

PACSCL/CLIR

“Hidden Collection in the Philadelphia Area: A Consortial Processing and Cataloging Initiative”

MINIMAL PROCESSING MANUAL

Goals of this project

1. Provide intellectual and physical access to some of Philadelphia’s finest primary source materials that, at this point, are “hidden.”
2. Create a model which other repositories and/or consortial groups may use for their own projects, especially in minimally processing collections and reducing backlogs.
3. Process the selected collections minimally so that their use can be tracked and recorded and, if deemed worthwhile, future grants may be acquired to process them more fully.

Minimal Processing

1. Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner introduced the concept of minimal processing in their article, “More Product, Less Process,” in order to handle late 20th century collections. Minimal processing is designed to reduce the backlogs created by accruals and the time intensive nature of processing. The goal is to make collections accessible to researchers even if they are not perfectly processed.
2. The real key to minimal processing is taking advantage of all the information that is already available. Look at what is written on the boxes and how folders are labeled. Use the processing plan and the information in your packets.
3. While working, remember that this project requires that minimal processing is employed: do not get overly absorbed in the collection!
 - **Arrangement will take place at the series and possibly subseries level and description will take place at the series/subseries level and often at the folder level.**
4. Work efficiently and take good notes so that you do not have to return to reinvestigate topics.
5. All administrative and collection level information will be entered into the Archivists’ Toolkit before you arrive at the repository.
6. Remember that this is an experimental project: to the best of PACSCL’s knowledge, this is the first time that minimal processing will be applied, large scale, to collections that pre-date the late 20th century. Please complete your processing worksheet as you process in order to provide the best data for future processors or others interested in using these techniques.

Included in this manual:

1. **The Guide, page 2**
2. **Processing Levels, page 10**
3. **Notes Worksheets, page 11**
4. **Processing Worksheet Sample, pages 15**
5. **Definitions, page 16**
6. **Sensitive Materials, page 21**
7. **Resources, page 24**

FOR THIS PROJECT, processing is divided into 5 steps:

- I. Familiarize Yourself with the Collection and Take Notes**
- II. Arrange the Collection**
- III. Describe the Collection (Create the Finding Aid)**
- IV. Proofread Your Work**
- V. Tie Up Loose Ends**

The Guide

STEP 1: Familiarize Yourself with the Collection and Take Notes

- Examine Existing Descriptive Documents
 - These documents may include survey notes, accession records, existing container lists, processing plan, etc.
 - In the processing plan, look at:
 - **Biography/History Note:** Look for names, topics and context within the material
 - **Dates of Collection:** Be aware of the date span that was originally stated. Remember that this collection is surveyed but unprocessed—the archivists accessioning the collection, the surveyors and the person creating the processing plan only briefly looked at the collection and after processing, new date spans may be necessary.
 - **Notes to Processors** which may indicate problems or issues to which you will need to pay attention.
 - **Subjects:** should, very generally, tell you what the collection is about. However, be aware of the listed subjects—after processing, you will be sending Holly/Courtney an email if you think that the subjects listed are not appropriate or additional subjects should be added.
 - **Look for potential series**
 - The processing plan, created by the project staff, should help identify potential series, but as the processor, you will be the one who finally determines the series list.
- Examine the Collection
 - Look at the outside of the boxes for clues: you may find information about accessions, donors, subjects and the quantity of materials donated.
 - Compare what you see with what you know of the collection from the existing descriptive documents and processing plan.
 - As you are looking through the material, use your notes worksheet to record additional:
 - Topics, Names and Places
 - Genres
 - Highlights in the collection
 - This will help you write your scope and content and add to the biographical and historical notes.
 - As you begin to identify subjects or types of materials, place markers or pieces of paper with the identifying information at the beginning and end of each of the groups of material.

STEP II: Arrange the Collection

- Identify an Intellectual Arrangement
 - The first thing to look for is original order: original order, if it makes sense, will always be used. If there is no original order or the original order is not conducive to research, you will need to rearrange the collection.
 - Original order, at the intellectual stage, is important because it indicates the way the creator thought, kept and used their own records
 - Identify Series and Subseries, if applicable
 - A series is nothing more than “a group of similar records that are arranged according to a filing system and that are related as the result of being created, received, or used in the same activity” (SAA Glossary).
 - A subseries is a series within a series.
 - The markers or pieces of paper you placed at the beginning and ends of groups of common material in step one will probably help you at this point.
 - Often, rearrangement is common sense: if you have a hundred folders that contain correspondence, it makes sense to create a series called “Correspondence.” It is not always this easy, but use your best judgment and look for common genres and themes in the collection.
 - Possible Series: Genres (Types of Materials), Topics, Time Frames
 - Architectural Records, Biographical Material, Correspondence, Ephemera, Financial Records, Government Records, Images, Legal Documents, Organizational Records, Press, School Records, etc.
 - These are just a few: Remember that one of the fundamental archival principles states that archival records are *unique*. Every collection you deal with will have a unique set of series that may or may not include any typical types.
 - Once you have identified the series, flag the start and end of the series.
Think about the Users: Make sure your series really make sense in the context of the collection.
 - Identify a Physical Arrangement
 - Again, pay attention to Original Order: If original order exists, this makes your minimal processing even more efficient.
 - Place the series in the box in a logical order (alphabetical, chronological, etc).
 - Minimal Processing Rules:
 - Do **NOT** organize material within folders.
 - Do **NOT** unfold papers within folders.
 - Do **NOT** remove papers clips or other metal fasteners unless absolutely necessary.
 - DO remove rubber bands.
 - DO use only pencil (everything an archivist does should be reversible).
 - **NEVER** throw anything away without permission from staff. Appraisal is possibly the most difficult task in processing and we do not have the time to do this well or thoughtfully. Leave the material in the collection UNLESS staff tells you to throw it away.
 - Minimal Processing was designed for late 20th century records, so we will be experimenting with how to minimally process collections containing pre-20th century records that are not in folders or easily identified.
 - You will encounter these situations: the guidelines on the following pages for handling them are based upon suggestions from Matthew Lyons and Cary Majewicz at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania:

