



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

LaTrobe
University
Library

Archives Collections Management & Development Framework



Purpose



This document is intended to supplement the University's Records Management Policy and the Library's Collection Development Framework. It outlines the approach to the management and development of the two Archives' collections at La Trobe University; the University Archives and the Dardalis Archives of the Hellenic Diaspora (herein referred to as the Greek Archives). This document also provides an overview of the Archives' teams justifications and processes for a range of functions including appraisal, acquisition (including donation), access, disposal, digitisation, storage, preservation, exhibition and loans.

Our Role



The University's Records Management Policy outlines activities and decisions surrounding the creation, management, retention, and disposal of records in accordance with relevant legislation (Public Records Act (1973), AS ISO 15489-2002). The policy is a framework for the legislative recordkeeping requirements of the University and only addresses the functions of the Archives in a limited capacity. There are a broad range of functions carried out by the Archives, which encompass, but are not limited to:

- managing and preserving the records of La Trobe University (LTU), its antecedent institutions, and its communities in order to preserve memory, and facilitate transparency and accountability;
- making the records of LTU accessible to staff, students, stakeholders, and the wider community, both physically and digitally;
- providing expertise and guidance to La Trobe University and its staff on the creation, management, preservation, and use of Archives, in cooperation with Digital Records;
- facilitating the acquisition of Archives relevant to La Trobe University, both internally and externally, through Donation; and,
- supporting the interpretation and promotion of the history of La Trobe University through a range of outreach and engagement activities, including digitisation, exhibitions, publications, research, and teaching.

The Greek Archives functions include the points listed above, but with a specific focus on the University's interests and obligations relating to the Greek diaspora, Greek-Australian life, and Hellenic language.

Our Approach



Participatory Archives

Records have a central role in forming identity, preserving memory and supporting accountability. A participatory approach to archives seeks to involve all record stakeholders and seeks input not only from the people who created the records, but also those who are represented in records. Without this input, precious information about the records, and the activities they evidence, may be lost.

There are many types of participatory approaches. For the purposes of the La Trobe University Archives, a participatory approach will simply mean putting people at the heart of the archives, and acknowledging that archives exist for people, are made by people, and have impacts on people.



Benefits of a Participatory Approach

The practical and ethical benefits of a participatory approach are numerous. There are three key benefits we wish to identify in relation to the Archives.

Context and description – A key function of archives is the capturing and preservation of context through description. Context can be found by examining the circumstances around a record's creation: the who, what, when, where, why, and how. Richer and more accurate description can be produced through consultation involved in the events being documented, or in the creation or management of records. La Trobe University has a diverse student base, and a historic emphasis on supporting first-in-family, low SES, and Indigenous students. Proactive, participatory work is needed to better represent these students in the Archives.

Accessibility and usability – Records must be accessible and usable. Participation can be used to inform decisions around access platforms or file formats and highlight any cultural sensitivity concerns that may necessitate content warnings or access restrictions.

Ethics and legality – Ethically, participatory approaches can identify potential problems before they occur. Issues such as copyright, intellectual property, cultural sensitivity, and privacy can all be discussed with key stakeholders before action is taken.



Collection Priorities



The University Archives collects, develops, manages, and maintains its collections in order to preserve and promote the history of the University, as well as its staff, students, and communities. Many of these records are defined as permanent retention under the Higher and Further Education Functions Retention and Disposal Authority (RDA) PROS 16/07.

The Greek Archives collects, develops, manages and preserves the records relating to the Greek diaspora, Greek-Australian life and Hellenic language, culture and history, in order to preserve community memory. The goal of both Archives is to contribute Victoria's archival and cultural heritage.

Our priorities are:

- rehousing and stabilising materials at risk of deterioration;
- identifying and developing strategies to increase the visibility and accessibility of the collection long-term;
- identifying collections, series, or items of particular significance or value, and enhancing their accessibility;
- identifying and amplifying the hidden and diverse voices within the collection; and
- identifying gaps in the collection.

Scope of Collections & Custody of Records



6

The Archives take a broad definition of a record. A record is an information object, in any format, that serves as evidence of an activity. Records may be physical or digital and may include what can be understood as 'artefacts' or 'ephemera'. Both Archives hold a vast range of record formats including photographs, negatives, posters, newsletters, minutes, medals, publications, newspapers, film and audio.

The University Archives works closely with Digital Records to identify, and take custody of, records of enduring historical value. This includes records designated as permanent retention in PROS 16/07, or records that are designated as temporary retention, but hold intrinsic value for future researchers. These records may be transferred to the University Archives upon activation of the disposal schedule.

Digital Records have custody of records of temporary value to the University, or records of permanent non-historical value (such as legal, administrative, or other records that include personal or sensitive information) as mandated by PROS 16/07.

