Using PAASH subject access points in AOR:

As of March 2021, AOR has been updated to include the Provincial Archives of Alberta Subject Headings (PAASH) for subject indexing. AOR previously had just 29 broad authorized subject terms. With the inclusion of PAASH, there are now just over 6000, allowing for much more detailed and meaningful subject access.

PAASH Overview:

PAASH defines a list of authorized subject terms and relationships between them. These relationships are:

> NT which indicates narrower terms that represent more specific subdivisions of a broader term
> USE and UF (use for), which indicate which of two equivalent terms is preferred
> RT which indicates related terms

The image below shows the AOR entry for the PAASH heading "Long-term care facilities," which indicates all of its relationships to other terms.

The lines "UF Extended care facilities" and "UF Nursing homes" beside "Equivalent terms" indicate that "Long-term care facilities" is the preferred term and "Extended care facilities" and "Nursing homes" are non-preferred equivalent terms, so "Long-term care facilities" should be used as a subject access point instead of either of these. AtoM handles the selection of preferred terms for you. For example, If you search for "Nursing homes", AtoM will instead suggest the entry for "Long-term care facilities," and if you attempt to enter "Nursing homes" as a subject access point, AtoM will instead fill in the preferred term (see "Search" and "Adding subject headings to archival descriptions" for more detail).

Types of headings in PAASH:

There are various types of headings included in PAASH, some of which require special treatment. This section describes these types and how to handle them.

Terms with double dashes (narrower terms):

Narrower subdivisions of terms have the format "[Broader term] -- [Narrower subdivision]". If you use a narrower term as an access point, there is no need to also add the broader term. You may however wish to use multiple narrower subdivisions of a single broader term as access points on a given record.

Terms containing corporate and place names:

PAASH contains terms for some corporate and place names. AtoM also has its own separate fields for name and place access points:

Our general preference in AOR is to use PAASH terms (as subject access points) only for specific subdivisions of corporate and place names, and to use name and place access points for all descriptions whose content relates to that name or place.

For example:
For a holding related to a fire station in Edmonton, you should use the PAASH term "Edmonton -- Fire stations" as a subject access point and "Edmonton (Alberta)" as a place access point.

For a holding relating to Edmonton in general, you should use "Edmonton (Alberta)" as a place access point, but need not use the PAASH term "Edmonton" as a subject access point.
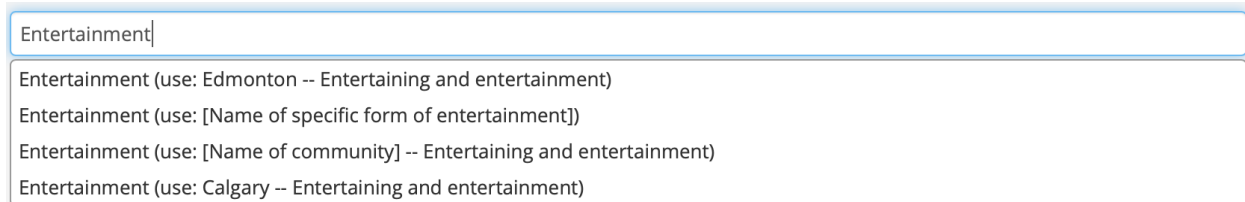
Terms with square brackets (name templates):

Headings with square brackets are NOT meant to be used directly as subject access points and should NOT be selected when they appear as options in the drop down menu. They are naming

templates that indicate a range of terms, and the correct way to format them, not authorized terms in themselves.

If you encounter a term with square brackets:
1. Check to see if the completed version that you wish to use has already been added to the authority file for the appropriate vocabulary:
    ○ Subjects and subdivisions of corporate and place names belong in the Subjects authority
    ○ Non-subdivided place names belong in the Places authority
    ○ Non-subdivided corporate names belong in the Names authority
2. If not, you may wish to contact the AOR administrator to request that the term be authorized.

For example, if you are cataloguing a holding relating to an arcade in Edmonton, it may occur to you to use "Entertainment" as a subject access point. Entering "Entertainment" into the subject access points field will yield the following suggestions:

Entertainment|

Entertainment (use: Edmonton -- Entertaining and entertainment)
Entertainment (use: [Name of specific form of entertainment])
Entertainment (use: [Name of community] -- Entertaining and entertainment)
Entertainment (use: Calgary -- Entertaining and entertainment)

These suggestions indicate that "Entertainment" is not a preferred subject term, and provide alternatives to use instead.

The suggestion "use: [Name of specific form of entertainment]" indicates that you should check to see if the specific form of entertainment that you are looking for has its own subject term, and if so use it rather than "Entertainment" as an access point. A search for "Arcades" will show that it is indeed an authorized subject heading.

The suggestion "use: [Name of community] -- Entertaining and entertainment", indicates that you may complete the template and use the term "Edmonton -- Entertaining and entertainment". Since this term is conveniently already indicated as another suggestion, this clarifies that it is already an authorized term. Clicking on "use: Edmonton -- Entertaining and entertainment" will add it as a subject access point. If it were not already an authorized term, you may wish to request that it be added.

