

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: Dave Reser, LC Representative
Subject: Post-nominal letters as Other Designation (Additional examples for RDA 9.6.1.9 and 9.19.1.7, and addition to Appendix E)

Thanks to the British Library for analyzing the issues related to post-nominal letters and persons.

Like ALA, we are concerned about the introduction of the term “post-nominal” and note that language for such letters already exists in the 5th paragraph of 9.4.1.8 : “...initials and/or abbreviations that indicate. ...” We think the wording used there should be incorporated into BL’s proposal because it also describes additions that are abbreviations (e.g., M. Phil., Ph. D) in addition to letters/initials.

We also agree with ALA that these indications of an academic degree or membership in an organization are within the scope of “Other Term of Rank, Honour or Office” in the “Title of the Person” instructions at 9.4.1.9. This approach obviates the need for a change to Appendix E.

Response to ALA’s Suggestions

We agree with the ALA response for 9.4.1.1, with this slight change:

9.4.1.1: Adjust newly proposed second paragraph:

Title of the person includes other terms indicative of rank, honour, or office, including initials and/or abbreviations representing an academic degree, or membership in an organization.

9.4.1.9: We agree to the ALA proposal for 9.4.1.9 with these changes:

- 1) The “including initials... in an organization” phrase does not need to be repeated since it has been included in the scope at 9.4.1.1, and the word “term” should remain in the singular:

Record a term indicative of rank, honour or office if the term appears with the name.

- 2) We also suggest adding explanations to the examples proposed by ALA. We were unable to determine the nature of “F.I.P.S.” but suggest this for Ph.D.:

Ph.D.

Term indicative of a postgraduate academic degree

9.19.1.6: We do not agree to the proposed addition to the instruction for the same reason given at 9.4.1.9. We agree to the example addition.

Future Considerations:

We do not agree that a designation like “Saint” should be moved to the Title of the person instructions. Terms used in 9.4 for titles are generally terms actually used by the person, in the person’s lifetime. The type of additions made for Other designation associated with the person are “labels” that we put on names for convenience and are not labels used by the people themselves. The term “saint” has multiple meanings and uses, which may be the source of confusion. As used in RDA 9.6.1.4, the term Saint is not a “word indicative of ecclesiastical rank or office” like the religious titles in 9.4. The term is a label assigned by an official decree of certain Christian churches confirming the person’s status as a servant of God. In the Bible, the term “saint” is used to describe the faithful as in Psalms CVI, 16-18: “They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord.” Many Protestant churches hold that all believers in Jesus Christ are “saints” according to the usage of the term in the New Testament. These meanings of the word “saint” should not be considered when assigning the word “Saint” as an Other Designation Associated with the Person.”

We would like the JSC to consider adding a definition of “Other Term of Rank, Honour, or Office” to RDA as part of the approved version of this proposal, if it is accepted. The distinction between this element sub-type and others (including religious titles at 9.4.1.4-9.4.1.8 and profession or occupation terms) has been unclear to catalogers in the U.S. cataloging community. Would the BL be willing to add a definition to their proposal?