Situation	Recommendations
Non archival box	Transfer contents and label information to archival box.
Box too heavy to lift	Subdivide into two or more boxes, if possible.
Non archival folder	If folder is damaged or doesn't fit in a document box, transfer contents and label to archival folder without any additional work to contents. If folder is overstuffed, divide into two and note on new folders that contents were originally in one folder. (To label a continuation of folders you can use 1:2 and 2:2). Otherwise, keep as is.
Volumes	Place one or more volumes in standard box if they will fit and be adequately supported, especially if volumes are damaged or have soft covers. Keep clearly related volumes together if possible. If the repository stores volumes directly onto shelf, make brief tabs for each volume, including collection name or number, volume type, and dates. Any volumes with detached covers and/or spines should be tied with book tape.
Unfolded bundle of papers	For each bundle: untie and put into one folder without sorting or other work on contents. If folder is overstuffed, divide into two. If bundle is labeled or brief description can be quickly gleaned, label folder accordingly. Otherwise, look at records and make the best guess possible based on a brief examination.
Pile of loose papers (in box or on shelf)	Group papers and place in folders, keeping groups of adjacent, related materials together if possible. If brief description can be quickly gleaned (e.g. prevailing recipient, approx. date range), label folder accordingly. Otherwise, look at records and make the best guess possible based on a brief examination.
Volume needs repair	Flag for local staff and note in Preservation worksheet.
Cased photos, glass negatives or slides, other fragile items	Wrap in tissue if not adequately protected against normal handling. Flag for local staff and note in Preservation worksheet.
Mold, possible nitrate film	Notify local staff immediately and follow their procedures for isolating or note in Preservation worksheet.
Live bugs	Notify local staff immediately and follow their procedures for isolating.
Sensitive materials that are candidates for restriction for legal privacy reasons (e.g. medical or student records, personnel or case files) **See note for further info:	Ask local staff if you are correct in thinking certain items should be restricted. If yes, follow their procedures for physically and intellectually identifying restricted material. If an entire series must be restricted, use note fields in the Archivists' Toolkit (see The Archivists' Toolkit Guide).

Obvious large cache of duplicates	This type of duplication is usually only found in 20 th century institutional or corporate materials. Discuss with local staff, and remove in accordance with local records management policy and/or local staff instruction.
Three-ring binder	Remove pages, transfer to folder(s)
Post-bound volume	Leave as is unless damaged
Artifacts	Flag for local staff
Audio-visual materials	Identify formats if possible

▪ ****Sensitive Material**

- This is tricky and controversial: according to the Society of American Archivists: “Archivists may place restriction on access for the protection of privacy or confidentiality of information in the records,” However, according to Mark Green, “Imposing restrictions where neither law nor donor wishes demand is a danger.” Don’t restrict items without the ability to justify your decision.
- Look at the University of North Carolina’s “Sensitive Materials Processing Guidelines Overview” located on page 22 of this Manual.
- **ALWAYS** pay attention for **Social Security Numbers** which are found extensively in 20th century collections! Social Security was not instituted until 1935 so you do not have to look for them in materials pre-1935, and social security numbers are not reused. Thus, if the person is dead, you do not need to worry. If you don’t know if the person is dead, restrict the material.
- Consider also other sensitive ISSUES:
 - Native American topics.
 - Court Materials which are not official.
 - Board minutes which are not official or very recent.
 - Field notes in anthropological or archeological collections.
 - These are just a FEW examples: use your best judgment and common sense and don’t be afraid to ask. Often the local staff may tell you to be cautious: Notes in the Archivists’ Toolkit may read: “Series restricted; please talk to Archivist for further information.” Repository staff can then reevaluate the series and determine if it absolutely must be restricted.

STEP III: Describe the Collection and Create the Finding Aid

- Using the **Archivists' Toolkit**, create the finding aid using the Archivists' Toolkit Guide provided in your manual.
- **Titling series, subseries and folders**
 - Each institution will have their own format for folder titles and dates: make sure you are aware of their format before beginning your container list (if you have one!)

MINIMAL PROCESSING REMINDER: You will not be spending significant time with any aspect of the collection, so it is important to pay close attention to any details that are quickly available or have been noted in the existing descriptive documents or on folders.