Selecting both "Edmonton -- Entertaining and entertainment" and "Arcades" as subject access points, as well as adding "Edmonton (Alberta)" as a place access point, would be the preferred course of action.

The subject terms previously used in AOR are now indicated with an asterisk at the end of their names. These terms are NO LONGER TO BE USED for new descriptions, but remain as placeholders in records that already use them.

Tools for finding headings:

The much larger selection of subject headings now available makes the process of selecting the most useful and appropriate among them all the more important. AtoM has various tools designed to facilitate this process.

Search:

AtoM's search feature is the most reliable and powerful way of finding subject headings. A search for subject headings takes place outside of the editing menu, so it should be done either before creating a new archival description, or before editing an already existing description.

To search all authorized subject headings, click "Subjects" in the "Browse by" menu. Then enter your query into the "Search subjects" box and click the magnifying glass. By default, the search will yield results that contain the query in either their preferred form or any of their non-preferred forms. Clicking on a term will bring you to a page that shows all of its relations to other terms, as well as records that already use it as an access point.

Selecting terms on the fly with autocomplete:

Terms may also be selected on the fly while editing an archival description, based on AtoM's autocomplete feature. As you enter text into the subject access point field, AtoM will suggest authorized headings that begin with that text.

However, the usefulness of this feature for finding terms is somewhat limited, as only 10 results can be suggested at a time, related terms are not displayed, and, unlike search, only results which *begin* with the text you have entered are shown.

If you already have subject terms in mind that you believe may be valid PAASH terms, this feature may be sufficient for selecting the correct authorized form—for instance, if you are entering records that have already been indexed with some version of PAASH, or of the popular Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). If a term has a different preferred form specified in the current version of PAASH, AtoM will automatically suggest and fill in the preferred form for you. See "Adding subject headings to archival descriptions" below for more detail on using the autocomplete feature.
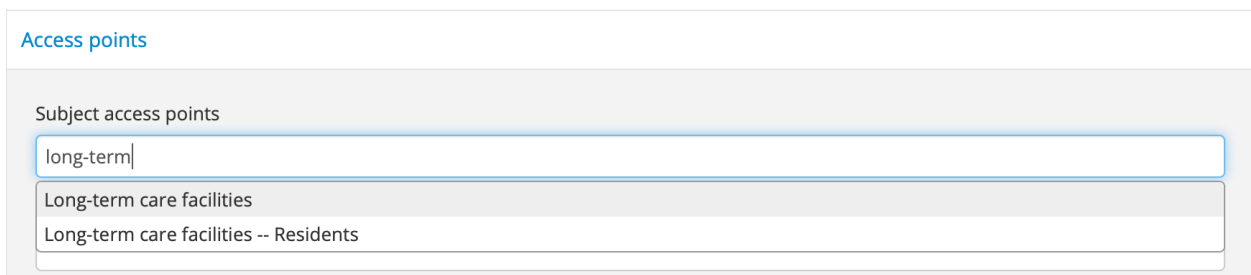
PDF Document:

The PDF version of PAASH is also available on the [Provincial Archives of Alberta website](#), for those who prefer to select terms from a more traditional alphabetized document.

Adding subject headings to archival descriptions:

While editing an archival description, open the "Access points" section and begin typing the heading into the "Subject access points" field. Headings that begin with the text that you have entered will appear in the drop-down list. Click on the desired heading to add it to the record.

Narrower terms or other headings that begin with the text that you have entered will also appear as suggestions. Note that the drop-down list can only contain 10 results at once. If a term is not among the suggested results, continue entering the rest of the term to refine the results, and click on the desired term when it appears to add it to the record.
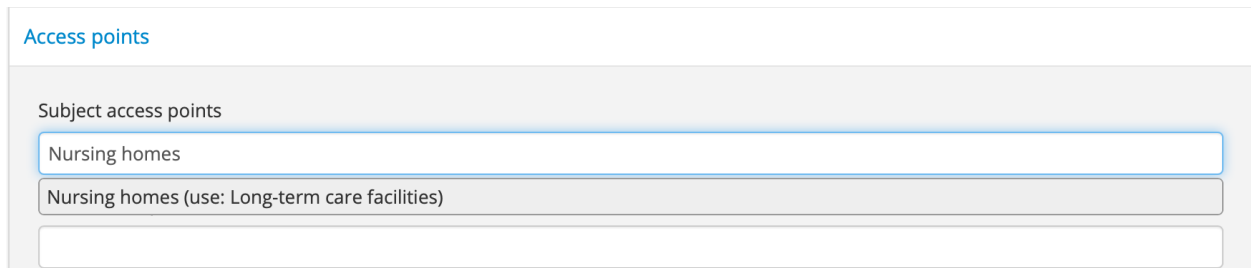

If you enter a non-preferred term from PAASH, AtoM will automatically suggest the preferred alternative:

Here, selecting "Nursing homes (use: Long-term care facilities)" will automatically add the preferred term "Long-term care facilities" to the record.