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RECORDS MANAGERS - OBLIGATION TO PASS THE PROFESSIONAL EXAM

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Abstract:

Records managers at the creators of archives are defined by the archival legislation of the Republic of Srpska, The Law on Archives and the Regulations on record management for administrative bodies.

Records managers are officials of different degrees and fields of education. Given that there are no high schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina that deal with the training of archival technicians, the education of officials is carried out through the preparation for passing professional exams in the Archives of the Republic of Srpska according to the planned program, and constant professional development through seminars/trainings provided for records managers. It is very important to employ an expert person, qualified to manage records and monitor information and technological development.

Professional training and improvement are of the greatest importance for the protection of public records, especially at a time when it is necessary to follow technological and informational development. Since 2002, the Archives of the Republic of Srpska and the Association of Archivists of the Republic of Srpska have launched a program of taking professional exams for records managers. In the period from March 2002 to January 2024, a total of 300 candidates passed the professional exam for working on the protection of public records and archival materials.

The plan and program of taking professional exams for records managers is regulated by the "Regulations on conditions, deadlines and methods of taking professional archival exams, recognition of professional archival titles and conditions for acquiring professional archival titles".

Keywords:

Records manager, records, archival legislation, professional training, professional exam

Izvleček:

Upravljavci gradiva – obveznost opravljanja strokovnega izpita

Upravljavce gradiva pri ustvarjalcih določa arhivska zakonodaja Republike Srbske, tj. Zakon o arhivih in Pravilnik o upravljanju z dokumentacijo za upravne organe.

Upravljavci dokumentov so uslužbenci različnih stopenj in področij izobrazbe. Glede na to, da v Bosni in Hercegovini ni šol, ki bi izobraževale za delo z arhivskim gradivom, temelji izobraževanje uslužbencev na pripravah za strokovni izpit v Arhivu Republike Srbske, skladno z začrtanim programom, in na stalnem strokovnem izpopolnjevanju na seminarjih oziroma tečajih. Zelo pomembno je zaposliti strokovno osebo, kvalificirano za upravljanje z dokumenti in spremljanje informacij ter tehnološkega razvoja.

Strokovno izobraževanje in izboljševanje je velikega pomena za zaščito javnih dokumentov, še posebej v času, ko je potrebno stalno spremljati tehnološki razvoj. Od leta 2002 Arhiv Republike Srbske in Združenje arhivistov Republike Srbske izvajata program strokovnih izpitov za upravljalce dokumentov. Od marca 2002 do januarja 2024 je opravilo strokovni izpit za delo z dokumentarnim in arhivskim gradivom 300 kandidatov.

Program strokovnih izpitov regulira Pravilnik o pogojih, rokih in načinih izvedbe strokovnih izpitov, podeljevanje strokovnih nativov in pogojev za pridobitev strokovnih nazivov.

Ključne besede:

upravljalci dokumentov z zapisi, arhivska zakonodaja, strokovno usposabljanje, strokovni izpit

1 Records managers, obligations and responsibilities

By records, we mean records or documents created by the actions of government, legislative, executive and judicial bodies, units of local government bodies, public institutions, companies and other legal and natural persons, and are considered active archival materials. It is precisely because of this status, in the protection of records by the custodians/creators themselves, that positive regulations relating to archival material are applied. The definition of archival material is identical to the definition of records, with the fact that archival material has an addition in its definition that explains how it is of permanent importance for science, culture, other social needs and legal protection of persons. The experts, archivists, will separate the archival material from the records by appraisal. From this we can see the importance of records protection while it is with the custodians/creators, because this is how we protect active archival materials (Law on Archives, 2008, articles 3 and 4).