- Writing Good Titles
 - When possible, you will be transcribing from existing labels into the Archivists' Toolkit. Only worry about improving titles if they are not at all helpful to researchers or are inaccurate. Enhance titles with dates, whenever possible and with additional information when it is easily available.
 - Writing good titles is extremely important even (or especially) when minimally processing.
 - This is often where researchers will decide if a collection contains information that makes research worth their time, and sometimes travel.
 - Pay attention to your wording and be as accurate as possible
 - Example: Meeting regarding Coal Mining in Scranton, PA, 1995
 - Is this a meeting about coal mined in Scranton, PA or is it a meeting about coal mining, generally, which was held in Scranton, PA?
 - A researcher may be interested in only one of these, and a title as unclear as this one may result in a researcher wasting his/her time or missing information that is really useful.
 - **Abbreviations:** Try very hard not to use abbreviations—few are absolutely standardized and part of this project's purpose is to create finding aids for a centralized, standardized EAD repository.
 - **Acronyms:** Do not use acronyms without describing them fully the first time they are used. Use acronyms sparingly: with electronic finding aids, researchers may jump to a portion of the finding aid without reading all notes. If you have a series title that has an acronym, make certain that you include the full name in the series title, in addition to the acronym. Example: Outdoor Advertising of America (OAA)
 - Just because you are in the archival field and certain abbreviations and acronyms are part of your vocabulary does not mean that they are part of a researcher's vocabulary.

Remember that finding aids are designed to make collections accessible: think about being the user of the collection and how you would want to search.
 - Miscellaneous--adjective 1. Consisting of members or elements of different kinds; of mixed character: a book of miscellaneous essays on American history. 2. Having various qualities, aspects, or subjects: a miscellaneous discussion.
 - What does "miscellaneous" mean to you? A big old mess you don't really know how to describe or how to handle?

- Anytime you use the term “miscellaneous” as a series title, please write a description that includes at least a list of the types of materials included therein. At least: Miscellaneous Financial materials.
- **Date fields (DACS Compliant)**
 - Inclusive Dates:
 - Use this: 1849-1851 (no spaces around the dash)
 - **NOT** 1849-51
 - If the collection continues to accrue, place the most recent accrual in the date span:
 - 1965-2009
 - (**NOT** 1965- OR 1965- (Ongoing)
 - Bulk Dates:
 - 1785-1960, bulk 1916-1958
 - Significant Gap in Records:
 - 1827, 1952-1978
 - Estimated Date Ranges:
 - approximately 1952-1978 OR circa 1870-1879
 - Single Dates:
 - 1975 OR 1975 March-August OR 1906 March 17
 - Estimated Single Dates:
 - probably 1867
 - approximately 1867
 - before 1867
 - after 1867 January 5
 - 1867 or 1868
 - 1860s
 - circa August 1975
 - No Dates:
 - undated
- **Notes: Biography/History Note, Scope and Content Note and Abstract**
 - This is the place for the collection’s importance and uniqueness to really shine.
 - This is another opportunity for the researcher to determine if the collection contains information that makes research worth their time, and sometimes, travel.
 - Look, again, to your existing descriptive documents, especially the survey notes and processing plan which will provide you with an excellent starting point: Sometimes very little revision or addition will be necessary.
 - Use your Note Worksheets—what you write does not need to be perfectly worded. **The quality of the information is what is key at this point!**
 - If you use any other work to create the notes, make certain that you cite the source using the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
 - Frequently, you will not be able to find all of the following types of information—but the more you have, the better!
 - **Biography/Historical Note**
 - This note is about the subject of the collection, USUALLY the creator, who may be a person, institution or business. Sometimes, the creator may be a collector and then the bio/historical note will focus on that which the creator collected with some information about the creator.

- This note should cover the general scope of the person or business, but it should focus on the aspect of the person, institution or business that is reflected in the collection.
- In every biography and historical note, the following should be included:
 - **Name:** this may include: titles, married names, aliases, pseudonyms, common or popular names and acronyms (if an institution or business) and changes of name.
 - **Geographic Location(s):** birthplace, place of business, etc.
 - **Birth/Death Dates** (as exact as possible) OR **Business Operation Dates**
 - This is almost always different from the collection dates as the collection may document only a fraction of a person's life or a business's operation.
 - **Education:** where was the person educated, what degrees were earned, the dates at an institution, etc.
 - **Type of business** conducted by person, institution or company.
 - **What the person, institution or company is known for, or why the person, institution or company is important?**
 - **Relationships** (parentage, marriage, business partners, etc.) found in the collection.
- **Scope and Content Note**
 - This note is about the contents of the collection.
 - This is a place to discuss highlights, obvious gaps in records, or unique perspectives on the topic of the collection.
 - In every scope note, the following should be included:
 - **Types of materials** found in the collection (genres or documentary forms) such as minutes, diaries, reports, water colors, documentaries, etc. Specifics can be added:
 - Example: Included in the collection are diaries describing day-to-day activities as well as nationally important events such as the signing of the Constitution of the United States of America in 1787 and Philadelphia's Yellow Fever Epidemic in 1793.
 - **Main Subjects** (use your best judgment).
 - **All Series Titles and Subseries Titles**, if applicable.
 - **Areas of the collection which are particularly rich with information.**
 - **Dates**
 - Spans of the records, dates of events, or extremely important time frames within the creators life or business operations:
 1. Example: If you are referring to Picasso's Blue Period, note the dates: 1900-1904.
 - Formats
 1. In narratives, use normal date order such as July 22, 2009.
 2. When describing a span, do not use spaces around the hyphen: 1945-1947 and do not abbreviate: NOT 1945-47. However, "from 1800 to 1900" is preferred.

