

VIAF Admission Criteria

The Virtual International Authority File (VIAF®) is an OCLC service, an aggregation and a value-added dataset that is drawn from many sources, including national libraries. It represents a collaboration of OCLC with many agencies. VIAF Contributors advise OCLC on VIAF-related policy issues through an advisory body, the VIAF Council.

OCLC and the VIAF Council—in close consultation—have developed a set of general criteria designed to assist OCLC in evaluating candidate agencies and other data sources for addition to VIAF. These criteria are presented below.

Categories of VIAF Membership

- **VIAF Contributor.** VIAF Contributors are agencies that formally join VIAF (the agency and OCLC execute a standard contract), provide descriptive metadata and authority data to VIAF, and are eligible to appoint a representative to the VIAF Council.
- **Other Data Providers.** VIAF includes data from other, selected sources (e.g., Wikipedia) that are not VIAF Contributor agencies. Other Data Providers are not eligible to participate as voting members on the VIAF Council.

Evaluation Criteria

When evaluating an application by an agency that wants to become a VIAF Contributor or the potential addition of an Other Data Provider, OCLC will be guided by the following criteria.

Criteria to become a VIAF Contributor

- Is the institution a National LAM (Libraries, Archives, Museums) agency, a large and/or transnational LAM cooperative or other widely known and respected cultural heritage institution that hosts valuable authority data?
 - *Note:* National LAM agencies (e.g., national libraries) are *encouraged* to apply to VIAF.
- *Please note:* Individual agencies that are not National LAM agencies, nor eligible to participate in an appropriate authority data cooperative, may apply for consideration as a VIAF Contributor. Such candidates should be advised that VIAF admission for this category of institution is very selective.

Other opportunities to contribute data to VIAF

Agencies that do not meet VIAF Contributor requirements may still be able to contribute data to VIAF in one of two ways.

- Join an authority cooperative that is a VIAF Contributor or VIAF Other Data Provider.
- Become an individual VIAF Other Data Provider.

Evaluation criteria for all potential data sources (VIAF Contributors and Other Data Providers)

- Scope of data
 - Are the data offered related to names of persons and names of organizations (including political units, such as federal, state and local agencies or jurisdictions) and/or data related to works, expressions and geographical names?
 - *Note:* At this time VIAF is *not* seeking files that are solely or primarily subject vocabularies or classification schemes or are focused on other categories of entities not listed in the bullet point above.
- Complementary data
 - Will the data offered significantly enrich and extend VIAF through the contribution of new names/entities and languages/scripts?
- Quantity of data
 - Will the data offered constitute a small, medium or large dataset?
 - For the near term, VIAF is seeking large- or medium-sized datasets.
 - *Please note:* For National LAM agencies, this criteria does *not* apply.
- Technical aspects of data creation, maintenance and transmission
 - Will the data offered and the offering agency satisfy certain technical requirements?
 - *Primary criteria:* Are the data offered in a suitable, ingestible form? Are corrections, additions and other updates provided on a timely basis?
 - Does the data meet minimum data quality requirements?
 - *Determination:* As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to supply technical details about their files and to provide sample data for evaluation.
- Relationship of data source to National LAM agency/cooperative authority data aggregations
 - Is the prospective Contributor eligible to contribute through an existing—or a prospective—authority cooperative (e.g., the Program for Cooperative Cataloging's NACO program) or an associated National LAM agency?
 - National/trans-national aggregations are strongly preferred as prospective sources for VIAF to the admission of individual non-National LAM agencies.
- Licensing of data
 - *Note:* VIAF Contributors sign a standard contract that grants OCLC permission to reuse the supplied authority data and to integrate their data into VIAF. (*Reuse:* VIAF data is released under an open license, the [Open Data Commons Attribution License \[ODC-By\]](#).)
 - Other Data Providers must offer VIAF data under a suitable data reuse arrangement (e.g., publication of the Provider's data under an appropriate open license), one that is compatible with VIAF's licensing requirements.

Applying for Admission

VIAF Contributors: Agencies are invited to complete an [application](#) and submit it to OCLC. Admission decisions are made on a rolling basis.

Other Data Providers: Please contact the VIAF team (oclcviaf@oclc.org) with a description of your dataset and provide contact information. Other Data Providers are evaluated on a rolling basis.

Other questions? Please direct questions and inquiries to oclcviaf@oclc.org.

Admission decisions

In the case that an application fits the criteria unambiguously, OCLC will make a decision on admission.

In the case that the application does not fit the criteria unambiguously, OCLC will consult with the VIAF Council before making a decision on admission.

OCLC reports regularly the VIAF Council on applications and admissions.