

# The Current Situation of Pre-Service Training of Human Resource for Archives in Vietnam

*ĐOAN THI HOA, Ph.D.*

Vice Dean - Department of Archives and Records Management, Hanoi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam,  
Viet Nam - Ha Noi, 36 Xuan La Str., Tay Ho District, Website: [truongnoivu.edu.vn](http://truongnoivu.edu.vn)  
e-mail: [hoadhmv@gmail.com](mailto:hoadhmv@gmail.com)

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### *ABSTRACT*

This article introduces the current training of human resources in archives in Vietnam. The author will focus on clarifying the following issues:

- Overview of archive system of Vietnam;
- The history of archive human resource training in Vietnam. Modern society demand for archive human resources.
- Archive human resource training levels: vocational training, college training, university training and training for postgraduate students (master and doctor); introduction of a number of typical training institutions.
- Analysis of current archive training program: strong points and weaknesses.
- The issue of urgency of changing the training program towards modern technology. The process of the program transformation to meet the needs of society.
- Conclusion on the achievements and the problems posed in the training of archive human resources in Vietnam.

**Key words:** Vietnam, Hanoi, University of Home Affairs, woodblocks, pre-service training, archives

Lo stato attuale della formazione pre-lavorativa delle risorse umane per l'archivio in Vietnam

### *SINTESI*

Questo articolo introduce l'attuale formazione delle risorse umane negli archivi del Vietnam. L'autore si concentrerà sul chiarire i seguenti aspetti:

- Panoramica del sistema di archivio del Vietnam;
- La storia della formazione delle risorse umane di archivio nel Vietnam. La domanda della società moderna di risorse umane nell'archivio;
- Livelli di formazione delle risorse umane in archivio: formazione professionale, formazione superiore, formazione universitaria e formazione per studenti post-laurea (master e dottorato); introduzione di un numero di tipici istituti di formazione.
- Analisi del programma di formazione dell'archivio corrente: punti di forza e debolezze.
- La questione dell'urgenza di cambiare il programma di formazione verso la moderna tecnologia. Il processo di trasformazione del programma per soddisfare le esigenze della società.
- Conclusione sulle realizzazioni e i problemi posti nella formazione delle risorse umane archivistiche in Vietnam.

**Parole chiave:** Vietnam, Hanoi, Università per il Ministero dell'interno, matrici in legno, formazione pre-servizio, archivi

Trenutno stanje na področju usposabljanja človeških virov za potrebe arhivov v Vietnamu

### *IZVLEČEK*

Avtor v prispevku predstavlja trenutno stanje na področju usposabljanja človeških virov v arhivih v Vietnamu. V prispevku se avtor loteva tem, kot so pregled arhivske službe Vietnama, zgodovina izobraževanja v arhivih v Vietnamu, vključno z zahtevami sodobna družbe v zvezi s arhivskimi človeškimi viri, različni nivoji arhivskega izobraževanja: poklicno usposabljanje, višje strokovno izobraževanje, univerzitetni študij in podiplomski študij (magistrski in doktorski študij), predstavitev tipičnih izobraževalnih ustanov, analiza trenutnega izobraževalnega

programa vključno z odlikami in slabostmi, vprašanje nujnosti spreminjanja izobraževalnega programa glede na sodobne tehnologije, preoblikovanje programa v smislu potrebe družbe itd. Na koncu avtor prinaša zaključke o dosežkih in problemih pri usposabljanju izobraževanju arhivistov v Vietnamu.

**Ključne besede:** Vietnam, Hanoi, Univerza za notranje zadeve, lesene ploščice, pred izobraževanje, arhiv

### Đào tạo nguồn nhân lực lưu trữ ở Việt Nam hiện nay

#### TÓM TẮT

Bài viết giới thiệu công tác đào tạo nguồn nhân lực lưu trữ ở Việt Nam hiện nay. Tác giả sẽ tập trung làm rõ những vấn đề sau:

- Khái quát hệ thống lưu trữ Việt Nam;
  - Lịch sử đào tạo nguồn nhân lực lưu trữ ở Việt Nam. Nhu cầu xã hội về nguồn nhân lực lưu trữ Việt Nam hiện nay;
  - Các bậc đào tạo nguồn nhân lực lưu trữ Việt Nam: trung cấp, cao đẳng, đại học và sau đại học (thạc sỹ và tiến sỹ); giới thiệu một số cơ sở đào tạo điển hình;
  - Phân tích chương trình đào tạo lưu trữ hiện nay của Việt Nam: ưu điểm và hạn chế;
  - Tính cấp thiết của việc chuyển đổi chương trình đào tạo định hướng công nghệ hiện đại. Quá trình thực hiện chuyển đổi chương trình đào tạo để đáp ứng nhu cầu xã hội;
- Kết luận về thành tựu đã đạt được và những vấn đề đặt ra trong đào tạo nguồn nhân lực lưu trữ ở Việt Nam.

