

**Maag Library
Archives & Special Collections**

APPRAISAL POLICY

Appraisal is the basis for selecting records and papers that are to be retained in the Department of Archives & Special Collections. Archival Appraisal has been defined as the process of evaluating actual or potential acquisitions to warrant the expense of processing and preserving the collection by the archival repository. Potential and actual records need to adhere to the Collection policy. Careful appraisal of potential collections is of primary importance in eliminating unwanted materials and unnecessary growth. Before materials are accepted into the Department of Archives & Special Collections, the University Head of Archives & Special Collections will conduct a careful appraisal of the materials as a group. Preliminary and subsequent weeding of a record or manuscript group occurs as the materials are being processed. Processing involves further appraisal/weeding, arrangement, description, storage and conservation. Additionally re-appraisal and evaluation of existing collections to eliminate materials that have proven unwanted will be conducted to further the quality of the collections. (See Appendix for appraisal procedures.) Appraisal Form

Archival Appraisal Criteria

A. Functional Analysis: Overview of the office/person of origin.

1. Administrative level of the office/person - location in the decision making hierarchy.
2. Duties of the office or person - impact on the mission, policies, and functions of the agency or organization.
3. Identify which record types created by the office/person best document its functions or purpose.
4. Identify records which are required to be maintained by statute.
5. Identify records which are declared confidential by statute.

B. Content Analysis: Quality of information within the records.

1. Evidential value.
 - a. How well do the records document the function, policies, structure, and activities of the agency or organization?
 - b. Preserve the original source materials when possible, rather than secondary sources or transcriptions.
2. Informational value.
 - a. Do the records contain information about significant people, events, trends, and topics affecting the history of YSU?
 - b. Are significant policies or activities described?
 - c. Are the interests, values, and experiences of the people of YSU well represented?
 - d. Do the records provide information, insight, or perspectives not documented by records currently maintained by the archives?
 - e. Is the information well documented and reliable?
 - f. Consider the value of the information to genealogical researchers.
 - g. Does the information in the record complement other records in the agency or organization?

C. Object Analysis.

1. Does the record have intrinsic value as a particularly significant or revered document, or because of the author or an original signature.
2. Is the physical form, material, or design of the record unique, special, or important?
3. Is the medium upon which the information is recorded difficult to access or preserve?
4. Condition.
 - a. Is the record intact?
 - b. Will conservation measures be necessary?
 - c. Is the value, accessibility, or reliability of the records content affected by its condition?

D. Accessibility and Use.

1. Assess the anticipated use of the materials based on past reference activity and the significance and popularity of the topic.
2. Assess the potential increase in the value of the record to future researchers.
3. Are there legal or donor imposed restrictions on the use of the records?
4. Can the archives preserve and use the record in its original format? If not, does an alternative format affect the value of the record and the information it contains?

E. Cost Benefit Analysis.

1. Does the value of the record, especially compared with current holdings, warrant the time, cost, and space that will be required to maintain it?
2. Does the value of the record justify the application of needed conservation measures?
3. Can the archives adequately store and access the records?
4. Does accessing the information on the record require the acquisition of special equipment or materials?