Custody arrangements are currently not reflected in the physical storage of records, as the majority of the Archives' collections are stored with those of Digital Records. Small subsets of the Archives' collections are stored in separate areas of this shared repository, however the majority are dispersed throughout Digital Records' collections. An ongoing priority of the Archives is to identify which records currently in custody of Digital Records should be transferred to the Archives. This is discussed in further detail in Collections Development.

The Greek Archives contains records related to individuals, families, organisations, and community groups. Some records in the Greek Archives have a contested or unknown provenance. Many items cannot be attributed to a creator or owner. La Trobe University is legally bound to preserve and manage this collection, and no collection items can be returned to a person unless written proof of a loan agreement can be supplied by the claimant.





Collections Management



Collection Development

Collections development involves increasing the quality, quantity, or extent of collections or series held in the Archives through appraisal. It forms a key part of the Archives' ongoing work to preserve and promote the history of La Trobe, its antecedents and the Greek diaspora in Australia, and is informed by the Archives' role within the University, its remit under PROS 16/07, the Public Records Act (1973), and the Collection Priorities.

The Archives actively seeks records that meet the appraisal criteria set out below. Records that do not meet those criteria may be rejected.

Appraisal

Appraisal is the evaluation of records to determine what needs to be kept, for how long, in what form, and under what conditions. The Archives' primary appraisal criteria broadly include the following:

- relevance, relationship, significance or interest to the University, its stakeholders, and its wider community;
- relevance, relationship, significance or interest to the Greek community and diaspora;
- uniqueness and potential value as a research, education, cultural or institutional memory resource;
- representation of activities, locations, time periods, or other aspects of the collection that are otherwise absent or minimally represented;
- representation of communities that are otherwise absent or minimally represented;
- relevance or connection to existing records or collections (i.e., completing a series or Collection).

Records are further assessed on the basis of:

- present condition and ongoing preservation requirements;
- access requirements and restrictions;
- current or desired custody arrangements;
- copyright and intellectual property considerations;
- provenance (including evidence of provenance); and
- cultural considerations, including whether materials are created by or relevant to Indigenous persons or communities, and whether repatriation should be considered or desired.

The collection development priorities of the Archives are further informed by ongoing consultation with stakeholders, including staff, students, community and the Vice Chancellors Office.

Disposal

Disposal is defined as “a range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions which are documented in disposal authorities or other instruments” (PROV, Master Glossary). This includes retention, transfer of custody, destruction, or deletion of records in or from recordkeeping systems.

Circumstances where disposal would take place include:

- a)** Multiple copies: records may be disposed of if the number of copies held exceed requirements, for instance, one preservation and one access copy.
- b)** Reappraisal: if during reappraisal, the record does not meet the appraisal criteria, disposal will be considered.
- c)** Normal Administrative Practice (NAP) records: records classified as NAPs include empty folders, informal communications such as “with compliments” slips, and unused forms.
- d)** Condition: records may be disposed of if they are in extremely poor physical condition, at risk of contaminating/damaging other collection items, or the cost of their conservation would exceed their value or relevance. In these instances, items may be digitised prior to destruction.
- e)** Appraisal and/or condition of donations: items that were accepted for donation may later be sentenced for disposal according to the reasons cited above. Records would be disposed of according to the criteria set out in the Archival Donor Deed.
- f)** Transfer or repatriation: Transfer of ownership might occur because records were temporarily loaned, donated or acquired without legal authority to do so. Repatriation might occur if records relate to a certain community or group who have the moral right to these records (such as records created by or about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander individuals or communities).

When undertaking any form of disposal, information about the records being disposed is documented.



Acquisitions

Acquisitions come from three main sources: transfers from Digital Records, internal LTU donations, and external donations. The donation process is documented in two forms; the Archival Material Donation Offer form records provenance, extent, condition, copyright and access requirements, allowing the Archives to determine suitability of the items for inclusion in the collection. The Archival Donor Deed acknowledges the receipt of the donation and requires the signature of the University Librarian and the donor.

Transfers from Digital Records

The majority of records acquired by the University Archives come via transfer from Digital Records. These records are sentenced as permanent retention according to PROS 16/07 or are assessed by the Archives as being of enduring value. The transfer of records from Digital Records to the Archives is captured within the EDRMS (MyRecords), therefore donation documentation is not required.

Internal LTU Donations

Internal donations are those which are solicited from, or offered by, individuals, teams, Departments, functions, Schools, or other entities within the University (including staff and student groups).

- Student Union, association, or group records;
- Personal papers of academics or staff;
- Informal records, or records that were not created or kept in accordance with relevant legislation or University policies, and therefore were not managed by University Records Management policies (e.g., staff photographs).

Internal donations require donation documentation to be completed.

External Donations

External donations are those made by individuals, groups, or organisations that hold records relevant to the Archives collecting priorities. These may include former staff, alumni, or members of the public.