## 1 Overview of Archives of Vietnam

Archives of Vietnam is younger and at lower development stage than many other countries' are. Due to historical factors, archives only gained proper attention after the independence of Vietnam from French colonization. However, the subsequent wars with the French in 9 years (1945-1954) and the American in 20-year (1954-1975) hindered significantly the development of the young sector.

After the wars, Vietnam has made great efforts to strengthen its archives systems. Up to date, the archives are relatively well structured. In 2011, Vietnam passed the Archives and Records Law, which marked a new development stage of the nation's archives. All archives of Vietnam, regardless of time, origin, and form or medium, are registered in the National Fonds D'archives of Vietnam. In term of state management, since the 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vietnam has developed a dual system of archives: the Party's Archives (of the Communist Party of Vietnam) and the State Archives. This dual system is confirmed again by 2011 Archives and Records Law. The leader of the Party's Archives is the Records Management and Archives Department of the Office of Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee. The State Archives System is under the governance of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). The State Records Management and Archives Department is an agency under MOHA which have the responsibilities to assist the MOHA in governing the (state) archives (*for more details, see <http://www.archives.gov.vn>*)

Vietnam has four national archives centers, which preserve archival records dated back to early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Nguyen Van Tham et al., 2010). Besides, archives at institutional level are formulated in most of government agencies from the central to local level. Ministries, ministerial-level agencies, and government agencies established Records and Archives Division. The provinces also set up provincial archive departments under the governance of the Provincial Department of Home Affairs. At district level, there are personnel in charge of archives.

With a history of 1000 years under Chinese domination, nearly 6 decades under French colonization, and then 20-year war with the American, archival records of Vietnam are multi-lingual: Traditional Chinese, French, English, and Vietnamese. Traditional Chinese and French archival records mainly dated earlier than 1945 with a large amount. At the present, Vietnam has a National archives center (National Archives Center I) to preserve the records dated before 1945, most of which are in Traditional Chinese and French.

Vietnam possesses a special form of records, which are recognized by UNESCO as a World Documentary Heritage - the woodblocks. This is the first documentary heritage of Vietnam recognized

by UNESCO on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009, including 34.618 woodblocks. Woodblocks are plates of wood on which words written in Chinese or Chinese transcribed Vietnamese were carved in reverse as a popular method of printing books in Nguyen Dynasty in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All the contents were approved and signed by the Emperor before being sent to the most skilled carvers of the country to carve the words on durable wood. These are the unique original records, which are valuable for research in contemporary history and culture of Vietnam.

## 2 History of pre-service training of human resource for archives in Vietnam

After the war with the French ended in 1954, despite of the subsequent war with the American in 20 years later, Vietnam has paid attention to train and develop human resource in archives. At the early stage (1958-1960), Vietnam did not have professionally trained staffs working in archives. To address the issues, we sent people abroad (Soviet Union, the East Germany, etc) for tertiary education in archives and invited expatriate experts to conduct archives training in Vietnam. In 1967, in the harshing conditions of the war, the University of Hanoi developed the Archives and Records management division as a part of the Department of History. The University started to enrol students for this division in 1968 and educated the first generation of archivists of Vietnam, who graduated in 1971. Since then to 1995, Vietnam educated in average 15 students per year (the year of highest enrolment took in 26 students). In 1996, Department of Archival Science and Office Administration was established in Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities- Hanoi National University (the university originated from the former University of Hanoi, and the department was built upon the former division of Archival Science in the Department of History). In the South, Ho Chi Minh city National University<sup>1</sup> started to provide courses in archival sciences in 2003. About 20 students enrolled and graduated in each of the first two courses (Phan Dinh Nham, 2007). In the later courses, the university takes in average 70 under-graduate students each year in its full-time Archival Science program (Hoang Truong, 2011).

## 3 The current situation of pre-service training of human resource for archives in Vietnam

### 3.1 Major training institutions providing archives programs

At the present, Vietnam has two major training institutions in archives and records management. The first is Department of Archival Science and Office Administration of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities- National University of Vietnam (both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city branches), which focuses on theories and research (for more details, see <http://ussh.vnu.edu.vn/>). The later is Hanoi University of Home Affairs (for an overview of the university, see <http://truongnoivu.edu.vn/>). The university was upgraded from the former Hanoi college of Home Affairs in November 2011 which was firstly established in 1971 as a professional training school specializing in records management- archives. The university opened under-graduate courses on archives and records management. While the University of Social Sciences and Humanities focus on theories and research, the University of Home Affairs prioritize practical skills for the persons who will directly conduct specific tasks of records management. Besides, there are some other provincial universities/ colleges provide under-graduate courses in archives and records management. However, their intake and quality are still limited.