Records managers must have a protective approach to the records, but not preserve everything that has ever been created by the institution, and thus not neglect the obligations prescribed by the Law on Archives (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska*, no. 119/08). The department for the records management, which includes supervision over the state of storage, protection, recording, arrangement and selection of records and archival material, providing professional assistance to the custodians of archival material and keeping records of archival material outside the archives, represents the first and basic protection of active archival materials. Right after that come record managers. The greatest responsibility, however, lies in the hands of records managers by owners/creators of public records, whose task is to take care of records and future archival material. This implies that the institution/employer provides appropriate premises for keeping records, provides microclimatic, chemical-biological and physical conditions for the protection of public records from the harmful effects of temperature, moisture, light, radiation, dust, microorganisms, insects, rodents, as well as physical damage. (Law on Archives, 2008, article 8). The rest is in the hands of records managers. It actually depends on their awareness of the importance of the institution's archival operations. In the post of records managers, there are officials of different degrees and fields of education. Given that there is no high school in our area that deals with the training of archival technicians, the education is self-education of officials, preparation for passing professional exams in the Archives of the Republic of Srpska according to the planned program, and constant professional development through seminars/trainings provided for records managers. It is very important to employ an expert person, qualified to handle public records and monitor information and technological development, in the records managers job.

The experts of the competent Archives give detailed instructions on the implementation of individual protection measures to the custodians and creators of public records and archival materials by carrying out professional supervision, as well as professional training for records managers who handle public records and active archival materials. This professional training mainly refers to seminars for archivists, which are held twice a year, and which deal with topics related to records management in conventional and electronic form. In addition to the many benefits that this type of education for archivists brings periodically, it is a devastating fact that almost always the same participants/institutions apply for it.

Also, the expert archivists of the competent Archives give detailed instructions on the implementation of the following protection measures. It is very important that the custodians and creators make their general acts on the records management system, in order to decisively regulate the issues of: running office business, keeping records, issues of processing and handling public records, disposal of records and their submission to the archive, technical equipment, marking and disposal of records, conditions and methods of storage of records, its valorization and separation from records whose storage period has expired (Law on Archives, 2008, article 8).

2 Education

Professional training is of the greatest importance for the protection of public records and archival material, especially at a time when it is necessary to follow technological and informational development. Since 2002, the Archives of the Republic of Srpska and the Association of Archivists of the Republic of Srpska have launched a program of taking professional exams for records managers. In the period from March 2002 to July 2023, a total of 276 candidates passed the professional exam for working on the protection of public records.¹

The Archives of the Republika Srpska regulated the plan and program of taking professional exams for records managers with the "Regulations on conditions, deadlines and methods of taking professional archival exams, recognition of professional archival titles and conditions for acquiring professional archival titles".² Professional examination means the examination in which it is determined the ability of the candidate to perform tasks of professional processing record management.

All records managers who have completed secondary school (IV level of education), who have performed the tasks of keeping, protecting, arranging, selecting, recording and making available for use public records for at least six months, as well as the tasks of handling records at providers of preservation services for digital records, or are employed by providers of accompanying services for capturing or storageing digital records, have the right to take this exam. (Regulations on conditions, 2010, article 38). This is also regulated by the Law on Archive.

The program for taking the professional exam is complex and multidisciplinary, and consists of:

- knowledge of legal and other regulations that determine the obligations of custodians and creators of public records, regulations on records management and protection of archival materials;

¹ More on: <http://www.uars-arhivisti.org/Doc.aspx?subcat=16&cat=5&id=13&lang=cir>.

² Published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska, no. 126/10.

- knowledge of archival science, which includes knowledge of the procedures related to the arrangement and recording of public records, the selection of archival material and the selection of disposable records, and the procedure for acquisition archival material to the competent archive;
- knowledge of public records management in paper and electronic form: knowledge of records disposal dates, conditions and methods of records managing, physical and technical protection of records, acquisition and conversion records to digital form and on microfilm;
- knowledge of the basics of informatics and the use of information technologies when working with public records. (Regulations on conditions, 2010, article 39)

In order to take the exam, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions, it is necessary to submit an application to the Association of Archivists of the Republic of Srpska and attach a certificate of completion of school and a certificate of work experience in the protection of public records. The candidate prepares the exam from the following literature:

