

## **Institutional Records Policy**

**August 4, 2021**

### **Introduction**

Institutional Records are any official, recorded information of any medium which are created, received, and/or maintained by a Museum staff member or department. This policy defines the ways the Museum preserves its permanent, official records (the Institutional Archives), and the recommended disposition of records with limited or short-term value. Records may be individual, central, active, inactive, temporary, and/or permanent, as defined below:

- Individual Records: the files generated by and belonging to one individual staff member
- Central Records: the files of several individuals or department, consolidated into a common filing system. Central Records are generally organized into a filing plan. Departments are responsible for maintaining a filing plan with a controlled vocabulary and structure. The Museum's standard central record location is the L Drive, although they may be stored in paper files or other external hard drives.
- Active Records: files that are regularly used by the staff member or department which created them and continue to be maintained in office spaces (also called current or working records).
- Inactive Records: files that are no longer regularly used by the staff member or department which created them. These records may be transferred to the Institutional Archives, discarded, or destroyed according to the criteria outlined in this policy.
- Temporary Records: files of limited administrative value that are maintained for a specified period before destruction.
- Permanent Records: files of enduring, historical, or research value that are maintained in perpetuity in the Institutional Archives after their active period of use.

The guidance in this policy applies to all formats, including paper, electronic, photographic, and audiovisual records. Materials will be digitized on a case-by-case basis with the goal of making institutional records and archives accessible. The Museum will not destroy any records that have been subpoenaed by a court, regardless of this policy's documentation retention time guidelines.

### **Institutional Archives**

The Institutional Archives are the permanent record of the Museum's activities. Institutional Archives are created by both individual staff members and departments. The Institutional Archives also maintains the Museum's Temporary Records, such as

financial and personnel files which can be destroyed after being maintained for the period of time required by law.

The Research and Archaeology Department, in collaboration with individual staff members and departments, is responsible for maintenance of the Museum's Institutional Archives.

**In general, only final copies of projects and notes or correspondence with actionable items are maintained in the Institutional Archives.**

Below is a (non-comprehensive) list of materials maintained in the Institutional Archives:

- Final copies of exhibit text and photographs of installed exhibits
- Final copies of educational curriculum
- Final copies of grant proposals, reports, and financials
- Policies, procedures, or plans
- Promotional materials, photographs, and videos of major Museum activities
- Board meeting minutes
- Significant donor relationship files
- Significant financial records
- Significant correspondence, including emails which reference actionable items
- Significant departmental files which reference actionable items

**Weeding Institutional Records**

Weeding involves removing records with short-term value from the Museum. Weeded records can generally be discarded, destroyed (shredded), or deleted unless they must be kept for a certain time period for legal purposes.

Record retention is left to the discretion of each staff member and/or department, and the time period files are considered active may differ across departments and staff. After a staff member leaves the Museum, it is the responsibility of their supervisor and the Collections Manager to work collaboratively to determine disposition of their Individual Records.

The following bullet points outline suggestions for weeding institutional records.

- **Drafts:** the Institutional Archives only maintains final copies and drafts with significant annotations in the Museum's Permanent Records. Drafts should be discarded after a final product has been developed and approved.
- **Routine Correspondence:** the Institutional Archives only maintains copies of correspondence which mention significant actionable items. Examples of correspondence that can be discarded once inactive include meeting announcements; logistical information; confirmations, and travel itineraries.

- Duplicates: the Institutional Archives does not maintain duplicate copies of records. In general, the Institutional Archives maintains original material only from the staff member or department which created it. Photocopies, extra copies, documents in multiple formats, and documents saved in multiple locations should be weeded after they become inactive. Staff members and departments should save either the original (for documents only in paper format) or the copy that is filed with the most complete set of records (for documents in multiple or electronic format).
- Research Material: Apart from materials created as the result of a staff member's original research, the Institutional Archives does not maintain information collected as background, informational, or research material. Final copies of exhibits, programming, or lectures will be maintained.
- Photographs and audiovisual materials: the Institutional Archives does not maintain copies of the same photograph or photographs which show only slight differences (e.g., multiple photographs of the same group of people taken at the same time). Photographs and videos must be clearly focused and document a moment of significance (e.g., a Museum program). Photographs and video of collections objects are managed outside this policy.
- Miscellaneous: the following types of records can be discarded after their period of active use: supply and vendor catalogs; un-annotated envelopes; blank forms; advertisements and promotional materials outside the Museum; equipment manuals, and warranties.