External donations require donation documentation to be completed.



Storage, Rehousing and Preservation

When reappraising or accepting new collection items, an assessment of the housing conditions will take place. Where items are poorly stored, or are stored in non-archival quality materials, the collection may be rehoused.

Archival quality materials will be used in order to ensure long-term preservation and stability of materials and facilitate safe handling. Where items are in poor or fragile condition, bespoke housing may need to be constructed. It is a priority of the Archives to identify items at risk of damage or degradation and prioritise them for rehousing. This is ongoing work.

The Archives retain the right to refuse physical access or provide assisted access to view or handle fragile items.

All staff working with Archives materials will have manual handling training where appropriate, especially when digitising collection items, or working on rehousing projects.



Making the Archives Accessible



The default position of the Archives is that its collections are open and accessible to the public, and as such we do not generally accept items that have had embargos or restrictions placed on access (aside from copyright compliance). Making collections accessible is a core function of the Archives. Due to the nature of the Greek Archives collections and the unknown provenance and copyright of many collection items, particular care must be taken in providing in-person and online access. Some records will likely contain sensitive content, or for ethical and legal reasons cannot be made available. This must be assessed on a case-by-case basis before providing any form of access. Similar care must be taken when providing access to University Archives records.



Metadata and Description

During appraisal, collections are assigned an accession number which is recorded in the Collection Asset Register. Descriptive metadata is created in accordance with LTU Archives' standards, and with a consideration of multiple potential uses.

To facilitate access, each collection will have a MARC record and a finding aid in the Archives' LibGuides page. A selection of items may be digitised.

Digitisation

The Archives have a selective digitisation strategy as there are limited benefits to mass digitisation. The Archives undertake digitisation for two reasons: access, and preservation.

Digitisation for preservation will be done when records are in very poor condition, likely to deteriorate, are unable to be handled or used without damaging further or are a high-risk format. Digitisation for preservation does not mean that these records will be destroyed. A disposal decision might be made in conjunction with digitisation for preservation, but wherever possible and practical, physical items will be retained.

Digitisation for access will be undertaken to make items available to the public via a discoverability interface (such as OPAL) or used in promotion and outreach activities by the Archives (such as exhibitions, or social media). Records may be selected for digitisation for a range of reasons, but some core criteria include:

- uniqueness;
- relevance or importance to the University;
- visual interest (particularly for the purposes of promotion and engagement); or
- timeliness (such as in relation to an event or anniversary).

Digitisation for access might also be done where users cannot physically access the Reading Room, including to facilitate fair access under S113E of the Copyright Act 1968.

Digitisation will be done in compliance with relevant legislation, including the Copyright Act 1968 and under advice from the University's Copyright Officer.

Exhibitions and Loans

Loans (On campus)

Items from the collection may be used for exhibitions within LTU buildings, across all campuses, once the physical condition of the items and the proposed space has been assessed. The Archivists will assess the items proposed for display and determine a method of display for each item which must be adhered to. Examples could be, that an item requires a special support, be displayed in a cabinet, or have its pages turned regularly.

The physical location should be:

- Secure
- Free from dust
- Not receive direct sunlight
- Have a consistent temperature and low fluctuating humidity

The items selected for exhibition must be:

- In good general condition
- Of a size and format that can be easily handled without risk to the item
- Of a suitable format for long-term display.

Items selected for exhibition may require preservation treatment, rehousing, framing, or mounting onto secure backing boards to ensure the long-term safety of the item. Reproductions of original items may be used in some instances.

Loans (Off campus)

Requests for loans to external organisations or using collection items off-campus will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and require a Loan Agreement. Loans will typically only be made to recognised organisations with appropriately qualified staff. A minimum of 18 weeks' notice is required, and the item will be lent for up to 6 months. The number of items lent will depend on the format and condition of the item, but typically not exceed 15 individual items.

The following criteria may also be applied (at the expense of the borrower):

- documentation, mounting and packaging of the items, at an hourly rate equal to the Archivists' salary (HEO 6);
- secure transport to and from the approved location;
- travel and salary expenses where installation and/or handling is deemed necessary by an Archivist; and
- insurance costs of the items for the duration of the loan, including valuation where necessary.

A report will be written for each item on loan, noting the condition and display requirements. This is checked upon the return of the item to ensure no damage has occurred.

The Archives may produce reproductions of original items to facilitate sharing of our collections. Responsibility and cost will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Relevant Documents



Australian Standard Records Management (ISO 15489–2002) [Part 1: General](#)

La Trobe University [Records Management Policy](#)

Library [Collection Development Framework](#)

PROV Retention and Disposal Authority (RDA) Higher and Further Education Functions [PROS 16/07](#)

Victorian [Public Records Act 1973](#)

*Endorsed Library Leadership Team September 2023
Review schedule annually at end of year
Next review November 2024*

