Transferring Records to the Case Western Reserve University Archives

(effective 3/1/2003; revised 4/7/2011)

If you have questions, please contact the Reference Desk by mail, e-mail, telephone or fax.

Reference Desk
Case Western Reserve University Archives
20 University West
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7229

Telephone: 216-368-3320
Fax: 216-368-0482
E-Mail: Archives@case.edu

Why Transfer Records?

Policy

Policy on Retention of University Records
http://www.case.edu/its/archives/Records/RecordRetentionPolicy_2011-01-24.pdf

Posterity

The work your office does is important. Transferring your office's records to the Archives ensures that your contributions to CWRU's development is remembered. Without records from all offices, important information is lost.

Practicalities

You can save physical and digital space by transferring records to the Archives.

By transferring the seldom used records, you are no longer responsible for caring for them and searching them when necessary. The information you need will always be available; there is even a bonus: by combining the resources of the many departments that transfer records, a full and accurate research service can be provided.

What Records to Transfer?

The Archives collects the records of University administrative offices, academic schools and departments. The Archives will not keep every document, photograph, publication, etc. that is created by an office. Through accessioning and appraisal decisions we create the leanest documentary record of Case Western Reserve University.

If you wish to discuss your office's records in detail, please contact the Archives staff at Archives@case.edu or 216-368-3320.

Wanted Items

What the Archives wants from your office or department are the inactive records which document its purpose and functions. There are two main types of functions to be documented: core program activities and oversight/coordination activities.

Core program activities
Core program activities include work directly related to the primary programs and services which are the responsibility of your office. Examples of core activities are:

- planning a new degree program or a new major
- monitoring compliance with affirmative action guidelines
- evaluating the effectiveness of a staff training program
- contracting for demolition of a building

Oversight and coordination activities
Oversight and coordination activities include work necessary to keep all the separate programs and services working as a coherent whole. Examples of coordination activities are:

- convening a task force to recommend requirements for a new student center
- planning and coordinating the University accreditation effort
- reporting progress to supervisors

Examples of document types produced in the administration of these functions include:

- contracts
- correspondence (letters, memoranda, e-mail)
- minutes (of faculty, staff, and student groups)
- organizational charts
- photographs of University people, places, events (if identified)
- policies and procedures
- publications, such as annual reports, directories, financial reports, handbooks, newsletters
- reports

What Records to Transfer?

Unwanted Items

Routine support activities
There are some functions which are necessary to support core activities, but that are not the purpose of your office. These are called routine support activities (or housekeeping activities). Examples of routine support activities are:

- •purchasing office supplies
- •making travel arrangements
- •submitting work orders
- •replying to routine requests ("Here's a copy of the report you requested.")

Examples of document types produced in the administration of these functions include:

- •salary distribution reports
- •work orders
- •confirmations
- •reservations
- •itineraries
- •receipts
- •acknowledgments
- •monthly budget statements
- •letters of transmittal (cover letters, memoranda, e-mail)

Do not send these to the Archives.

Reference copies
Your office will also have documents which were not produced by your office but distributed throughout the University. These are what is known as reference copies or convenience copies. We already receive the record copy from the office of origin. Examples of these document types include:

- • Benelect package
- •President's Annual Report
- •CWRU General Bulletin

Do not send these to the Archives unless you are the office of origin.

External publications
You will oftentimes have publications or brochures from institutions external to the University. They are often kept for reference purposes. Examples of these document types include:

- •annual reports from foundations, such as the Cleveland Foundation
- •brochures from civic groups or professional groups, such as the Greater Cleveland Growth Association and the Society of American Archivists
- •IRS codes regarding the tax status of foreign visitors
- •reprints or photocopies of journal articles

Do not send these to the Archives.

What Records to Transfer?

Never send these:

- blank forms, stationery, envelopes
- artifacts (e.g. plaques, mugs, clothing, jewelry)

Advice

These guidelines must be administered thoughtfully. What is a routine support activity in one office might be a core activity in another office. For example, the procedures for how to process a purchase requisition is a routine support activity for the History Department; it is a core activity for the Purchasing Department.

How to Transfer Records?

These instructions are for paper records transferred to the University Archives. If your office is considering transferring electronic records, please contact the Archives.

Your cooperation with these procedures will enable the Archives to preserve and service your office's records more efficiently. Records improperly transferred to the Archives will be subject to immediate return at your office's expense.

Preparation of folders:

- Records should be in folders with legible labels securely attached to the folders
- The folder label should reflect the contents of the folder
  - e.g. You are the department assistant in the President's Office and have a folder full of president's annual reports; a correct folder label would be: President's Annual Reports, 1987-1999; an incorrect folder label would be: Agnar Pytte
- All obsolete folder labels should be removed or scratched out
- Pendaflex folders should not be used; they break open the boxes. Re-folder the items in manila-type file folders
- Folders should be packed in the order they were kept by your office

Preparation of boxlist:

- A list of folder titles (called a box list) should be made for each box and placed in box 1. Do not use Social Security Numbers in this list. You should keep a copy for your records.
- A digital box list should be prepared and sent, either in the body of an e-mail message, or as an attachment, to: Archives@case.edu. If it is sent as an attachment, the document should be a text file (e.g. ASCII or RTF), Word or Excel; no PDFs

Preparation of boxes:

- Sturdy boxes with a double-bottom, 12" wide x 15" deep x 10" high, or smaller, should be used; larger boxes will not fit on our shelves and present a safety hazard for staff
- Boxes should have lift-off lids, not attached lids. Do not tape lids to boxes
- If the box lid does not fit properly, you may have to repack some of the items
  - e.g. A large binder can be removed and the documents put in a file folder properly labeled
- Boxes should be labeled on the outside with your name, office name, and number of boxes: e.g. John Doe, President's Office, 1 of 2
  John Doe, President's Office, 2 of 2

How to Transfer Records?