3. Decades are written without an apostrophe: 1920s.

- **Functions or activities resulting in the creation of the records.**
- **How the collection fits into the more general context of history.**
- **How the collection may be useful to researchers** (this is really the highlights section).
 - Example: Researchers interested in colonial medicine may find the diaries which include entries on treating yellow fever to be useful.

▪ **Abstract**

- The abstract is a brief and tidy statement that sums up the collection—usually, it includes the most basic and important information from the bio/history note and the scope and content note.
- It is useful for providing researchers with the most essential facts about the collection.
- You should describe the collection in just a few sentences:
 - Who or what is the collection about?
 - What is contained in the collection?
 - Include the most important keywords

STEP IV: Proofread your Work

1. Export the Finding Aid

- Follow directions from the Archivists' Toolkit Step-by-Step Guide.
- Create an html document.
- Copy and paste the entire html document into a word document in order to run spell check, paying close attention to proper names and place names because spell check may not identify them as incorrect.
- Make any changes in the Archivists' Toolkit, **DO NOT** make changes to the word document.
- What to look for in proofreading the Finding Aid
 - Make certain that your bio/history and scope and contents notes make sense and reflect the contents of the collection.
 - Look for folder titles that do not make sense (if they don't make sense to you, they certainly won't make sense to a researcher).
 - Look for inconsistencies: do not vary certain terminology throughout the finding aid: pick either account book or ledger; keep punctuation very consistent, etc.
 - If you have obvious questions at the end of reading the finding aid, return to the collection and answer them.
 - Remember that you are minimally processing. You cannot provide full details. Go back **ONLY** when your unanswered questions compromise the effectiveness of the finding aid.
 - Look for mistakes in numbering on the finding aid.
 - Count the number of folders in each box and make certain it matches your finding aid.
 - Make certain that changes are made in the Archivists' Toolkit, **NOT** the word document.

2. Return to the existing descriptive documents.

- Make certain that all the most important information included in those documents is included in your Notes.
- Check to see if the date ranges are still correct: the surveyors did not have the opportunity to look at the collection as closely as you did.
- Have you reduced or increased the size of the collection through processing? If you did, check to see that the correct extent is reflected on the finding aid.
- Check to see if there are any names, subjects or genres that should be added to or removed from the authority list.
 - If there are, email Holly/Courtney and they will add them.

Ask your processing partner to review the finding aid: a fresh pair of eyes see amazing things.

3. Export the Finding Aid again.

- Check once more for spelling errors:
 - Make certain that the changes you made are actually reflected in the new finding aid.
 - Make certain that you did not create new misspellings when you added material to the finding aid.

STEP V. Tie Up Loose Ends

- Notify Holly/Courtney that the finding aid is completed:
 - When you are satisfied with the finding aid, email Holly/Courtney with an attachment of the html. They will review the finding aid and suggest changes and revisions, if necessary.
 - You will be responsible for making the changes, exporting the finding aid, checking for spelling errors and re-emailing Holly/Courtney.
 - If the repository is interested in reviewing the finding aid, they may do so at this point. Have a discussion to learn any suggestions/revisions they recommend.
- Create labels for boxes, following the standards of the repository.

**PACSCL/CLIR
Processing Levels**

Level	Title	Description	Arrangement	Preservation
1	Collection Level Processing	Collection level record in EAD (at least DACS single level minimum); no action taken other than the creation of the collection level record.	As is	Rehouse only if unserviceable in current housing. Check for mold, pests, and nitrate film
2	Series Level Processing	Collection Level Record and finding aid with series/subseries list. Described at the series/subseries level with information about their location in boxes.	Put series and boxes and/or volumes into rough order.	Replace damaged boxes; house items or folders found loose on shelf; tie up damaged and/or unboxed volumes with book tape Check for mold, pests, and nitrate film.
3	Folder Level Processing	Collection Level Record and finding aid with folder list.	Put series and folders or volumes in order within boxes. DO NOT order material within folders.	All unbound materials should be in archival boxes in order to arrange series groupings; refolding into archival folders only if damaged or do not fit; tie up damaged volumes or place in boxes Check for mold, pests and nitrate film.

PACSCL/CLIR "Hidden Collections" Project
NOTE Worksheet

Biographical Note for Personal Papers or Family Papers or Collections on a Person:

Who

Who is the collection about?

Name changes?

Who was their family?

Are other significant people in the collection and their relationships to creator/subject?

What

What did the person do for a living?

What are significant accomplishments or achievements of the person and their dates?

When

When was the person born?

When did they die?

What are significant timeframes/dates within the person's life time?

Where

Where was this person born?

