

31st Archival Science Colloquium

Formation of a Documentary Heritage and Appraisal. Perspectives on an Archival Debate

31st May and 1st June 2027

Call for Papers

Program outline

Since the 1990s, the German debate on appraisal has been characterised by a methodological debate centring on top-down approaches (documentation strategies) and bottom-up approaches (horizontal and vertical appraisal). This fundamental debate has subsided in recent years, even though the foundations of appraisal have changed considerably: Digital records, scarce resources, heightened expectations from politicians and the public, and a society that has become more pluralistic are putting established concepts to the test. The 31st Archival Science Colloquium is therefore fundamentally reviving this specialist discussion.

The first thematic area focuses on appraisal as a strategic management task. The presentations will outline management tasks at both the strategic and operational levels. Issues of prioritisation and resource allocation will also be addressed. The second thematic area focuses on how civil society and marginalised groups can be integrated into appraisal. It will explore the possibilities and limitations of participation, as well as the role of private archives.

The third thematic area is intended to facilitate a comparison with the international debate on appraisal. For this thematic area, we welcome presentations from the international archival community:

3 Models and procedures in an international comparison. Appraisal approaches, standards and institutional practice

The German and international debates on appraisal sometimes run parallel to one another; at other times, they intersect and influence one another. In Germany, the responsibility for appraisal lies exclusively with the archives; in other countries, this is often not the case. The idea of placing appraisal within a social context has been under discussion in the English-speaking world since the 1980s. In Germany, this debate began as early as the early 1970s. It was revived in the 2000s and has had a lasting influence on appraisal in German archives. The debate on the inclusion of minorities in the appraisal discourse has been ongoing in the English-speaking world for around 20 years; in Germany, it has only gained momentum in the last few years. It is therefore worthwhile to compare the various approaches and to ask how appraisal is viewed and discussed in an international context. Which concepts and models are being discussed and applied among our European neighbours and overseas? How do they influence one another? How are they embedded in society? Even where topics overlap with Thematic Area 2 – for example, regarding the participation of social groups – the focus of this thematic area remains on comparative analysis of systems.

Proposals for presentations in German or English in the form of abstracts (pdf file format) are requested by **30th September 2026** to the e-mail address (geschaeftszimmer@archivschule.de). They should not exceed one page (DIN A4) and should

include the title of the paper as well as the author's name and contact details. We are planning three presentations plus discussion in each section (90 min), The lectures should therefore last about 20 minutes.

The lectures will probably be held in front of an audience in Marburg and will also be streamed. Proposals from the international arena are expressly welcome. Speakers from overseas are asked to deliver their presentations, preferably via video conference. Travel and hotel costs of the speakers may be covered to a certain extent.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Irmgard Christa Becker (irmgard.becker@archivschule.de).

After the conference, the contributions will be published in the publication series of the Marburg Archives School.

The 30th Archival Science Colloquium is being held in cooperation with the Working Group on Archival Appraisal of the Association of German Archivists (Arbeitskreis Archivische Bewertung des Verbands deutscher Archivarinnen und Archivare e.V.).

The full call for papers in German can be viewed [here](#).

Translated with DeepL.com (free version)

Marburg, 15. Juli 2026