University Archives: Selection Policy

Version 3.0: July 2014

Background

1.1 The University of Leicester Archive is the body of documentary material produced by the University itself which has been selected for permanent preservation because of its research value and as evidence of the establishment, development and most significant functions and activities of the institution.

1.2 This Policy recognises the Data and Records Retention Schedule (DRRS)¹ created by the University’s Information Assurance team to inform the processing of the University’s current and semi-current records. The archive service aims to integrate its selection criteria with the DRRS and achieve harmonisation between the two processes. This policy aims therefore to complement the University Archives Policy, the Records Management Policy and Data and Records Retention Schedule.

2. Scope

The Selection Policy applies to all records created or held by the University of Leicester, its predecessors and affiliated bodies, and to records deposited by former staff and students of the University. It applies to all records, irrespective of format, including digital or e-records (both born-digital and digital surrogates).

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this Selection Policy is to inform decision-making on the selection of institutional records for inclusion in the University of Leicester Archive. Responsibility for decision-making on archives selection lies with the University Archivist but this policy and its appendix are available to staff throughout the university with responsibility for implementing the DRRS and who may as a result be identifying material for potential transfer to the University of Leicester Archive.

3.2 This policy notes that institutional archives generally comprise less than 5% of all records generated or held by the creating body. The aims of the Selection Policy are as follows:

- To articulate the principles underpinning decisions concerning which documentary material is worthy of permanent preservation as part of the institutional archive.

¹ http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ias/records/records-retention-schedule
To promote accountability for the ongoing integrity and validity of the University of Leicester Archive.

To ensure that the strategic aims of the University Archives Policy/Collection Policy are met.

To assist the University Archivist in achieving consistency of decision-making, ensuring that material of genuine archival / research value is identified, retained and managed as such.

To ensure that material that is not worthy of permanent preservation as part of the institutional archive is identified in a timely fashion and appropriate disposal arrangements made.

To complement the DRRS in guiding staff throughout the university who are tasked with decision-making on record-keeping practices on the types of material of potential interest to the University of Leicester Archive.

4. Selection principles

When selecting records worthy of permanent preservation, decisions should be guided by the following principles and with reference to the DRRS.

- Records of continuing value to the ongoing business of the University will almost certainly have the greatest potential archival value.

- In most instances, records that demonstrate how policies and strategic plans for the University were formulated, developed and implemented are of a high archival value. Day to day transactional material, such as paid invoices, is of less value.

- Where possible archival retention decisions will be made at series level: for example, a series of committee minutes will be selected, rather than individual minutes of particular meetings.

- Selection should not occur at below item level (e.g. assessing each document within a file). Records should not be weeded or cherry-picked. To aid their understanding of archival material, researchers need to know the context in which it was created. For example if a correspondence file appears to contain only one or two significant papers, retaining the whole file will ensure that researchers are able to fully comprehend the context in which the records were created.

- The only exception to the above principle is the removal of duplicate records.

- In most cases, only the final/principal/master copy of an archival document need be retained. If this copy has been lost or destroyed, then a copy or earlier draft should be selected in its place. Circulation copies of, for example, agendas and supporting documents are not required.

- Information within records recorded or duplicated at a higher level will not be retained. For example, records of minor committees and working groups that are relayed to and recorded in the records of policy making committees or officers at a higher point in the administrative hierarchy.
• This Policy recognises that the existing University of Leicester Archive shows particularly weak coverage of material generated by teaching units and seeks to address this through pro-active identification of appropriate material.

• In those instances where older (fifty plus years) records are uncovered, University staff should contact the University Archivist even if the DRRS indicates destruction. Older records whose modern equivalent is not required for archives may nevertheless retain some archival value, as they may constitute the only surviving evidence of a significant activity from a particular historical period.

• This policy recognises the value of more informal records and / or records which record less procedural aspects of the life of the University and seeks to ensure that the University of Leicester Archive is representative of the richness and diversity of all aspects of university life.

• Where University staff attend meetings of or otherwise participate in the activities of external bodies, papers created by or relating to that external body will accrue amongst their working papers. It is not necessary to select records created by external bodies for preservation within the University of Leicester Archive where the archive of that body is held by another institution. For example, the papers of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals are held at the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University. The University of Leicester Archives does not seek to replicate material already held in that archive.

• Questions concerning the potential archival significance of records or other aspects of this policy should be addressed to the University Archivist.

5. Responsibilities

The following responsibilities accompany the selection process:

• Retention decisions should be made as soon as possible after records are created or received. This is in accordance with best practice, avoids backlogs of material and aids access where appropriate.

• It is the responsibility of departments/divisions to carry out the initial selection of records for transfer to the University Archives by referring to the DRRS. The University Archivist is available to provide guidance where needed, particularly for any records not covered by the schedule and which may seem worthy of permanent preservation.

• Any disposal decisions must be recorded using the Records Disposal Template [UNDER REVIEW], available on the Information Assurance webpage

• After records have been transferred to the University Archive the Archivist has the authority to make further selection and disposal decisions with reference to the DRRS, this policy and professional best practice. These decisions will be fully documented.