### 3.2 Pre-service training programs in archives

#### 3.2.1 Degree types

At the present, Vietnam provides education and training on archives and records management at all level: from vocational training secondary school to doctoral program.

The professional secondary degree program (1-3 years) on archives and records management has been delivered since the 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Until now, the University of Home Affairs still continue to provide this program.

1. Hà Nội - the Capital of Vietnam. Hồ Chí Minh city is the biggest city and a political, socio-economic and cultural center of Vietnam.

The college degree program (3 years) has been delivered since 2005 by the University of Home Affairs (the former College of Home Affairs). By the time of this paper, there are approx. 7000 graduates of this program<sup>2</sup>.

The bachelor degree program (4 years) has been delivered since 1968. Annually, there are 150 students in average graduating from the full-time archival sciences bachelor program of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Hanoi University of Home Affairs provided the first course of this program in 2012 and their first class will graduate in 2015. The average annual intake of the University for this full-time program is approx. 180-200 students.

Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities started its master program on archival sciences in 1998, with 6 students enrolled in the first course. Since then, the average annual intake of this program is approx. 15-20 students.

The targets of the under-graduate programs are high school graduates who will be required to attend the national high education entrance examination. The target of the graduate programs are bachelors who gain distinct results in their undergraduate program and in-service staffs who are working in archives (at central or local levels). Up to date, 4000 bachelors, 100 master students completed their education program on archives and records management in Vietnam. The first generation of doctoral candidates (approx. 15-20 people) are going to complete their PHD program. The learners of these programs not only work in the areas of archives and records management but also involve in administration- office management of governmental agencies at the central and local level as well as enterprises in the business sector. The fact shows that the graduates of these programs meet the requirements of their career and many of them have been developed to be leaders, researchers, and lecturers at training institutions in archives and records management. Besides, Vietnam has trained about 30 Laos and Cambodian archive professionals in the under- graduate and graduate programs (Vu Thi Phung, 2011).

### **3.2.2 Modes of archives and records management program**

At the present, for all levels of training degrees (from professional secondary to doctoral), Vietnam provides two modes of archival training program: full- time program and part- time program for in-service staffs. Full-time program is considered to play a critical role in human resource development of the sector. The part time program is to address the needs of in-service staffs who are doing jobs that require knowledge and skills in archives and records management but cannot attend full-time program. There is no significant difference between the curricula structure and professional knowledge provided by the full-time program and by the part-time program. The part-time program does not include some courses which do not relate directly to archives such as sports and physical education, national defense education, etc. The degrees of the full time program and the part time program have equal value.

### **3.3 Archivist human resource demands in Vietnam**

At the present, there is a great demand of professionally trained human resource in archives, especially bachelors and masters.

In terms of quantity, according to the sector planning reports of the State Records Management and Archives Department, only 20-25% of the sector's personnel got tertiary education in archives. The sector set a target that this statistics will increase to 75-80% by 2020 to boost development of the sector (Decision on approval of the archives and records development plan until 2020 with vision 2030, 2012).

In terms of quality, the current archivists possess knowledge about traditional forms of records which are mainly in form of paper. There is an urgent need to train them to apply high technology to keep up with the rapid technology development in all aspects of the society. In management and office administration, information technology plays an unreplacable role. Application of information technology in office administration and management leads to increased use of electronic documents and

2. Information provided by the Administration Department of Hanoi University of Home Affairs.

electronic communication. Vietnam set a target that by 2020, “90% of all documents and materials that are officially circulated among state administrative agencies will be in electronic form.... Most of communication among state administrative agencies will be conducted in the electronic environment, at any where and at any time, using multi-media mediums; most of public services will be provided online.....” (Resolution promulgating the master program on state administration reform in the 2011-2020 period, 2011). On the 22th May 2012, the Prime Minister of Vietnam issued Directive 15/CT-TTg on enhancing the use of electronic documents in government agencies ‘as a part of administration renovation, developing e-government, transforming from working with paper to working on the internet with electronic documents’. In the meantime, Vietnam is actively developing the ‘electronic single-door mechanism’. Moreover, social organizations and enterprises also enhance application of information technology in their activities, and increase electronic communication to improve work effectiveness.

Applications of automation technology, electronic documents, and electronic communication and circulation have improved significantly the quality of documentation and activities of government agencies as well as social organizations’. As in many other part of the world, electronic documents are replacing paper documents in Vietnam. This implies a challenge for archives sector to preserve digital information as historical evidence and national cultural heritage and experiences. The current human resource in archives have not been able to meet this requirement of modern society and there is an urgent need to address this issue.