Where were they educated (institution, degree, dates):

Where did they live?

Where did they conduct their business?

Did they travel/explore?

Did they die?

Why

Why is this person significant?

Why should people use this collection?

PACSCL/CLIR "Hidden Collections" Project
NOTE Worksheet

Historical Note for Corporate, Business or Organizational Records or Collections on a Corporation, Business or Organization:

Who

Who is the collection about?

Name changes/Dates?

Who were key players in the corporation, business or organization?

Who did the corporation, business or organization serve?

What

What did the corporation, business or organization do?

What was the mission statement?

What are significant accomplishments or achievements of the corporation, business or organization and their dates?

When

When was the corporation, business or organization created?

When did it stop its activities?

What are significant timeframes/dates within the corporation, business or organization's life cycle?

Where

Where was the corporation, business or organization located?

Location changes?

Why

Why is this corporation, business or organization significant?

Why should people use this collection?

PACSCL/CLIR "Hidden Collections" Project
NOTE Worksheet

Scope and Content Note:

THINK ABOUT THE COLLECTION FROM THE RESEARCHERS POINT OF VIEW!!!!

What kinds of materials are in the collection? If one type of material/or topic makes up the bulk of the collection, make note of that.

What are the main subjects contained within the collection?

What is the date range of the collection?

Are there gaps in the collection?

What are the highlights or specific strengths of the collection? If there is anything that pops out at you for future digitization projects, note it here!

Are their unique perspectives on topics within the collection?

How does the collection fit within the more general context of history?

How will this collection be useful to researchers?

PACSCL/CLIR "Hidden Collections" Project
NOTE Worksheet

Abstract:

Who is the collection about?

What are the dates of the creator/subject?

What is the significant contribution of the creator/subject?

What is in the collection?

What are the dates of the collection?

Sample Processing Worksheet

Repository: Any Repository

Processors: Your Name

Collection: Any Collection

Extent pre processing: 3 linear feet

Extent post processing: 2 linear feet

Hours for Processing: 9 hours

Existing Descriptive Documents:

Accession Record, container list, survey notes, processing plan

Did original order exist at the start of processing?

Yes: while series levels were not defined, they clearly existed and required only a little rearrangement in order to achieve intellectual control.

Minimal Processing Notes:

This collection contained one box of loose documents: however, they were separated into obvious categories and therefore, could easily be foldered and placed in an appropriate order. Little reading of the documents was required to create good titles and supply dates. The materials were typed and therefore, interpreting handwriting was not necessary. In addition, the size of the collection was reduced by one linear foot because the documents, once placed in folders, fit into other existing boxes.

The Archivists' Toolkit Notes:

The Archivists' Toolkit was not functioning properly and I could not enter the finding aid information until I restarted the computer 3 times (25 minutes). The scope and content note and the biography note, created by the survey team, were less developed than normal and I worked for about 1 hour on creating sufficient descriptive information.

The existing folder titles were usable and I created the folder list very quickly.

Level of Processing at End of Work: Processing Level 3 (folder level description)

Processing Times and Activities

Day 1: 9-12 and 1-3; Familiarized myself with collection (.5 hour), determined series levels (.5 hour), arranged the collection (.5 hour) and started the folder list in the Archivists' Toolkit (4.5 hours)

Day 2: 9-12; finished the folder list (1 hour), developed the scope and content and bio notes (2 hours) and proofread and made box labels (1 hour).

Day 3:

Day 4:

Day 5:

Day 6:

Day 7:

Definitions

From: A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology by Richard Pearce-Moses

<http://archivists.org/glossary/index.asp>

Abstract: n. ~ A concise summary of the key points of a larger work, often used to assist the reader in determining if that work is likely to be of use.

Access: n. ~ 1. The ability to locate relevant information through the use of catalogs, indexes, finding aids, or other tools. – 2. The permission to locate and retrieve information for use (consultation or reference) within legally established restrictions of privacy, confidentiality, and security clearance.

Archival Records: n. ~ 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. ('Archival records' connotes documents rather than artifacts or published materials, although collections of archival records may contain artifacts and books. Archival records may be in any format, including text on paper or in electronic formats, photographs, motion pictures, videos, sound recordings. The phrase archival records is sometimes used as an expanded form of archives to distinguish the holdings from the program.)

Archives: (also archive), n. ~ 1. Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control; permanent records. – 2. The division within an organization responsible for maintaining the organization's records of enduring value. – 3. An organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or other organizations; a collecting archives. – 4. The professional discipline of administering such collections and organizations. – 5. The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections. – 6. A published collection of scholarly papers, especially as a periodical.

Arrangement: n. ~ 1. The process of organizing materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context and to achieve physical or intellectual control over the materials. – 2. The organization and sequence of items within a collection.

Artificial Collection: n. ~ A collection of materials with different provenance assembled and organized to facilitate its management or use.

Authority Control: n. ~ Description · The process of establishing the preferred form of a heading, such as proper name or subject, for use in a catalog, and ensuring that all catalog records use such headings.

Backlog: n. ~ 1. Materials received by a repository, but not yet processed.

Best Practices: n. ~ Procedures and guidelines that are widely accepted because experience and research has demonstrated that they are optimal and efficient means to produce a desired result.

