

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: Dave Reser, LC Representative
Subject: Priority order for additions to authorized access points representing a person (Revision of RDA 9.19)

Thanks to the British Library for reviewing the priority order for additions to authorized access points for persons. We agree with some of the arguments made, and that catalogers should have greater flexibility than the current instructions allow, but not as much flexibility as suggested by BL. We still believe in the priority order for the addition of certain attributes added optionally or “in case of conflict.” Specifically, we think that dates of birth and/or death from 9.19.1.3, and fuller form of name from 9.19.1.4 should have a higher priority than period of activity, profession or occupation, etc., for the following reasons:

1. Generally, these do not change or vary in fact over time, unlike elements such as professions or occupation, period of activity, term of rank, honour, or office, or other designations (of an Other designation associated with a person). The more concrete attributes also assist algorithms that are attempting to “match” entities from different agencies, such as VIAF.
2. There is a level of unambiguous objectivity for the data recorded for these elements that is not present for others. For example, William Shakespeare’s profession may be recorded as Actor, Poet, Writer, Playwright, or Author, but his date of death is 1616. Data recorded as Other designation (9.6.1.9) has the potential to be obscure and/or offensive to the user, e.g., FitzRoy, Catherine (Illegitimate child) instead of FitzRoy, Catherine, 1604-1608 or Beckham, David (Fergie's Fledgling) instead of Beckham, David, 1975-.
3. Giving catalogers a priority order (to a point) promotes consistency in application; this is very important when attempting to manage a large authority file where duplication of persons is already a problem. Total flexibility for adding any attribute will reduce predictability for catalogers searching to see if headings are already established, and will result in more duplicate records (the resolution of which is a costly burden).

As noted, we agree with BL that additional flexibility could be offered, and we believe that some of the instructions *after* 9.19.1.4 (Fuller form of name) should be at the judgment of the cataloger.

Responses to the proposed changes:

9.19.1.4 (Fuller form of name): Do not agree with the deletion of the second sentence. The date of birth or date should be used, and the current “optional additional” *already* allows the inclusion of the element even if it is not needed to distinguish access points.

9.19.1.5 (now: Period of Activity of the Person): Agree that the “Period of Activity of the Person” and “Profession or Occupation” could be de-coupled and divided into separate instructions. We do not agree that Period of Activity should be used (other than an optional addition) instead of a more concrete attribute, so do not agree to the deletion of the second sentence.

9.19.1.6 (now: Profession or occupation): Agree with the de-coupling with Period of Activity of the Person, but believe a second sentence needs to be added to the proposed instruction:

Make this addition when the following elements are not available:

date of birth and/or death (see [9.19.1.3 RDA](#))

fuller form of name (see [9.19.1.4 RDA](#)).

9.19.1.7 (now: Other term of Rank, Honour or Office): agree that adding greater flexibility is in order by eliminating “period of the activity of the person and/or profession or occupation” as a prerequisite.

Make this addition when the following elements are not available:

date of birth and/or death (see [9.19.1.3 RDA](#))

fuller form of name (see [9.19.1.4 RDA](#)).

~~or~~

~~period of activity of the person and/or profession or occupation (see [9.19.1.5 RDA](#)).~~

9.19.1.8 (now: Other Designation): We note that the element instructions at 9.6.1.9 only allow recording of this element when needed to distinguish and nothing more concrete is available. The authorized access point instructions need to be in synchronization with the access point instructions, so we do not agree to this change.

Add an appropriate designation (see 9.6.1.9) if it is needed to distinguish one access point from another. Make this addition when the following elements are not available:

date of birth and/or death (see [9.19.1.3 RDA](#))

fuller form of name (see [9.19.1.4 RDA](#)).

Note on the ALA response:

1. We do not think that 9.19.1.1 should be revised; the changes to 9.19.1.1-9.19.1.7 that resulted from 6JSC/BL/13 rightly moved the “details” from 9.19.1.1 into the more appropriate instructions that follow (9.19.1.2-9.19.1.7)—we believe this is where the

cataloger will be looking for the requirements and guidance, not in a more general instruction. We also think that replacing the current instruction to “Make additions to the name as instructed at 9.19.1.2-9.19.1.7, as applicable” with a more generic instruction to apply “in this order of preference” oversimplifies some of the additions at 9.19.1.2 (for example, you *must* add titles of royalty and certain religious titles (e.g., Pope), and you *must* add “saint” and “spirit” if applicable, but you only have to add “type of species or breed” in some circumstances.

2. We would like to think that the additional instructions on “selecting the most authoritative date to record” is well understood and does not need to be specified in the instructions.

3. We thank ALA for the minor editorial revisions.