• The University Archivist will also work closely with the University’s Information Assurance Office to ensure that archival appraisal procedures are integrated with wider records management processes within the University.
6. Selection objectives

6.1 Objective of archival selection

The primary objective of archival selection is to identify University records which accurately reflect the establishment, development and most significant functions and activities of the University of Leicester. The records should be able to show:

- what the University did
- when, where and how it did it
- why it did it in a particular way
- who were the key staff involved and why
- what impact did it have and who was affected by it

6.2 The process of archival selection will focus on the University’s principal functions. These are:

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Research
3. Student administration and support
4. Corporate relations
5. Corporate management
6. Resources management
7. Enterprise and business development

The selection objectives for each function are outlined below. These take into account the HEI Business Classification Scheme formulated by JISC and the related publication Guidance on Archival Appraisal. In most instances, departments and divisions will carry out a number of different activities across functions.

6.2.1 Teaching selection objectives

The objective is to preserve evidence of the University’s delivery of its taught programmes at both graduate and undergraduate level. This includes records related to:

- the development of teaching strategies and policies;
- the management of teaching standards;
- the development, administration, review and assessment of taught programmes and courses;
- the conferment of awards.

6.2.2 Research selection objectives

The objective is to preserve evidence of the University’s research programme, including records related to:

- the development of research strategies and policies;
• the management of research quality and standards;
• the development and management of research projects;
• the dissemination and exploitation of research.

6.2.3 Student administration and support selection objectives

The objective is to preserve evidence of the University’s recruitment, administration and support of students. This includes records related to:

• the development of students admission strategies and policies;
• the recruitment and admission of students;
• the management of student relations;
• the development of student support services strategies and policies;
• the development, management and delivery of student support services;
• the development and management of the University’s Student Union.

6.2.4 Corporate relations selection objectives

The objective is to preserve evidence of how the University manages and maintains its public profile, including the management of its relations with groups outside the University. This includes records related to:

• the development of marketing and public relations strategies and policies;
• the development and management of the University’s corporate identity;
• the management of media relations;
• the development of alumni relations strategies and policies;
• the management of alumni relations and events;
• the development of fundraising strategies and policies;
• the management of fundraising campaigns;
• the development of community relations strategies and policies;
• the management of community relations;
• the management of University special events.

6.2.5 Corporate management selection objectives

The objective is to preserve evidence of the University as a corporate entity. This includes records related to:

• the development of policies and procedures for strategic planning and performance management;
• the development of the University’s legal framework and governance structure;
• the management of governing and executive bodies;
• the management of senior officer appointments;
• the management of the University’s relationship with government and other funding bodies.
6.2.6 Resources management selection objectives

The objective is to preserve evidence of the management of the University’s estates, staff, information resources, IT and finance. This includes records related to:

- the development of estate management strategies and policies;
- the management and development of its estates;
- the development of finance strategies and policies;
- accounts and asset management;
- the development of personnel strategies and policies;
- workforce planning and management, including the management of industrial relations;
- the development of information resources, including ICT, University records and archives and the University Library;
- intellectual property management, including management of its patents.

6.2.7 Enterprise and business development

The objective is to preserve evidence of the establishment of related companies which are wholly or partly-owned by the institution; of the management of services provided by the University to students, staff, the general public or businesses on a commercial basis. This includes records related to:

- development of related companies strategy, planning and policy development; formation, management and disposal of related companies
- development of commercial services strategy, planning and policy development; planning, quality management and promotion of the commercial services

6.3 The University of Leicester Archive also includes complementary material which is not part of the core institutional archive but documents aspects of the lives and careers of individuals associated with the University such as former staff and students. These are NOT the records created as part of their official duties (which would be processed as part of the core institutional archive) but to their subsequent career development or other aspects of public and private life. Different selection principles apply to these records and these will be developed and formally agreed at a later point.

The University Archives Selection Policy will be subject to a review every three years. The date of the next review is May 2017.

Agreed by the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee, 7 July 2014
Appendix A

Definitions

Records: recorded information in any form, created, received and maintained by the University in the conduct of its business, and kept as evidence of that activity. A record is not ephemeral: that is to say, it contains information that is worthy of preservation in the short, medium or long term. The record is a corporate rather than an individual resource.

Record series: a body of records or documents maintained as a unit because of a common function, physical form, or use. Archive appraisal is usually of the records series as a whole, rather than individual components of it.

Records retention schedule: an authorised timetable for the retention and disposal of an organisation’s records. The schedule defines the content and purpose of each record series, the office responsible for creation, the required retention period and the final disposition of the records. Records should only be disposed of in accordance with the schedule.

To archive: the process of transferring records deemed worthy of permanent preservation to the University of Leicester Archives. At the point of transferral the University Archivist assumes responsibility for the care and preservation of those records.

Archival records or archives (noun): records deemed to have sufficient historical value to merit permanent preservation. They are transferred to the University Archives once their operational value to their office of creation has expired.

Archival appraisal: the process by which records of continuing and historical value are identified as archival records.

Archive repository: a dedicated storage and reference facility for archival records. The repository for the University of Leicester Archives is based at Special Collections, David Wilson Library, University Road.