### **Recommended Records Disposition**

The following chart describes different types of records and their recommended disposition:


Type of Record	Description	Disposition
Accounting Records (general)	Routine deposits, bills, sales receipts, vendor files, payroll, etc.	Originals: destroy when seven years old Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Accounting Records (significant)	Final documents and significant correspondence relating to procedural and financial audits, budgets, capital campaigns, endowments, investments, and major gifts	Originals: transfer to archives and maintain significant figures in accounting database in perpetuity Copies: destroy when seven years old
Archaeological Conservation Records	Significant descriptions, photographs, drawings, inventory lists, condition statements, studies, and related documentation for	Originals: maintain in department Copies: destroy when no longer needed

	objects conserved in the lab	
Archaeological Contracts	Documentation pertaining to individuals, vendors, services, and final work products of contract work	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Archaeological Fieldwork Records	Significant field notes, photographs, videos, drawings, dive logs, and related materials	Originals: maintain in department Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Board Records	Correspondence, agendas, minutes, and materials related to meetings and significant activities of the Board	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Collections Data and Management Files	Accession and deaccession data, catalogs, descriptions, object images, deeds of gifts, rights and reproduction permissions, original research materials, condition reports, insurance records	Originals: maintain in database and departmental files Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Departmental (administrative) Files	Significant memoranda, reports, meeting materials, notes, and miscellaneous documentation	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Development Files	Donation history, contact reports, significant notes	Originals: maintain in database Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Educational Program Files	Significant correspondence, program proposals, agreements, curricula, and final products such as worksheets, teacher packets, handouts, flyers, and/or program booklets	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Exhibition Records	Significant correspondence, memoranda, scripts, drawings, evaluations, and related materials; and final copies of exhibit text and installations	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed

Grant Files (accepted)	Proposals, reports, correspondence, and financials	Originals: destroy when 7 years old, maintain in database Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Grant Files (rejected)	Proposals, correspondence, and financials	Originals: maintain in database Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Human Resources Records	Payroll documentation, and Job applications, personnel files, resumes, and CV of significant staff	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Individual Records	Significant correspondence, email, memoranda, reports, meeting materials, notes, and miscellaneous documentation of upper-level Museum staff	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Insurance Files	Claims, indemnifications, and waivers of insurance	Originals: destroy when six years old Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Marketing Materials	Calendars, advertisements, brochures, printouts, announcements, press coverage, and other final copies of print and internet Museum promotional materials	Originals: transfer two copies to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Policies, Procedures, and Plans	Final copies of policies, significant procedures, and plans, and significant supporting documentation of their development	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Professional Activities Files	Significant documentation relating to professional events in which staff participated as a speaker or organizer	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Program Files	Significant scripts, audiovisual materials, notes, agendas, and related materials for Museum programming, lectures, and speeches	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed


Publications	Final copies of newsletters, annual reports, journal articles, and other published Museum materials	Originals: transfer two copies to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Research Inquiries	Routine inquiries about specific objects or historical events	Originals: maintain in department Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Significant Property Records	Deeds, construction rights, rights of way, invoices for major equipment purchases	Originals: destroy 3 years after sale of property Copies: destroy when no longer needed
Visitor Records	Documentation of official visitor counts and surveys	Originals: transfer to archives Copies: destroy when no longer needed

Approved by the Board of Directors, August 4, 2021




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Scott Hardy  
Chair, Board of Directors




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Susan Evans McClure  
Executive Director