

# V.G. PROTOCOLS FOR THE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND RECORDS CENTER

(Source: *Office of the President, Almanac, January 23, 1990 and Resolution of the Trustees, June 22, 1990* (<https://archives.upenn.edu/digitized-resources/docs-pubs/trustees-minutes/minutes-1990/june-22/>); revised, *Office of the Provost, February 2, 2023*)

## I. Mission

The University of Pennsylvania, acting through its University Archives and Records Center, recognizes its responsibility to the academic community and to the public for the orderly retention and disposition of all University records, both active and inactive, and for the timeless preservation of historically significant documents and other materials which reflect the University's origins and development and the activities and achievements of its officers, faculty, students, alumni, and benefactors.

In order to meet this obligation the University Archives and Records Center has been designated the official repository of all inactive and historical records of the University's administrative offices, academic departments, committees, and student groups. Documentation is sought for all aspects of University life. The University Archivist organizes and supervises the deposit and servicing of inactive records in the Records Center and the eventual permanent conveyance of historical materials to the Archives. The purpose of the records management program is to provide records retention and retrieval services which assist the faculty and administrative staff in the ongoing operation of the University. The purpose of the archives program is to collect, preserve and make accessible materials of historical value. Thus it serves scholars interested in the history of the University, institutions of higher learning in the United States, American intellectual life, and the Philadelphia community in which the University lives. In addition to the University's administrative records, the Archives and Records Center shall also collect the personal and professional papers of University officers, faculty, students, alumni, and benefactors and the papers of individuals and organizations where the subject matter of the collection is particularly relevant to University history.

The Archives and Records Center shall provide appropriate facilities for the retention, preservation and servicing of its holdings. Inactive records remain the property of the office of their origin and are made accessible only to authorized representatives of that office. Historical materials are the property of the Archives and Records Center and are made accessible to scholars and the community at large in accordance with University access policy. By making its historical collections accessible, by encouraging their use for historical research and scholarship and by entering into cooperative relationships with other archival and records management agencies and institutions, the Archives and Records Center shall serve as an educational resource center within the University of Pennsylvania, a place to stimulate and nourish creative teaching and learning.

## II. Administrative Mandate

The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, recognizing the need for formal archival and records management policy, hereby adopt the following policy and procedures for the collection, retention, preservation, and servicing of University records:

1. Responsibility for assuring that historically significant materials shall be preserved and permanently retained at the University of Pennsylvania lies with a single administrative unit, the University Archives and Records Center. The successful collection of all such records requires that one office, with University-wide purview, manage their progression through the several stages — active, inactive and archival — of their life cycle. In general, active records are those in use in the office in which they were created; inactive records are those placed under finite-term retention at a records center facility, and archival records are those of historical significance retained permanently in a repository open to research.
2. Any papers or other records generated or received by the administrative and academic offices of the University in the conduct of their business — including all official printed material, reports, record books, minutes, committee files, financial records, correspondence, and associated papers — are the property of the University and may become archival material. The definition of University records shall also extend to forms other than paper, such as prints, photographs, microfilm, motion picture film, audio and video formats, digital, and electronic records.
3. All administrative officers of the University, including those members of the Faculty who, by virtue of administrative responsibilities either of a continuing or occasional nature, possess University records relating to their official duties, are to observe the following policy and procedures:
  - a. Provision shall be made for efficient and economic records control by all University administrative offices and the University Archives and Records Center. Records shall be regularly surveyed, inventoried and appraised to determine retention value. Active records shall be retained by the office of origin; inactive records will be transferred to the Records Center and placed on finite-term retention schedules. The officer in charge of each administrative or academic office, in consultation with the University Archivist, shall be responsible for deciding how long both active and inactive papers shall be retained in and under the direct control of the office of origin. Inactive records transferred to the Records Center shall remain the property of the office of origin and shall be accessible only to authorized representatives of that office.
  - b. University records may not be destroyed or placed in inactive storage at a site other than one designated by the Records Center without the joint approval of the senior officer in the office of origin and the University Archivist. Should these individuals be unable to agree on retention value, disposition shall be stayed pending review and final determination by the Advisory Committee on the University Archives and Records Center, as defined in paragraph seven below.
4. The University Archivist, in accordance with prevailing collections and access policies, shall be responsible for the appraisal of inactive University records for their historical significance. The University Archivist shall determine which such materials shall be permanently retained by the Archives, shall grant and limit access to the collections and shall establish and administer other public service policies and procedures as necessary. Historically significant records transferred to the University Archives for permanent retention shall become the property of the University Archives and Records Center.
5. The University Archives and Records Center shall be an administrative department within the Penn Libraries. The University Archivist is responsible for long-range planning and for hiring, training and supervising departmental staff. The University Archivist is accountable for the successful performance of all departmental services: records management, development of archival collections,

cataloguing and other technical services, access, and other public services. The University Archivist shall review and have decision making power over University records which may be offered to or found in any of the multiple archival repositories at the University. The University Archivist shall establish intellectual access to all such repositories through the maintenance of shared collection catalogues and finding aids.

