

Maag Library Archives & Special Collections

ACCESSIONING POLICY

Accessioning is defined as the practice of transferring physically and legally to a repository as a unit at a single time; an acquisition. It also means to take and document the custody and receipt of records. Many archives refer to accessioning as a preliminary description of the record (content, context, structure) and not strictly just a physical transfer. [Many times this will be the only level of description that an archive will be able to do. This is because archive collections are indefinite and the resources available are limited.] Youngstown State University Archives will accession records according to the acquisition policy. The YSU Archives will use three methods to establish control over a collection: legal, physical, and intellectual (Hunter, 101). The following are the methods that will be used:

- Oral agreement: can be legally binding but it is the poorest form of documentation, as a consequence, it will not be used.
- Purchase agreement: This can be as simple as a bill of sale. Purchase of manuscript and archival materials is normally discouraged. If a significant collection becomes available only through purchase, such an acquisition must be considered on its own merits. It is important to note that purchase of such materials tends to discourage donations by other potential donors. If more than one institution is involved in bidding for materials, the needs of the patrons may be subverted. For these reasons, purchase of materials is generally limited to commercially published materials only.
- Letter: This refers to an exchange of letters which often details an offer and acceptance of records.
- Will: These transfers occur upon the death of the donor.
- Deposit agreement: physical transfer of documents to a repository without the transfer of title.
- Deed of gift agreement (or contract)¹: is a signed written instrument containing a voluntary transfer of title to real or personal property without a financial consideration. This is the most important and used agreement. An archives should strive to attain this level of control. (The preferred form of control).
- Retention Schedule

Transfers will have the following basic elements (See Record Analysis and Accessioning procedures):

- The name of the donor and the provenance of the records.

¹ Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives, Hunter, pg. 102

- The name of the recipient
- The date of transfer
- Description of the materials being transferred
- Transfer of rights (if loan, the length of time)
- Statement of restrictions, if any
- Disposal criteria and authority
- Signatures of both the donor and the recipient