

Procedure: The Australian National University Archives collecting

Purpose

To specify procedures for the acquisition of material which the University Archives seeks for its collection.

Procedure

Application of policy: provenance

1. The official records of the University include those of the Council and its committees, the Executive, Colleges, Divisions, Schools, Departments, Faculties, Centres, Institutes, Offices and Units.
2. They include records of antecedents such as the Canberra University College, the Mount Stromlo Observatory and the Australian Forestry School, as well as records of institutions subsequently subsumed into the University such as the National Institute of the Arts. They also include the records of separately constituted ANU enterprises.
3. The official records may take the form of minutes, agenda papers, reports, correspondence, memoranda, working papers, electronic documents, emails, online transactions, data held in databases or on tape or disks, maps, plans, photographs, sound and video recordings, and microforms. They may exist as part of a recordkeeping system (such as those administered by University Records, Student Administration and Human Resources), as master sets of University publications, or be included in collections of otherwise personal records which staff may accumulate in undertaking University business.
4. The University Archives may seek to acquire the records of academic and administrative staff (commonly known as 'personal papers') where they contain official records or document University business which is not documented in official recordkeeping systems.
5. Collections maintained by senior officers result from their performance of the duties of University positions and document business conducted on behalf of the University. The personal records of senior administrative staff may include official records which were considered too confidential to place in official recordkeeping systems. The University

Archives seeks custody of these records to control access to them under the access provisions of the Archives Act.

6. The records of academic staff document the primary functions of research and teaching, and these functions are not routinely documented in official recordkeeping systems. In addition, academic staff may collect primary source materials in the course of research.
7. The records of organisations and societies which operate on campus document the social and cultural activities of the University, of both staff and students.
8. The University Archives may accept records of Council members, honorary graduates, benefactors, visiting fellows, graduates, students or others associated with the University. The records are assessed for their relevance to the University in terms of the person's relationship or contribution to the University community, the significance and nature of their career, and with regard to other institutions which the person may be associated with.
9. The University and its antecedents have occupied the Acton and Mount Stromlo sites since the 1920s. Records relating to the previous use of the land now occupied by the University in these and other sites may be significant to the current and future use of the land.

Application of policy: continuing value

10. Records authorities, issued by the National Archives of Australia and developed jointly by the National Archives and the University, assign values to official records and authorise their retention and destruction under the disposal provisions of the Archives Act.
11. Official records of continuing value include (but are not limited to):
 - * minutes of governance and decision-making bodies such as the Council and its committees, Academic Board, and other significant committees approving policy and authorising action
 - * records documenting policy development and implementation, precedent and high-profile cases, high-level negotiations and agreements, submissions to significant enquiries, strategic planning and reviews, and statutory reporting
 - * architectural maps or plans, and records relating to the University's buildings and grounds, including land acquisition, building ownership, property management, and procurement of capital equipment
 - * financial records including annual budget submissions, annual financial statements and general ledger reports, audit reports, delegation schedules, and contracts documenting ownership of intellectual property and conditions of donation
 - * personnel records for senior staff and other significant staff and students

- * records documenting teaching, including course outlines, assessment records, and copies of examination papers
- * student records relating to academic achievement and graduation
- * postgraduate theses (these are currently retained by the University Library)
- * audio-visual materials documenting the University's development, programs, staff and students such as photographs and film of people and events, and oral history interviews of significant people
- * master sets of publications such as annual reports, calendars, faculty handbooks, The ANU Reporter, newsletters, media releases, programs for events and ceremonies, conference proceedings and promotional material.

12. Personal records are assessed for continuing value with reference to the degree of duplication with official records, the person's role in the University, their contribution to scholarship and to the university community, the significance of their research, and the relationship of the records to their service and activities in the University.

13. Records of continuing value in personal records include:

- * significant official correspondence with colleagues and students not duplicated in official records
- * copies of important speeches and lectures
- * records documenting research of national significance including proposals, notes, data, recordings, photographs and reports
- * primary source research materials where ongoing research use is identified
- * teaching material such as lecture notes, course outlines and handouts
- * significant confidential records not included in official records

14. Material not of continuing value in personal records includes: routine correspondence, copies of committee minutes (where the official set of minutes is held by the Archives), staff circulars, personal financial records, drafts and proofs of publications, collections of research papers and journal articles by others, research data and bibliographic information which has been incorporated in publications, and publications readily available elsewhere.

15. Records of continuing value in the records of university organisations and societies include minutes of committees and annual general meetings, records documenting significant activities, annual reports, photographs of events and master sets of newsletters and other publications.

16. Records of continuing value of people closely associated with the University include records relating to their contribution to the University which provide important perspectives and information which may not be available in the official records of the University.

