



Borthwick Institute for Archives

Appraisal and Disposal Policy



This policy sets out how we approach the selection of records for permanent preservation and how we approach the disposal of records we deem of no further value to our mission and purpose.

1. Policy

Introduction

1.1 Archive appraisal is a positive, essential and characteristic archival activity that seeks to ensure the availability of records of enduring value; appraisal enables society to hold organisations and individuals accountable for their actions. Through appraisal, we distinguish records of enduring value from those of little further value so that the latter may be eliminated.

1.2 There are two layers of value:

- a) The value of the records to the organisation that created them. Identifying records of continuing business value assists in efficient and effective administration and enables decision-making and policy development.
- b) The value of the records to society, both now and in the future. This includes evidential value derived from how the records document an organisation's history, structure, and functions and informational
- c) value in providing records that make research about people, places, and subjects possible.

Appraisal

1.3 In selecting records for permanent preservation, we seek to retain records that:

- are most capable of documenting change, continuity and development over time and of assisting in the interpretation of such changes;
- In the case of university records, they are most capable of documenting the functions of the constituent parts of the university and the university as a whole, in line with the agreed corporate appraisal policy.

1.4 We do this by selecting records that demonstrate the following:

- Potential to support the University's research themes:
 - Creativity
 - Culture and Communication
 - Environmental Sustainability and Resilience
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Justice and Equity
 - Risk, Evidence and Decision Making
 - Technologies for the Future
- Evidence for the actions and activities of the organisation or individual concerned.
- Evidence relating to events, developments or trends in religious, social, political, legal or economic history.
- Known or potential research impact.
- Potential for audience development, skills development or public engagement.

1.5 Applying the criteria in 1.4 above requires knowledge, experience and skill. We acknowledge that appraisal decisions often benefit from the passage of time and recognise that appraisal decisions to retain records may be revisited at appropriate time intervals.

1.6 Appraisal is performed by archivists or under their supervision.

1.7 All archives are appraised per the acquisition agreement with their owners.

1.8 Archives are appraised both before receipt at the Borthwick and afterwards.

Disposal

1.9 Disposal decisions, including the basis of any sampling, are recorded in Borthcat at the appropriate level.

1.10 Records selected for disposal may be offered to their owner or former owner or other archives or appropriate institutions or organisations, taking account of the Guidelines in Appendix A to this policy and any specified terms on acquisition.

1.11 Records selected for destruction will be destroyed securely, with appropriate

regard for data security and environmental impact.

1.12 We provide appraisal guidelines in Appendix A to assist staff in appraising records on a case-by-case basis following our Collections Information Plan.

1.13 Information about records selected for disposal will be presented to the Collections Development Group, which will decide on further action under the terms of this policy.

2. Scope

2.1 The policy applies to the appraisal of all records held at the Borthwick Institute for Archives, irrespective of format or media. It includes archives owned by the University and those deposited at the Borthwick. It covers the appraisal of archives newly acquired by the Borthwick and the re-appraisal of existing holdings.

3. Oversight

The policy is managed by the Borthwick Collections Development Group.

4. Implementation

All staff in the Borthwick Institute are responsible for implementing and adhering to this policy.

5. Supporting Policies

This policy is supported by the following policies and guidelines:

- Forward plan
- Collections Information Policy
- Collections Information Plan
- Collections Development Policy
- Collections Development Plan
- Digital preservation plan and procedures
- University of York Data Protection Policy

Document history and status

August 2017	Information Services SMT	Approved
January 2024	Archives and Research Collections Leadership Team	Updates agreed

Review cycle 5 years

Date of next review September 2028

Appendix A

Appraisal guidelines

Records should usually be selected for disposal if they:

- sit outside the Collections Development Policy;
- form part of a more extensive collection at another archive repository;
- are deemed by suitably experienced and competent staff to be in such poor physical or technical condition that they will be unusable or that their physical or technical condition means accessing the information in the record is now realistically impossible;
- do not link with documentation or other metadata required to ensure they remain understandable and useable in the future, such as via indexes, user manuals, or technical metadata;
- are duplicates (but one version will be kept, assuming other disposal criteria do not apply);
- are published works created or received by the creator;
- are records/information captured elsewhere (for example, at a higher or lower level of the organisation or by another organisation or individual);
- are records that need to be retained by law but are not considered to be of historical value (for example, finance records, health and safety) and are beyond their legal retention date;
- are records with minimal content or where their content does not add substantially to what is already known.

Disposal guidelines

Where records are selected for disposal:

- In the case of records on deposit, we will inform the owner of the records selected for disposal, allowing the owner to remove them into their custody. The Borthwick will allow three calendar months for owners to effect removal of the records. After this three-month period has elapsed, the Collections Development Group will decide whether the records shall be securely destroyed or offered to a public archive repository.
- Where a depositor cannot be located, and in the case of records owned by the University, the Collections Development Group will decide whether they shall be deaccessioned and either securely destroyed or offered to a public archive repository.
- When necessary, the Borthwick will seek guidance from The National Archives in selecting appropriate public archive repositories.
- When no repository can be found for the records, the Collections Development Group will approve their secure destruction.