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Ince, Lindsay

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ISDF, ISAAR (CPF) and the HEI Classification Scheme

University of Huddersfield

Lindsay Ince, Assistant Archivist, University of Huddersfield

Case Study: Cataloguing the history of the University of Huddersfield

The University has existed in eight different organisational incarnations and has been on the ~ same site since 1883. Initially it was a series of membership organisations designed to allow the working classes access to learning in the theoretical arts, humanities and sciences, backed by membership fees and philanthropic local businessmen:

- 1841 – Young Men's Mental Improvement Society
- 1844 – Huddersfield Mechanics Institute
- 1846 – Huddersfield Female Educational Institute

Education moved toward gaining vocational and technical skills in the evenings and part time in order to boost local industries. The College moved under the remit of the local board of education.

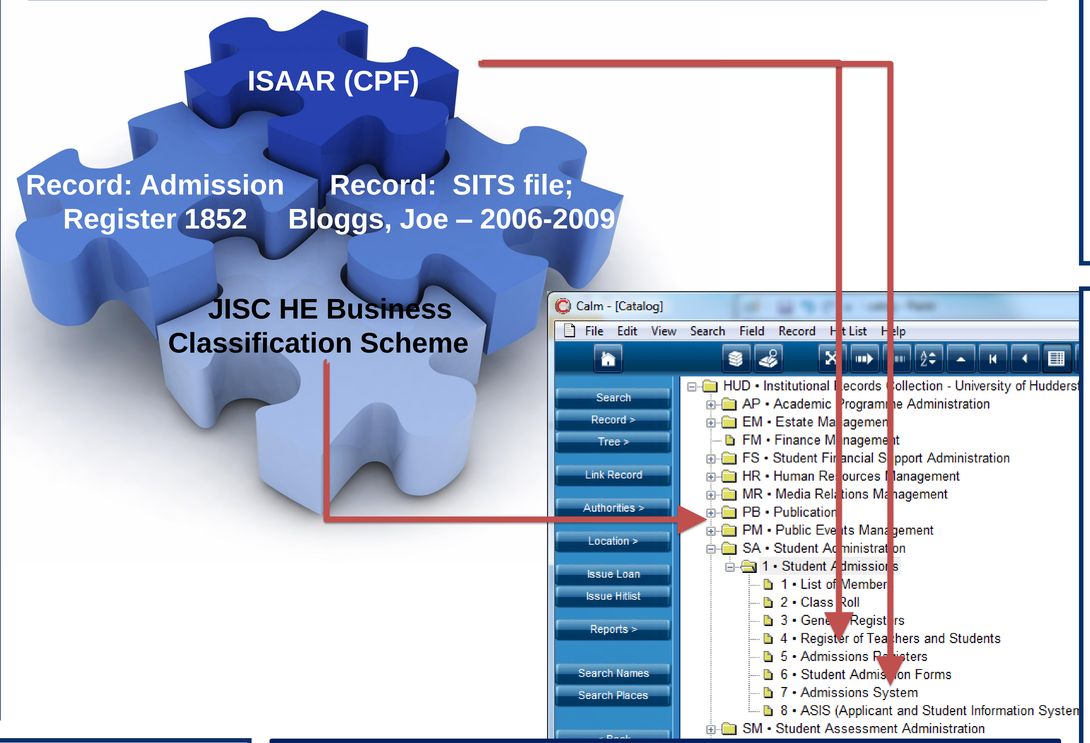
- 1884 – Huddersfield Technical School & Mechanics Ins.
- 1896 – Huddersfield Technical College
- 1958 – Huddersfield College of Technology

Higher education institutes from the late 20th century have become research focused institutions providing a choice of vocational, scientific and aesthetic educations to under- and post-graduate students studying full or part time.

- 1970 – Huddersfield Polytechnic
- 1992 – University of Huddersfield

Introduction

- The aim of this project is to catalogue the institutional records of the University as a whole to international standards and avoid splitting them into a number of distinct, provenance based classification schemes.
- To reflect the chronology and complexity of the organisation in the past, whilst still maintaining one user friendly access point / catalogue for researchers.
- To catalogue according to MPLP (More Product, Less Process) principles. This means minimal processing of material, but maximising opportunities to harvest knowledge from resources and capitalising on them to reflect the intricacies of the organisation's history.



JISC HEI Classification Scheme

The JISC Higher Education Institution Business Classification Scheme has been developed through consultation with the sector to reflect the functions, activities and tasks undertaken by modern HE organisations.

The generic classification map means a pick 'n' mix approach can be used to create an institutional file plan based on the types of activities being carried out, and allow for the inclusion over records over multiple administrative systems, from simple volumes of early admission registers to current born digital and more complex SITS student records.

When uploaded to a portal like the Archives Hub, the collection can be searched or browsed as a standalone archive as the functions form the basis of the classification scheme, but the ability to input ISDF fields means comparisons can be made across time and the sector, even if institutions have an existing provenance based classification scheme.

Benefits & Challenges

- **Benefits**:

- The functional approach and HE classification schemes both have the capacity to grow with the organisation. Early archival records can be added to CALM with ease as can current born digital records from the Wisdom EDRM system, which has also implemented the JISC HEI classification scheme.

- For users, comprehension of one classification scheme provides access to all institutional records from past to present, with institutional history contained within to authority files and administrative history in the function descriptions.

- If persistent identifiers are attached to physical archives, the intellectual structure has the ability to adapt as material is appraised or accrued and grow with the classification scheme.

- **Challenges**:

- Discovery through indexed authorities or functions is easy at a local level, but on 3rd party portals like Archives Hub, it may be difficult to exclude content tagged in other collections.

- There are opportunities to duplicate information unnecessarily in ISAD, ISDF and ISAAR fields. One approach should be adopted for the entire project and documented accordingly.

Why Functional Cataloguing (ISDF)?

- Functional cataloguing fits well in an evolving organisation, where administrative systems may be restructured and moved between departments, but the records resulting remain basically stable over time. E.g. Council Minute Book, 1890-1899 contains records relating to two administrative bodies. In a provenance based cataloguing system, the book would have to be allocated to one and cross-referenced from the other, in a functional structure it can sit in a Governance series and link to both institutions.
- Cataloguing by the function rather than the creator leads to a more stable and organised result, and less repetition of information.
- Functions are more easily understood by users, no specialist organisational knowledge is required to access the catalogue.

The Importance of ISAAR (CPF)

- Creating a range of authority files of the organisations, departments and persons not only secures the records within an accurate context, but also creates a reflection of the administrative structure and changes occurring within an organisation as it evolves.
- Researched entries about organisations, departments, people and places now form an independent organisational history, but consistent linking of theses to record series is a crucial way in to the records, and provides the context of the creating organisation.

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For more information contact: Lindsay Ince, l.ince@hud.ac.uk

References:: _ISDF, ISAAR (CPF), ISAD-G, JISC HEI Business Classification Scheme http://bit.ly/1jYS2jS
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