Notifications:

- •Call University Archives at 216-368-3320 or send e-mail to Archives@case.edu so that we may expect your records
- •Contact the University Movers to transport the boxes from your office to the Archives. The Archives address to be used for the University Movers is: University Archives, 20 University West, 7229
- •If you wish to deliver the boxes yourself, call us to arrange a time

If you are transferring records from a non-university facility, you can either deliver the records yourself or send them by U.S. Mail.

The Archives mailing address is:
Case Western Reserve University Archives
20 University West
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7229

The Archives delivery address is:
Case Western Reserve University Archives
20 University West
11000 Cedar Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7229

When to Transfer Records?

Active records should not be sent to the University Archives. Records are active when the work to which they relate is ongoing or when they are frequently consulted for routine business.

The University Archives only accepts inactive records. Being inactive does not mean records are useless. It means that their primary job is finished. Records are considered inactive when:

1. the job they were created to do is finished
   e.g. the event you organized is over, and all the bills have been reconciled, and all the acknowledgments have been sent, and all the follow-ups have been made

or 2. the process and outcome of the activity the records document are not likely to be challenged
   e.g. the Campaign for CWRU is over, and the books have been audited, and the campaign has been evaluated

or 3. they are not needed as an example for a repeating activity
   e.g. you work in the Development Office and run the Annual Fund every fiscal year. You use the end of the fiscal year as a cut-off date and transfer the records 3 years after the close of each Annual Fund year.

As a rule of thumb, if the records have not been referred to in 3 years, they are inactive.

Records can be categorized in several ways.

Project Files
It is important to keep the documentation of a project or event together. For example, the planning, construction, and occupation of the Kelvin Smith Library took place over 6 years. You would not pull out the first 3 years of the project and transfer them. Keep all the records together until the project is completed and transfer them as a whole.

Another example might be: you work for the University Alumni Affairs Office and plan Reunion Weekend every year. You may wish to keep the most recent 2 years of reunion records to refer to, but not need anything older. You find this is true for all the alumni events you plan and coordinate. You then decide to transfer 3-year old event files annually (e.g. 1999 homecoming, reunion, and other event files are transferred in 2002; 2000 files are transferred in 2003, etc.).

When to Transfer Records?

Case Files
Case files document a fixed set of transactions executed across a defined population, generally using standardized forms to conduct and record those transactions. Each file contains the same kinds of records that result from the same set of activities. The files are differentiated from one another by the distinct cases they document. For example, dean's office student files document the progression of students from the date they matriculate until their commencement or withdrawal. There is one file for each student.

Case files should not be transferred until they are at least 5 years past their close date. For example, dean's office student files for students who graduated or withdrew in 2004 can be transferred in 2009.

Subject Files
There is no set time period for transferring these types of files. These are files which are organized by topics, and do not readily fall into the other categories. They contain documents concerning a wide variety of functions and activities. (They are also called topical files.) These activities are often ongoing, i.e. there is no end date.

For example, your office has all documents regarding dormitories and room and board in a file called "Housing." You put such documents in here until the folder is full, and then you can label its span dates (e.g. 1995-2000). You then create a new folder with the same folder title and consecutive span dates (e.g. Housing, 2001-   ) and fill in the end date when full.

Housing, 1995-2000
Housing, 2001-

Another example might include a heading with folder titles. You administer in some manner endowed professorships. You have a general folder with procedural and establishment information which you call "Endowed Professorships." You then need separate folders for the several chairs you have. For example:

Endowed Professorships, 1979-1990
Endowed Professorships. Elmer Lincoln Lindseth Professorship, 1982-1987
Endowed Professorships. Jesse Hauk Shera Assistant Professorship, 1984-1987
Endowed Professorships. Joseph T. Wearn University Professorship, 1986-1990

When a file is closed (e.g. Housing, 1995-2000), and no longer active, then it could be transferred.

When to Transfer Records?

Frequency of Transfer
As with most maintenance activities, transferring records on a regular schedule can minimize the pain and inconvenience and improve your efficiency. We recommend reviewing your office's records annually. Some offices incorporate it as part of end of fiscal year activities and preparation of annual report.

Volume
Do not worry if you only send 1 box a year. Volume does not matter. In this case, quality of the records is what counts!

What Happens to the Transferred Records?

When records are transferred to the University Archives, they are accessioned.

1. We assign an accession number that uniquely identifies this set of records.
2. We compare the contents of the boxes to the box list you prepared and note corrections if needed.
3. We record information about the records, their creators, and their transfer.
4. We send the information recorded in step 3 to you in a Records Release.
5. You sign 1 copy of the Records Release and return it to the Archives. Keep the other copy with your copy of the box list as a permanent record of what your office has transferred to the Archives.
6. The records are stored, exactly as received, in a secure, climate controlled facility, until they are processed.
7. In the fullness of time, we process the records you transferred. Non-permanent documents are removed (duplicates, convenience copies, etc.). Permanent documents are integrated with other records transferred by your office. Damaged or deteriorating documents are repaired or copied. Finding aids are created to simplify retrieval of information and documents.
8. We notify you that an accession has been processed and that the original box list has been superseded.
9. We use the information contained in the records to answer reference requests.

Until records are processed, you may request their temporary or permanent return by contacting the Archives Reference Desk. Provide the accession number/box number/folder title. As you can see, it is essential that the box list you prepared is accurate. (See How to transfer records for box list instructions.)

Processed records are not loaned. The information is always available, and copies can be made; but once the item has been deemed of permanent value, it never circulates again.