Biographical Note: n. ~ That part of a catalog record or finding aid that places the materials in context by providing basic information about the materials' creator or author. (For individuals, the biographical note may include date and place of birth, full and variant forms of the name, occupations, significant accomplishments, places of residence and work, family members, and date and place of death.)

Collection: n. ~ 1. A group of materials with some unifying characteristic. – 2. Materials assembled by a person, organization, or repository from a variety of sources; an artificial collection. – collections, pl. ~ 3. The holdings of a repository.

Controlled Vocabulary: n. ~ A limited set of terms and phrases used as headings in indexes and as access points in catalogs.

Corporate Records: n. ~ Documents and other materials created or received by an incorporated commercial enterprise in the course of operations and preserved for future use. (Also: Business Records)

Cubic Foot: n. ~ 1. A volume of space that is approximately 12 × 12 × 12 inches. – 2. Records · A measure used to indicate the quantity of materials, commonly used to describe the size of large collections. (Because the surface of a standard file folder (10 × 12 inches) is roughly a square foot, a linear foot of files is roughly a cubic foot. A records center box, which measures approximately 10 × 12 × 16 inches, is generally counted as a cubic foot, even though it is slightly larger.)

Custodial History: n. ~ Records · The succession of offices, families, or persons who held materials from the moment they were created.

Describing Archives: A Contents Standard: n. (DACs, abbr.) ~ A standard for creating access tools for all forms of archival materials, including their archival creators and the forms of creator names.

Description: n. ~ 1. The process of creating a finding aid or other access tools that allow individuals to browse a surrogate of the collection to facilitate access and that improve security by creating a record of the collection and by minimizing the amount of handling of the original materials. – 2. Records management · A written account of the physical characteristics, informational content, and functional purpose of a records series or system.

Document Box: n. ~ A container that holds folders containing paper documents vertically and that measures roughly 10 inches high, 12 or 15 inches wide, and 6 or 3 inches deep, and that usually has an integral top hinged at the upper back. (Sometimes called a Hollinger Box. Document boxes made from high-quality materials suitable for long-term storage of archival materials are often called archives boxes.)

Document Case: n. ~ A shallow container that is used to store documents in a flat position and that has an integral top that is hinged on a bottom side.

Encoded Archival Description: n. (EAD, abbr.) ~ A standard used to mark up (encode) finding aids that reflects the hierarchical nature of archival collections and that provides a structure for describing the whole of a collection, as well as its components.

Extent: n. ~ Cataloging · A description of the physical quantity of the material described.

Family Papers: n. ~ Records created or collected by a group of individuals who are closely related by ancestry and relating to their personal and private affairs.

File: n. ~ 1. A group of documents related by use or topic, typically housed in a folder (or a group of folders for a large file). – 2. plural (files) · The whole of a collection of records.

Finding Aid: n. ~ 1. A tool that facilitates discovery of information within a collection of records. – 2. A description of records that gives the repository physical and intellectual control over the materials and that assists users to gain access to and understand the materials. (Finding aid¹ includes a wide range of formats, including card indexes, calendars, guides, inventories, shelf and container lists, and registers. – Finding aid² is a single document that places the materials in context by consolidating information about the collection, such as acquisition and processing; provenance, including administrative history or biographical note; scope of the collection, including size, subjects, media; organization and arrangement; and an inventory of the series and the folders.)

Flat File: n. ~ 1. Container or shelf used to store documents and planar materials in a horizontal position, parallel to the shelf. – 2. Containers designed to hold documents unfolded.

Folder List: n. ~ That part of a completed finding aid or a rudimentary finding aid that lists the folder titles in a collection. (A folder list makes it possible to browse the contents of the collection without having to physically access the materials. Some folder lists may also include information about the series and about the span dates of the contents in each folder.)

Fonds: n. ~ The entire body of records of an organization, family, or individual that have been created and accumulated as the result of an organic process reflecting the functions of the creator.

Historical Value: n. ~ 1. The usefulness or significance of records for understanding the past. – 2. The importance or usefulness of records that justifies their continued preservation because of the enduring administrative, legal, fiscal, or evidential information they contain; archival value.

Inclusive Dates: (also span dates), n. ~ Description · The dates of the oldest and most recent items in a collection, series, or folder

Informational Value: (also reference value and research value), n. ~ The usefulness or significance of materials based on their content, independent of any intrinsic or evidential value.

Institutional Memory: n. ~ The information held in employees' personal recollections and experiences that provides an understanding of the history and culture of an organization, especially the stories that explain the reasons behind certain decisions or procedures.

Intellectual Control: n. ~ The creation of tools such as catalogs, finding aids, or other guides that enable researchers to locate relevant materials relevant to their interests.

Intrinsic Value: n. ~ The usefulness or significance of an item derived from its physical or associational qualities, inherent in its original form and generally independent of its content, that are integral to its material nature and would be lost in reproduction. (Intrinsic value is independent of informational or evidential value. A record may have great intrinsic value without significant informational or evidential value; records with significant informational or evidential value may have little intrinsic value.)