17. Records of continuing value for records of local significance include those documenting previous use of the land which may affect current and future use, such as those recording the existence of significant historical or sacred sites, documenting landscape, or locating hazardous waste.

Application of policy: format and condition

18. Paper records include files, letters received, copies of letters sent, memoranda, minutes, agenda, reports, submissions, printouts of emails, manuscripts, diaries, notebooks, registers, index cards, drawings, maps and plans. Printed and published material is accepted when it is included on a file or as part of a master set of publications. Copies of published articles, newspapers and books will not be accepted as these are readily available elsewhere, such as in the University Library or the National Library of Australia.

19. Audio-visual records such as audiotapes and cassettes, film, videocassettes, and compact disks will be accepted where they are in playable condition. The content will be migrated to a more stable medium where possible to ensure the preservation and accessibility of the content, and digital copies made will be stored in the University's digital repository.

20. Photographs in the form of contact prints, negatives, slides and digital images (either on compact disk or in electronic form) are accepted. Digital images will be stored in the University's digital repository with appropriate metadata attached.

21. The University Archives manages electronic records from University recordkeeping systems which have been appraised against records authorities as of continuing value. These are held in the Electronic Records Management System or in the University's digital repository with appropriate metadata and access controls.

22. The University Archives may accept significant objects and memorabilia associated with the University, such as ceremonial objects, medals, trophies, plaques, academic dress, and commemorative merchandise where these provide a record of the activities of the University and are not already held in numbers.

23. The University Archives does not seek to collect artworks or research collections such as geological or botanical specimens which are more appropriately placed in other ANU collections or with a specialist collecting institution. The University Archives may, however, accept collections which also include this other material, where it is incidental or not easily separated from the collection.

Acquisition

24. All material offered to the University Archives will be assessed against the collection policy and the procedure for the application of the policy principles. Advice will be provided on the appropriate disposal of material which is not required by the University Archives, including referral to other archives institutions.

25. In most cases, official records of the University will be transferred to the University Archives directly from University Records. Where other official records are offered to the University Archives, the records will be assessed against applicable records authorities and transferred to the University Archives if appropriate.

26. Personal papers transferred to the University Archives will become the property of the University, and the transfer of ownership, and copyright if appropriate, will be effected by a Deed of Gift. The University Archives does not accept material on long-term loan.

27. The University Archives does not purchase records. However, the Archives may accept donations of records under the Commonwealth government's Cultural Gifts Program.

28. It is the University Archives' preference to receive hard-copy records organised in their original order, housed in suitable folders and boxes, and listed by the unit or person transferring them. Electronic records similarly require contextual documentation and metadata.

Access

29. Access to official records is governed by the [*Archives Act 1983*](#) which provides that records are usually made available to the public after a defined period, currently 20 years after creation. When personal records are acquired there is an expectation that they will be available to the public after a similar period. While some information may need to be restricted for a longer period, the University Archives will not accept transfer of material with unrealistic restrictions on access, including closure in perpetuity. Any restrictions on access are to be specified in the Deed of Gift at the time of acquisition.

Relationship to other collections

30. Records which fall within the collecting policy are currently held by a number of other collecting institutions including the National Archives of Australia, the National Library of Australia, and the National Film and Sound Archive. The University will liaise with these custodians to ensure that appropriate access, disposal and storage conditions are met.

Review of collection

31. The holdings of the University Archives are regularly reviewed to identify any material that is duplicated, of short-term value, or more appropriately placed with another collecting institution. Records may also be deaccessioned:

- * to allow the repatriation of cultural property
- * where the records have been stolen or lost
- * where damage or deterioration makes them unreadable or unmanageable

32. Material owned by the University may be deaccessioned by destruction (in accordance with the disposal provisions of the Archives Act where appropriate) or by offer to another institution, in accordance with University asset disposal procedures.

33. Unsolicited material which does not meet the collecting policy will be offered back to the owner with a recommendation of a more appropriate collecting institution. Where the owner cannot be contacted, the material may be deaccessioned by destruction or offer to another institution.

Document information

Title	The Australian National University archives collecting
Document Type	Procedure
Document Number	ANUP_009413
Version	
Purpose	To specify procedures for the acquisition of material which the University Archives seeks for its collection.
Audience	Staff-Academic
Category	Academic
Topic	Information Management
Subtopic	Records & Archives
Effective Date	16 Aug 2023
Review Date	15 Aug 2028
Responsible Officer	University Librarian and Director, Scholarly Information Services
Approved By	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (dvc.research@anu.edu.au)
Contact Area	Library, Archives and University Records (director.sis@anu.edu.au)
Authority	Archives Act 1983
Printed On	21 Apr 2025

Please ensure you have the latest version of this document from the Policy Library website before referencing this.