional improvement in the archival system became impossible. Revised version of the law and also the Code of the Republic of Belarus "On Education" adopted instead of it in 2011, refer professional improvement to licensed activity and permit its organization in any form only in an educational establishment [13, Art. 245].

At present there is no independent educational establishment in archival system of Belarus, and its creation in the near future does not seem possible by virtue of objective reasons. In this connection the organization of over-all professional improvement of the workers of state archival institutions with awarding of the statutory document on education becomes impossible.

5.4 Serious problems remain in the sphere of education of scientific staff in the field of archival science and records management. One should recognize that the post-graduate course operating at BelNIIDAD within the 2000-2013 period, has not come up to expectations. Out of 65 post-graduate students and competitors entered the post-graduate course in this period, only 20 managed to graduate. From them only 2 persons have defended dissertations and have received a scientific degree of the Candidate of Science, while two more dissertations have been at different times recommended to defence, however not defended till now.

The efforts undertaken by the management of BelNIIDAD and the Department on Archives to increase the efficiency of the post-graduate course activity have not yielded a desirable result. Eventually the post-graduate course at BelNIIDAD was closed since November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 by the order of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus. Education of scientific staff of the highest qualification in profile specialities for the state archival establishments is now carried out only in the BSU post-graduate course; however, it is too early to speak about its efficiency.

The absence in Belarus of a scientific council on defence of dissertations in speciality 05.25.02 "Documentation Science, Records Management, Archival Science" also complicates preparation of the scientific staff for archival establishments. The young scientists who have prepared the thesis in this speciality, are compelled to search for opportunities for the organization of a one-time defence in non-profile Belarusian councils with invitation of profile experts from abroad. However, the management of non-profile councils, being poorly familiar with specificity of records management and archival science, are reluctant to accept such dissertations for defence. As a result some dissertations remain not defended, though prepared at a fairly high level on the problematics topical for records management and archival science.

## 6 Conclusion

The system of education and professional training of archivists and records managers in Belarus includes a complex of the interconnected components. The basis of professional training is the profile education received at a university. Various forms can be used for further professional improvement, however self-education seems to be the crucial one. Only aspiration to new knowledge, acquiring new skills can provide professional growth of the specialist. All other forms of training only create conditions for realization of this aspiration.

Training of qualified personnel for archival establishments is a complex process connected with a number of problems. Among them we should name some inconsistent reforms of secondary and higher education, lack of qualified scientific and pedagogical staff, insufficiency of quality educational and methodological aids, etc. However, the main problem seems to be the absence of fully formed national scientific schools of records management and archival science, which are to create the basis for the content of educational activity.

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*SUMMARY*

The system of education and professional training of archivists and records managers in Belarus includes a complex of the interconnected components. The basis of professional training is the profile education received at a university. Various forms can be used for further professional improvement. Domestic and international training seminars, courses, scientific and practical conferences, institute of tutorship are among them. However self-education seems to be the crucial one. Only aspiration to new knowledge, acquiring new skills can provide professional growth of the specialist. All other forms of training only create conditions for realization of this aspiration. Training of qualified personnel for archival establishments is a complex process connected with a number of problems. Among them we should name some inconsistent reforms of secondary and higher education, lack of qualified scientific and pedagogical staff, insufficiency of quality educational and methodological aids, etc. However, the main problem seems to be the absence of fully formed national scientific schools of records management and archival science, which are to create the basis for the content of educational activity.

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