1. Union of Associations of Yugoslavia's Archivists, *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*, Zagreb, 1972;
2. Union of Associations of Yugoslavia's Archivists, *Directory of Archival Studies*, Zagreb, 1977;
3. Ivana Bruk, Ljubodrag Popović, *Archival Science*, Belgrade, 1986;
4. Association of Archivists of the Republic of Srpska, *Protection of Public Records at Custodians and Creators*, Banja Luka, 2000;
5. Lučija Duranti, *Archival Records: Theory and Practice*, Zagreb, 2000;
6. Zoran Mačkić, *Protection of Cultural Heritage - Collection of Regulations of the Republic of Srpska with Comments and Explanations*, Banjaluka, 2003;
7. Croatian State Archives, *Expert Exam for the Protection and Processing of Archival Material - Directory*, Zagreb, 2008;
8. Zoran Mačkić, *Records Management and Archival Operations. Manual for the Uninformed or Checklist for the Informed*, Banjaluka, 2013.

The candidate can take the exam in writing or orally, and the evaluation of the candidate is performed by a three-member committee. A candidate who passes the professional exam for a records manager receives a certificate, and must renew his certificate every two years, with submitted evidence that he has actively worked to protect public records. Most often, candidates submit evidence of participation in the selection of disposable records or the creation of a records inventory. Unfortunately, often all the care of the records manager ends here.

All the candidates who have taken the professional exams for records managers in the Archives of the Republic of Srpska and the Association of Archivists of the Republic of Srpska have conscientiously taken the exam, they have mastered the material and there were no problems when taking the exam. Precisely because of this, it remains unclear how errors occur in their work? Records inventory often arrive completely wrongly organized, the disposal list does not necessarily contain prescribed sections, arranging the material is a big problem for them, etc. Therefore, the education is constantly continued by the Department for the Protection of Archival Material Outside the Archives, the so-called "external service" of the competent archives, by giving instructions.

Also, education is continuously provided through professional seminars. Thus, the seminar can make it much easier for candidates to pass the exam, because they literally listen to the answers to the questions that will be asked in the exam. Likewise, seminars are good reminders for records managers. And we present to them all the news from the domain of archival science.

3 The Rules on continuous professional development

In 2010, *The Rules on continuous professional development* were published, which prescribe the procedure, conditions and methods of mandatory continuous education, certification and renewal of certificates for all persons who:

- perform tasks of storage, protection, arrangement, selection, recording
- access for the use of public records (with custodians)
- handle digital public records at the service providers or are employed by providers of accompanying capture services, or storage of digital records.

The professional knowledge of records managers is assessed with credit points during two calendar years after passing the exam.

Each records manager would have to (in addition to passing the exam), achieve five credit points from the scope of his work within two years, and persons who handle public records at service providers five credit points, of which three are from the scope of their work.

Way to earn credit spots:

- three credit points if the custodians of public records in the previous two calendar years submitted to the competent archives two records inventory, i.e. one credit point if one records inventory was submitted to the archives,
- three credit points if the competent archives in the procedure of expert supervision of the public records custodians in the previous two years did not find deficiencies or the deficiencies were eliminated within the given deadline,
- one credit point for each records disposal made in the previous two years.

Additional professional knowledge is acquired at professional seminars, courses and other forms of professional training organized by the Archives of the Republic of Srpska, the Association of Archivists of the Republic of Srpska and other legal entities registered to perform this activity. At least once a year, our Association makes a decision on which professional seminars, courses and other forms of professional training can be used to earn credit points.

If records managers do not achieve the required number of credit points within two calendar years, they must retake the professional exam within one year. And if these persons continue to handle public records, it will be considered that the custodian or creator of this records, or the provider of accompanying services for capturing or storage of public digital records does not meet the requirements of Article 8 of the Law on Archives.