### 3.4 Curriculum of archival under graduate programs in Vietnam

#### 3.4.1 Overview

The curriculum of the undergraduate program of Vietnam has been elaborated, developed and used for 40 years. The curriculum was designed with modules to the value of 125-135 credits over a period of 4 years. The curriculum composes of two parts: general education (including politics, social sciences and humanities, foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, environment, etc) and professional education including basic records management and specialization in archives. The curriculum also allocates time for field experience and intership. The professional knowledge on records management focuses on document processing and circulating, in- and out- document management, filing and updating files in the archives, management and use of stamps, etc. The professional archives knowledge includes categorization, collection and valuation of archival records, searching tools development, records preservation, etc. At the present, the curriculum targets at learners who works with traditional records in paper and in diversified areas of administration-office management of government agencies from central to local level as well as of enterprises and social organizations. However, the most significant shortcoming of this curriculum is that it fails to equip learners with knowledge and skills of automation technology, digital records, as well as, electronic data source protection. The fast changes to an informatic society requires Vietnam to develop a pool of archival professionals who can use high technology. This fact creates an urgent demand for training institutions to equip their students with capacity to apply modern technologies in archives with proper theoretical knowledge, necessary methods and skills to work with digital records, digital records transmit and preservation in archives of government agencies as well as enterprises.

#### 3.4.2 Renovation trends of archival training programs

Understanding the urgent need of capacity building in high technology application for archival professionals, Vietnamese training institutions, especially Hanoi University of Home Affairs, have renovated their training programs. Besides traditional courses, the programs need to provide new courses on information technology, digital records, and digital archives which equip the learners with the specific capacities as bellows:

- To apply information technology to work in digital environment: composing, circulating, transmitting and processing documents, tracking document processing in digital environment, digital curation, and digital archives, etc;
- To explore digital resources to adapt and work in an ‘e-office’ or an “e-government”;
- To protect important confidential information in digital environment from illegal access

- which may create economic harms to the government agencies/ enterprises or political- social instability;
- To conduct electronic communication and transmit;
  - To apply and make full use of digital signature;
  - To conduct digital archival tasks, etc.

### 3.4.3 Renovation methods

To renovate the training curriculum, the training institutions have implemented the following changes:

- **Reallocate time** of the traditional courses of the current program and increase time of the whole program to add new courses related to information technology, digital archives and records management;

- **Develop the syllabus of new courses** on applying information technology, i.e. electronic documents, electronic document communication and transmit, and digital archives. The new courses will also provide information about national and international standards and conventions related to digital records and archives;

- **Build capacity for lecturers.** Despite the fact that lecturers in archives and records management in most of training institutions have strong educational background and many years of experience, they are used to traditional methods with paper materials and lack of knowledge and experience with the modern form of records- digital. Thus, to be able to develop and teach new courses on digital records and digital archives, training institutions in Vietnam need to improve the capacity of the existing pool of lecturers and recruit more lecturers who can research and develop training syllabus of archival technology courses.

- **Improve physical facilities.** The necessary facilities include not only computers but also local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), document processor softwares for students to practice electronic document processing, digital communication, and digital archives.

In long term, Vietnam, specifically the University of Home Affairs, will establish a program specialized in document processing with application of modern technology and automation technology in document processing, records management, and archives.

In brief, after the war and especially in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Vietnam has gained certain achievements in records management- archives in general and in archival human resource development in particular. The pool of archival personnel got professional training has developed both in terms of quality and quantity, and meet a part of the demand of the archive sector and the society. However, in the future, Vietnam needs to increase the size of the archival programs as well as renovate the curriculum to improve the capacity of professional archivists to meet the requirements of a modern society in the 'Information Age'.

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### SUMMARY

Vietnam has only gained peace and unification since 1975. As a result, archives was neglected for a long time. Archives started to attract proper attention only since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century despites of the fierce war with the American. Up to date, archives of Vietnam has reach certain achievements. Vietnam has a large volume of archival records in multi-languages, among which there is a special form of records that was recognized by UNESCO as the World Documentary Heritage- the woodblocks. At the present, Vietnam has a dual archive system: the Communist Party's Archives and the State Archives. Vietnam has 4 National Archives Centers located along the country. In 2011, Vietnam passed the Archives and Records Law, which marked a new development stage of archives of the country. Pre-service training of human resource for archives of Vietnam has got attention since the 60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Up to date, Vietnam has trained a large number of professionals in archives. These professionals are working in the area of records management and archives and has met requirements of the society. Pre-service training of human resource for archives in modern time of Vietnam is conducted by major training institutions at all levels of educational degrees, from professional secondary degree to doctoral degree, and in both modes of full-time training and part-time training. To catch up with the development of the modern society and accelerating application of information technology in different aspects of social life, Vietnam has a great demand of archives human resource who are trained to use modern technology. As such, Vietnamese training institutions have been actively developed and renovated their training programs to meet the new requirements of the society for archival human resources in an informatics society.

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