6. The University Archives and Records Center, as the official repository for all University records, including confidential records, shall provide appropriate facilities for their retention and preservation. The University Archives and Records Center shall be provided financial and personnel resources sufficient to maintain services at the level of comparable university archives and records management operations.
7. In order to facilitate these protocols an independent Advisory Committee on the University Archives and Records Center shall be established and shall have the following responsibilities:
  - a. to advise the Penn Libraries or University Archivist on institutional support and initiatives required to fulfill archival and records management policy;
  - b. to advise the University Archivist on the implementation of this policy; and
  - c. in particular, to resolve substantive issues which may arise regarding access and collections policy and when necessary, to advise the Penn Libraries or University Archivist on the modification of these policies.

The Committee shall be composed of ten members: one representative each from the offices of the President, the Secretary of the University, the Provost, and the General Counsel; three members of the standing faculty appointed by the Senate Executive Committee to serve overlapping three-year terms; and three members of the standing faculty appointed by the President, also to serve overlapping three-year terms. The President shall appoint the Committee Chair.

The Committee shall meet at the call of the University Archivist or the Chair. It shall meet a minimum of once per semester.

### III. Collections Policy

The University Archivist and staff of the University Archives and Records Center shall actively seek, identify and acquire historically significant materials in the following categories:

1. University administrative records, including, but not limited to: correspondence, memoranda, minutes, summary financial records, academic research, curriculum, contracts, reports, subject files, published materials, photographs, and any other material generated or received by the administrative and academic offices of the University in the conduct of their business. These records shall be collected in accordance with the University-wide archives and records management program, in which all records pass through active and inactive phases prior to appraisal for historical significance.
2. Materials which document the life of the University community, including student activities, alumni organizations, organizations of faculty and administrators, and other University related groups. Such materials are essential complements to official University records. They may take a variety of physical, digital, and electronic forms, including books, news clippings, manuscripts, maps and posters, motion picture films, audio and video, and artifacts and objects.
3. The personal and professional papers of prominent people associated with the University, including University officers, faculty, students, alumni, and benefactors. These manuscript collections

may include materials relating to issues of historical significance outside higher education as well as professional academic activities, research and teaching, and educational theories and practices during the lifetime of the University. This collecting mandate shall also extend to the papers of individuals and organizations where the subject matter of the collection is particularly relevant to the history of the University, institutions of higher learning in the United States, American intellectual life, and the Philadelphia community in which the University lives.

The deposit, transfer or donation of records and other materials to the Archives and Records Center shall follow specific procedures established by the University Archivist. In the case of deposit of University records at the Records Center, the office or individual of origin does not relinquish control of the materials. In the case of transfer of University records for permanent retention at the Archives, the office or individual of origin relinquishes all rights to the materials. In cases where the materials are donated to the University, the donor usually relinquishes all rights, including copyright and literary rights. Donor restrictions are acceptable in special cases.

### IV. Access Policy

The historical collections of the University Archives and Records Center are open for research to all members of the University community, to visiting scholars and to the scholarly public. The University encourages the use of these collections through the dissemination of descriptive catalogues and the provision of public services at the Archives.

Access to certain classes of records, however, is restricted. Access to restricted records may be requested by written appeal to the Director of the University Archivist.

The following types of records generally will be closed:

- all administrative records of the University for twenty-five years from the date of their creation, with certain exceptions, such as those which must be open in conformance with law;
- records of a sitting administration;
- records the disclosure of which might expose the University to legal liability.

The following types of records will be absolutely closed:

- individual education records of living students or living former students, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, unless the student or former student grants access in writing (in accordance with the University "Confidentiality of Student Records (<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/confidentiality-student-records/>)" as published in the *PennBook* and *Almanac*);
- individual employment records of living current or former faculty members, administrators or other staff members, including records which concern hiring, appointment, promotion, tenure, salary, performance, termination or other circumstances of employment, unless the faculty member, administrator, or staff member grants access in writing (in accordance with University Confidentiality of Records Policy No. 201 (<https://www.hr.upenn.edu/policies-and-procedures/policy-manual/other-policies/confidentiality-of-records/>));
- other records where usage might constitute an invasion of privacy;
- records the use of which has been restricted by Deed of Gift.

Requests to photocopy or otherwise reproduce restricted records generally will be denied.

Appeals to gain access to restricted records shall be conducted in the following manner:

1. a researcher seeking access to restricted records shall complete a "Restricted Records Access Request" form;
2. the University Archivist shall review each request with the Advisory Committee on the University Archives and Records Center; the Advisory Committee is composed of ten members: one representative each from the offices of the President, the Secretary of the University, the Provost and the General Counsel; and six members of the standing faculty;
3. the Advisory Committee shall base its decisions on the merits of each case, weighing the needs of scholarship against the privacy rights of individuals and the legal interests of the University; the Committee must be satisfied that a researcher seeking access to restricted records has demonstrated that the records are required to carry out a legitimate scholarly research project or for other appropriate use; in all cases, the decision of the Committee shall be fair and reasonable, permitting the greatest possible access, given the limitations imposed by legal and ethical considerations;
4. in order to come to such a decision, the Advisory Committee shall meet, review the research proposal of the scholar petitioning for access, examine the materials to which he or she is requesting access and discuss the case; in cases where the materials are voluminous, the University Archivist shall review them and summarize their nature and content for the Committee, presenting individual documents of particular concern; in cases of requests for innocuous materials, a less formal review process may be invoked, consisting of a telephone or electronic poll by the University Archivist;
5. the Advisory Committee may act as a whole in its review and decision making or may delegate to a sub-committee of its own members the power to implement this policy; the decisions of the Advisory Committee shall be final.