The Association issues a certificate to a person who, within a period of two years, has achieved the number of credit points determined by *The Rules on continuous professional development*. Persons who improve professionally by attending

professional consultations, courses and other forms of professional training are obliged to submit to the Association a request for certificate extension, a certificate of continuous professional development and proof of payment of the fee for certificate extension.

Persons who, for justified reasons (due to illness, maternity leave, work abroad, unemployment, etc.) were not able to continuously improve in accordance with the provisions of these rules, may submit a reasoned request to the Association for an extension of the period of professional improvement. If it judges that the request is founded, the Association will extend the period of professional development by one year at the latest.

4 Nostrifications of certificates

The rules on the nostrification of certificates issued by other professional associations, published in Banja Luka in 2010, regulate the procedure and manner of performing the nostrification of certificates on passed professional archival exams, i.e. exams for record managers, issued by archival institutions and professional archival associations in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad.

By nostrification, certificates issued by archival institutions and professional archival associations in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad are recognized as equivalent to certificates of passing a professional archival exam, i.e. a recognized professional archival title and a passed professional exam for record managers who, in accordance with *Regulations on conditions, deadlines and methods of taking professional archival exams, recognition of professional archival titles and conditions for acquiring professional archival titles*, i.e. the recognition and acquisition of professional archival titles, is issued by the Association of Archivists of the Republic of Srpska.

A request for certification of a certificate can be submitted by a person who is a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a foreign citizen and a stateless person who has a legal interest in it in the territory of the Republic of Srpska. The legal interest from the previous paragraph means the intention of the applicant to be employed in the territory of the Republic of Srpska or to take an exam before the Commission for professional archival titles of the Association, which is proven by a certificate of residence.

Nostrification of certificates is performed by the Commission.

If, acting on the request, the Commission determines that the attached certificate is not similar or similar to the certificates on professional archival titles issued by the Association, it will propose to the President of the Association to reject the request for certification.

5 Literature

Law on Archives. (2008). Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska, no. 119/08.

Regulations on conditions, deadlines and methods of taking professional archival exams, recognition of professional archival titles and conditions for acquiring professional archival titles. (2010). Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska, no. 126/10.

POVZETEK

UPRAVLJAVCI GRADIVA – OBVEZNOST OPRAVLJANJA STROKOVNEGA IZPITA

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Oddelek za upravljanje z dokumenti, ki vključuje nadzor nad stanjem hrambe, varovanja, evidentiranja, urejanja in odbiranja arhivskega gradiva, nudenje strokovne pomoči skrbnikom arhivskega gradiva in vodenje evidence arhivskega gradiva zunaj arhiva, predstavlja prvo in osnovno zaščito arhivskega gradiva. Takoj zatem sledijo upravljavci arhivskega gradiva. Od teh je največja odgovornost v rokah upravljavcev dokumentov pri ustvarjalcih javnega arhivskega gradiva, katerih naloga je skrb za dokumentarno in arhivsko gradivo.

Arhivisti pristojnih arhivov dajejo podrobna navodila za izvajanje ukrepov varstva arhivskega gradiva.

Arhiv Republike Srpske je načrt in program opravljanja strokovnih izpitov za upravjalce arhivskega gradiva uredil s „*Pravilnikom o pogojih, rokih in načinu opravljanja strokovnih arhivskih izpitov, priznavanju strokovnih arhivskih nazivov in pogojih za pridobitev strokovnih arhivskih nazivov*“. Strokovni izpit pomeni izpit, pri katerem se ugotavlja usposobljenost kandidata za opravljanje nalog strokovne obdelave arhivskega gradiva.

Kandidat lahko izpit opravlja pisno ali ustno, oceno kandidata pa opravi tričlanska komisija. Po uspešno opravljenem strokovnem izpitu prejme kandidat ustrezno potrdilo, ki ga mora vsaki dve leti obnoviti na podlagi dokazila, da je bil aktiven pri upravljanju z dokumentarnim gradivom. Poleg tega se stalno izobražuje na strokovnih seminarjih. Tako lahko seminar kandidatom precej olajša opravljanje izpita.