Level of Description: n. ~ 1. The amount of detail or number of elements in a formal description of a work. – 2. The amount of detail in a collection included in a finding aid or catalog record, as determined by the number of hierarchical levels.

Levels of Arrangement: n. ~ The hierarchical, intellectual, and physical divisions used in archives management, including repository, record group, fonds, collection, subgroups, series, subseries, file, and item.

Linear Foot: n. ~ A measure of shelf space necessary to store documents. (A linear foot measures twelve inches for documents stored on edge, or twelve inches high for documents stored horizontally. For letter size documents, it is slightly less than a cubic foot. The number of leaves within a linear foot varies with the thickness of the material.)

Manuscript: n. (ms, abbr.) ~ 1. A handwritten document. – 2. An unpublished document. – 3. An author's draft of a book, article, or other work submitted for publication.

Manuscript Collection: n. ~ A collection of personal or family papers.

MARC: (also USMARC, MARC 21), n. ~ A data communications format that specifies a data structure for bibliographic description, authority, classification, community information, and holdings data. (An acronym for MACHine Readable Cataloging. MARC is a United States implementation of the Information Interchange Format (ANSI Z39.2). Other countries implemented that standard with minor variations. The variations included UKMARC, and CanMARC. Efforts to harmonize the variations to create a single standard are reflected by the use of the name MARC 21.)

Metadata: n. ~ A characterization or description documenting the identification, management, nature, use, or location of information resources (data). (Metadata is commonly defined as "data about data." In terms of archives, MARC format and EAD are standards for structuring descriptive metadata about collections. Dublin Core is a standard for structuring metadata that is intended for describing web resources.)

Multi-Level Description: n. ~ Description · A finding aid or other access tool that consists of separate, interrelated descriptions of the whole and its parts, reflecting the hierarchy of the materials being described. (Multilevel description proceeds from the general to the specific. Each level contains information relevant only to that level. Descriptions of a subordinate part does not repeat information in a description of its parent, with the exception of information necessary to link the part to its parent.)

Name Authority File: n. (NAF, abbr.) ~ A compilation of authority records that describe the preferred forms of names used as headings in a catalog, along with cross-references from variant forms of the name.

Original Order: (also registry principle, respect for original order, *l'ordre primitif, respect de l'ordre intérieur*), n. ~ The organization and sequence of records established by the creator of the records. (Original order is a fundamental principle of archives. Maintaining records in original order serves two purposes. First, it preserves existing relationships and evidential significance that can be inferred from the context of the records. Second, it exploits the record creator's mechanisms to access the records, saving the archives the work of creating new access tools. Original order is not the same as the order in which materials were received. Items that were clearly misfiled may be refiled in their proper location. A collection may not have meaningful order if the creator stored items in a haphazard fashion. In such instances, archivists often impose order on the materials to facilitate arrangement and description. The principle of respect for original order does not extend to respect for original chaos.)

Papers: n. ~ 1. A collection. – 2. A collection of personal or family documents; personal papers. (Papers¹ is used generically to encompass materials in a variety of formats, including manuscripts, typescripts, clippings, photographs. 'Papers' connotes materials in sheets. It is sometimes used in the title of a collection, even though that collection includes bound works such as scrapbooks or diaries, and may even contain even three-dimensional artifacts. – Papers² can be equally as encompassing in format but connotes materials associated with an individual or family, apart from official records of a business or organization.)

Personal Papers: also personal records, private papers), n. ~ 1. Documents created, acquired, or received by an individual in the course of his or her affairs and preserved in their original order (if such order exists). – 2. Nonofficial documents kept by an individual at a place of work.

Physical Control: n. ~ The function of tracking the storage of records to ensure that they can be located.

Primary Source: n. ~ Material that contains firsthand accounts of events and that was created contemporaneous to those events or later recalled by an eyewitness.

Processing: n. ~ 1. The arrangement, description, and housing of archival materials for storage and use by patrons.

Provenance: n. (provenancial, adj.) ~ 1. The origin or source of something. – 2. Information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection. (Provenance is a fundamental principle of archives, referring to the individual, family, or organization that created or received the items in a collection. The principle of provenance or the *respect des fonds* dictates that records of different origins (provenance) be kept separate to preserve their context)

Record Type: n. ~ 1. A distinctive class of records defined by their function or use. – 2. A class of records defined by their style, subject, physical characteristics, or form². Examples of record types¹ include baptismal records, deeds, and accounting ledgers. – Examples of record types² include moving images, photographs, oral histories.

Records Center Box: n. ~ A corrugated cardboard box, approximately one cubic foot, designed to hold either legal or letter size files. (A records center box measures approximately 10 × 12 × 16 inches. It is tall enough to hold files vertically, long enough to hold legal folders parallel to the long side, and wide enough to hold letter files parallel to the short side. Frequently, the top is not attached to the body of the box.)

Register: n. ~ 1. A record containing entries in the form of a list. – 2. A volume recording names or events.

Repository: n. ~ A place where things can be stored and maintained; a storehouse. (any type of organization that holds documents, including business, institutional, and government archives, manuscript collections, libraries, museums, and historical societies, and in any form, including manuscripts, photographs, moving image and sound materials, and their electronic equivalents)

Reversibility: n. ~ Preservation · The ability to undo a treatment, returning the object to the condition it was in before treatment.

