

ARCHIVES COLLECTION POLICIES

I. Statement of Purpose:

The University of the Arts Archives seeks to acquire, preserve, and provide access to records and other materials that document the history of the University of the Arts and its predecessor institutions. Through our physical collections, as well as our digitized items, we provide discovery opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and researchers to learn more about the unique history of this institution.

As defined by the [Society of American Archivists](#), archival records are:

*"Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs that are preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator."*¹

Thus, the University of the Arts Archives contains records and documents produced by the University of the Arts and its preceding institutions that are no longer considered [active](#).

II. Historical Background of the University:

The University of the Arts was formed in 1985 when [Philadelphia College of Art merged with Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts](#). At the time of the merger both colleges were over a century old and held prominent reputations in Philadelphia as educators of the visual and performing arts. Known for a short time as Philadelphia Colleges of the Arts, the school changed its name to University of the Arts in 1987 after being granted university status from the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education. The University of the Arts remains the only university in the United States dedicated to "educating students in the visual and performing arts, design, and writing." The Archives aims to reflect this unique heritage and convey its significance within the larger social and cultural history of arts education in Philadelphia from the late 19th century to the present.

III. General Collection Guidelines:

Chronological Guidelines: The University Archives collects records beginning with the formation of our predecessor institutions in the 19th century.

Scope of Collections:

Non-current records generated or received by the University's administrative offices, academic departments, University clubs and organizations, and student activities. Included are records such as meeting minutes and agendas, correspondence, memos, and reports.

¹ Society of American Archivists. (2018). Archival record. *Glossary of archival and records terminology*. Retrieved from <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/archival-records>.

Official university publications, including annual reports, newsletters, yearbooks, handbooks, brochures, and posters.

Alumni and student publications (if focused on UArts-related topics, with intended dissemination to the University community). These include items such as:

Programs, photographs, video-recordings, and other documentation of official University events, such as commencement exercises, exhibitions, symposia, parties, plays, concerts, and recitals.

Press releases on University news and events, published by the University.

Blueprints, photographs, and master plans of the University campus.

Types of Materials: Records range in a wide variety of formats, such as manuscripts, photographs, digital files (both digitized and born-digital formats), audio/visual materials, regalia, and scrapbooks.

Restrictions: We do not currently maintain the personal papers of individual administrators, alumni or faculty members. Similarly, we do not collect faculty and staff employment records or any student records. Researchers looking for information on former students should contact the UArts Registrar. Graduate theses are retained in the Libraries' Visual Resources and Special Collections and the UArts Digital Collections, which can be searched through the [UArts Libraries' online catalog](#).

IV. Acquisitions

Acquisitions refer to the archival items accessioned by a repository into the collection. What is "accessioning"? Accessioning is "to take legal and physical custody of a group of records or other materials and to formally document their receipt."² These records can be obtained either by an authorized transfer by an internal department within the university or via a signed deed of gift by a donor. Acquisitions are intended to support the mission of the archives and fall within the designated collecting criteria.

Acquisition Focus:

Being an academic institution, the University of the Arts Archives receives a majority its holdings from various offices and departments at the University in accordance to the official [UArts Records Retention Policy](#). On occasion we accept donations from alumni, faculty, and other members of the University community if they are relevant to the scope of our collections. We do not purchase or sell materials.

Restrictions:

The University of the Arts Archives is committed to preserving those items related to the university's history and community. The Archives seeks to make them available for research as soon as possible. At the same time, it has an obligation to guard against invasion of privacy and to protect the confidentiality of its records in accordance with all applicable laws. Therefore, every private donor has the right to impose reasonable restrictions upon their papers or work to protect confidentiality for a reasonable period of time. Restrictions on access are for a fixed term and are determined at the time of donation. The Archives does not accept agreements that restrict access to material in perpetuity or does not supply a specific date releasing the restriction. It encourages minimal access restrictions consistent with the legal rights of all concerned.

² Society of American Archivists. (2018). Accession. *Glossary of archival and records terminology*. Retrieved from <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/accession>.

Official University records will not be restricted unless dictated by [records retention schedules](#), or the needs of departments. Commonly restricted items include Board of Trustees documents, Strategic Planning materials, Governance collections, and correspondence received or generated by deans and directors of the Colleges and Schools/Departments.

Procedure:

As previously stated, material for the Archives may be transferred from an internal department or donated by an outside party.

Transfer of official University records:

The transfer of University records to the Archives should be in accordance with the [UArts Records Retention Policy](#) and other Archival Policies. All transfer of records must be accompanied by a signed accession form or confirmed through written correspondence.

Donation of non-official records:

Before an item will be accepted into the Archives, the archivist must evaluate it. The University Archives wishes to avoid donations that are accompanied by any restrictions on use and access, although this will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Archives will not accept materials without a legal transfer of title through a deed of gift. All transfer forms must be signed by the archivist, director of libraries, and the donor. Material on deposit will only be accepted if there is a signed agreement between the archivist and the depositor designating the material for permanent donation after a specified period of time. The Archives will not accept materials that are closed to researchers in perpetuity.

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