About the author:

Marijana Todorović Bilić, M. Sc., was born on October 26, 1981 in Banja Luka, where she completed primary and secondary school. She graduated in history from the Faculty of Philosophy in Banja Luka in 2007. At the same Faculty, she also completed postgraduate studies (major: History of Yugoslavia) in 2015, defending her master's thesis Information and Propaganda in the Bosnian Krajina (1929–1953). She worked as a radio host, program organizer and was the author of several shows from 1998-2011 and was a correspondent for media houses abroad. She participated in numerous educations in the field of media and journalism. Since 2012, she has been employed at the Archives of the Republic of Srpska in Banja Luka, as a archivist. She completed three cycles of the "Autumn Archival School" of the International Institute for Archival Studies in Trieste and Maribor. She is a member of the editorial board of the magazine "Glasnik" of the Association of Archive Workers of the Republic of Srpska, and she was a member of the editorial board of "Topola", the magazine of the Donja Gradina Memorial District. She is a member of the Steering committee of the Association of Archive Workers of the Republic of Srpska and the Archivist Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is the president of the Commission for passing the professional exam for records managers

and a member of the Commission for taking the professional archival exam and recognizing professional archival titles. She was a participant in many professional conferences, as well as an organizer of seminars and a lecturer in the field of records management. She is the co-author of the exhibition and catalog "Banjaluka - occupation and liberation". One of the organizers of the critical edition of Žarko Laštrić's memoir "Banjalučki Illegalac: Memories of Žarko Laštrić" in 2020. She is the author of the exhibition "Propaganda in Banja Luka and its surroundings during the Second World War" from 2021. Also, she is author of over twenty professional and scientific articles.

O avtorici: - že lektorirano

Mag. Marijana Todorović Bilić se je rodila 26. oktobra 1981 v Banja Luki, kjer je končala osnovno in srednjo šolo. Leta 2007 je diplomirala iz zgodovine na Filozofski fakulteti v Banja Luki. Na isti fakulteti je leta 2015 zaključila podiplomski študij (smer: Zgodovina Jugoslavije), kjer je zagovarjala magistrsko nalogo Informiranje in propaganda v Bosanski Krajini (1929–1953). Delala je kot radijska voditeljica, urednica programa in avtorica več oddaj od leta 1998 do 2011 ter kot dopisnica za medije v tujini. Sodelovala je na številnih izobraževanjih s področja medijev in novinarstva. Od leta 2012 je zaposlena v Arhivu Republike Srbije v Banja Luki kot arhivistka. Zaključila je tri cikle Jesenske arhivske šole Mednarodnega inštituta arhivskih znanosti Trst - Maribor. Je članica uredniškega odbora revije "Glasnik" Združenja arhivskih delavcev Republike Srbije in bila članica uredniškega odbora revije Spominskega območja Donja Gradina »Topola«. Je članica upravnega odbora Združenja arhivskih delavcev Republike Srbije in Arhivskega združenja Bosne in Hercegovine. Prav tako je predsednica komisije za opravljanje strokovnega izpita za upravljanje z dokumentarnim gradivom ter članica komisije za opravljanje strokovnega arhivskega izpita ter priznavanje strokovnih arhivskih nazivov. Sodelovala je na številnih strokovnih konferencah, prav tako organizirala seminarje in predavala na področju upravljanja z dokumentarnim gradivom. Je soavtorica razstave in kataloga »Banjaluka – okupacija in osvoboditev«. Sodelovala je pri kritični izdaji spominov »Banjaluški ilegalec: spomini Žarka Laštrića« leta 2020. Je avtorica razstave »Propaganda v Banja Luka in njeni okolici med drugo svetovno vojno« iz leta 2021. Prav tako je avtorica več kot dvajsetih strokovnih in znanstvenih člankov.