Scope and Content Notes: n. ~ Description · A narrative statement summarizing the characteristics of the described materials, the functions and activities that produced them, and the types of information contained therein.

Secondary Source: n. ~ 1. A work that is not based on direct observation of or evidence directly associated with the subject, but instead relies on sources of information. – 2. A work commenting on another work (primary sources), such as reviews, criticism, and commentaries.

Series: n. ~ 1. A group of similar records that are arranged according to a filing system and that are related as the result of being created, received, or used in the same activity; a file group; a record series.

Series Description: n. ~ A description of a series, including the title, scope and content note, size or volume, dates of the material, and arrangement.

Standard: n. ~ 1. A benchmark or reference used to measure some quality or practice. – 2. An international, national, or industry agreement that establishes qualities or practices in order to achieve common goals.

Subseries: n. ~ A body of documents within a series readily distinguished from the whole by filing arrangement, type, form, or content.

Union Catalog: n. ~ Descriptions of several repositories' holdings integrated into a single catalog.

User: n. ~ 1. An individual who uses the collections and services of a repository; a patron; a reader; a researcher; a searcher.

Vital Records: n. ~ 1. Records that document significant life events, including births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and public health matters; vital statistics. – 2. Emergency operation records immediately necessary to begin recovery of business after a disaster, as well as rights-and-interests records necessary to protect the assets, obligations, and resources of the organization, as well as its employees and customers or citizens; essential records.

Sensitive Materials Processing Guidelines Overview
From the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (pre current manual)

Category	Item	Comment
Student Records	Report Cards	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If donor or donor's family: no restriction necessary
	Transcripts	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If donor or donor's family: no restriction necessary
	Papers with grades	If donor or donor's family: no restriction necessary. If NOT donor or donor's family: restrict for 70 years
	Tests with grades	If donor or donor's family: no restriction necessary. If NOT donor or donor's family: restrict for 70 years
	Letters of recommendation	No restriction necessary.
	Miscellaneous student records/materials	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. Restrictions may be necessary if material identifies 3 rd party individuals and includes evaluation of any kind; the records need not be official institutional records governed by FERPA to warrant a privacy restriction.
Refereed Journal Records	Refereed journal correspondence and writings	If donor's own work, no restriction. Discard if donor was the referee.
Refereed Grant Records	Refereed grant proposals	If donor's own work, no restriction. Discard if donor was the referee.
Financial Material	Salary information	If donor, no restriction necessary. If donor's family, consult donor about restriction. If unrelated 34d paper, leave open.

	Charitable giving/potential	If donor, no restriction necessary. If donor's family, consult donor about restriction. If unrelated 34d paper, leave open.
	Banking, investments, insurance	If donor, no restriction necessary. If donor's family, consult donor about restriction. If unrelated 34d paper, leave open.
	Income tax records	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If donor, no restriction necessary. If donor's family, consult donor about restriction. If unrelated 3 rd party, leave open.
Medical/Health Related Materials	Medical bills	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded.
	Health Insurance correspondence	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If person represented is still alive, consider restriction for conditions relating to mental or reproductive health.
	Medical correspondence	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If person represented is still alive, consider restriction for conditions relating to mental or reproductive health.
	Physician journals	If end date is more than 70 years old, then no restriction is necessary. If end date is less than 70 years and individual patients and ailments are identified, restrict for 70 years from end date.
	Patient files	Restrict for 70 years from end date.
Legal Material	Court materials	Public records: no restriction necessary
	Legal case files	If donor's personal case file(s), no restriction necessary. If donor's

		family personal case file(s), consult donor for restriction. If lawyer's case files, restrict for 70 years.
Business Materials	Business administrative files	Restrict at donor's request only.
	Pay stubs	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded; otherwise, no restriction necessary.
	Job applications	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded; otherwise, no restriction necessary.
	Resumes	No restriction necessary.
	Employee records	Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded; otherwise, no restriction necessary.
	Grievance files	Restrict for 70 years.
Other Sensitive Content	Sexual activity	If content is explicit AND 3 rd parties are identified restrict until death of person(s) represented.
	Sexual identity	If 3 rd parties are identified restrict until death of person(s) represented.
	Drug use	If content is explicit AND 3 rd parties are identified restrict until death of person(s) represented.
	Mental health concerns	If donor, consider restriction. If donor's family or 3 rd party, consider restriction until death of persons represented.
	Reproductive health concerns	If donor, consider restriction. If donor's family or 3 rd party, consider restriction until death of persons represented.
	Marital discord	If donor, consider restriction. If donor's family or 3 rd party, consider restriction until death of persons represented.

Resources:

Duke University

Archival Processing Manual for Student Assistants and Interns,
<http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/about/techservices/procmanual.pdf>

Society of American Archivists

<http://www.archivists.org/menu.asp?m=profession>

Society of American Archivists. *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

“How to Proceed: A Procedures Manual for the Southern Historical Collection and General Manuscripts University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,
http://www.lib.unc.edu/wikis/archproc/index.php/How_to_Proceed

Yale University

Processing Manual,
<http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/manuscript/process/index.html>

