

Transfer Guidelines – University Archives – University Records

University records are valuable sources for historical research and administrative use. They document the university's history through the decisions, policies, activities, events, culture, and people of individual departments, units, and offices. These archival records, which contain permanent long-term historical, legal, fiscal, and administrative value, support the teaching and research needs of Iowa State University faculty, staff, students, and the public.

Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) collects, preserves, and provides access to inactive university records of enduring historical and evidential value to ensure that the important work of the University and its community is documented for future use, research, and enjoyment. Transferring these records to SCUA also transfers their custodianship from the originating/receiving department, unit, or office. Their retention, preservation, and accessibility under SCUA's management supports Iowa State's commitment to share and apply knowledge to make our students, Iowa, and the world better.

Steps to Transfer University Records

1. Review the University Records Retention Schedule (<https://records.policy.iastate.edu/>) to determine if your records are inactive and appropriate for permanent retention. Records designated to be destroyed or retained permanently by the office of origin should not be transferred to SCUA.
2. Contact the University Archivist if you have any digital records and for an on-site/email review of the selected records.
3. Prepare approved records for transfer.
 - a. Clearly label any unlabeled physical and digital folders/photographs/media, including names, events, and dates.
 - b. Pack physical records into standard records storage boxes (12"w x 15"l x 10"h) in the order in which they were kept in the office.
 - i. Fill boxes, leaving enough space to easily remove and replace a file folder but not so much space that the folders fall or bend. Include labeled sheets of paper to separate different categories.
 - ii. Place loose materials in folders labeled with a pencil and remove files from binders/hanging folders into folders labeled with a pencil. Use multiple folders if the contents are too large for one folder.
 - iii. If you have odd size items or records that do not fill a box, please contact the University Archivist.
4. Create an inventory, including contents and date spans of each box, and **email the inventory to the University Archivist**.
5. Fill out and sign a University Records Transfer Form for University Archives.

Once these steps are complete, drop-off/pick-up can be arranged. A printed copy of the Transfer Form and Inventory should accompany the transfer. Contact the University Archivist by email at archives@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-6672 for guidance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can we just send SCUA our records?

A. No. Please contact the University Archivist before delivering any materials to ensure only archival records are being transferred and that SCUA is ready to receive the records into the queue of materials to be appraised, accessioned, arranged, described, preserved, and made accessible. We would welcome routine transfers of materials and would be happy to set up a schedule that works for you.

Q. How can we access the transferred records?

A. Materials transferred to SCUA will be made accessible in the Reading Room on the 4th floor of Parks Library to faculty, staff, students, and the public during open hours unless the transferer restricts any records. Materials cannot be removed from SCUA. However, you may request copies of materials in our holdings.

Q. How much will this cost my department/college/unit?

A. The cost should be limited to staff and/or student assistant time required to correspond with the University Archivist, pack materials, create an inventory, and fill out the appropriate paperwork. Please let the University Archivist know if you need assistance obtaining standard boxes.

Q. Why is an inventory required?

A. Your records will generally remain as transferred until they are processed by SCUA's archivists, which can take years due to the size of our holdings, current archival standards, and SCUA's current resources. An accurate inventory will make it easier to access the records while they await processing, will increase the efficiency of archival processing, and supply a record of the materials that were transferred.

Q. How can I find materials already in SCUA's holdings related to my department/unit/office?

A. Most of SCUA's holdings can be found by searching CARDinal (<https://cardinal.lib.iastate.edu/>). Archives are organized by creator/collector, so consider using the name(s), past and present, of your department/unit/office, faculty, staff, and students to locate materials of interest.

Q. Will SCUA digitize the transferred analog records?

A. Digitizing, describing, and making unique archival materials accessible online via archival standards requires an immense investment of time and resources. While the possibility always remains for materials in SCUA's holdings to be digitized, many factors result in only a small portion of these holdings being digitized.

Examples of University Records of Interest to SCUA

The following lists provide examples of the types of physical and digital records which may be appropriate for transfer to the University Archives. These lists should not be regarded as a disposition schedule and should be used only as a guide to help university employees understand what may be suitable for transfer to SCUA. The Records Retention Policy and Schedule are the official documents that dictate the retention and disposition of university records. There may be records in your department/unit/office that are worthy of preservation but may not be described below. Please consult with the University Archivist for any possible exceptions. For further explanation about what SCUA collects and why, please see our Collection Development Policy at <https://specialcollections.lib.iastate.edu/collections-policy>.

What We Collect (in all formats, physical and digital)

- **Administrative records:** accreditation and self-study files, alumni and student organizational files, annual reports, architectural records, committee files, correspondence, grant files, maps, membership rosters, memoranda, minutes, organizational charts, planning documents, policy and procedures manuals, reference and subject files, research project files, speeches, strategic planning files
- **Fiscal:** summary reports such as annual financial statements, audit reports, departmental budgets, budget narratives, ledgers
- **Historical:** articles of incorporation, biographical material (e.g., bios and CVs), constitutions and by-laws
- **Publications (produced by the unit):** advertising kits, brochures, catalogs, handbooks, newsletters, press releases, journals, brochures, monographs, programs, posters, and announcements
- **Special events, celebrations, and sponsorships:** programs, substantive promotional and informational material, and final reports
- **Photographic materials:** prints, negatives, slides, and digital images
- **Audiovisual materials:** recordings, tapes, videotapes and films
- **University related memorabilia**

Note: Personal papers of faculty, staff, and students/alumni are the property of the individual who created them. Please contact the creator about their records and connect them with the Archivist if they have a desire to donate them to SCUA.

What We Do Not Collect

- **Active records**
- **Blank forms and duplicates**
- **Confidential or Personally Identifiable Information:** FERPA, HIPPA, and PII
- **Detailed financial records:** purchase orders, invoices, etc.
- **Equipment and software instructions**
- **Most three-dimensional objects/artifacts:** plaques, trophies, awards
- **Personnel records:** resumes, applications, promotion and tenure records, contracts, etc.
- **Student information:** grades, rosters, assignments, etc.
- **Travel or conference attendance records**

Inactive collecting areas

Books authored by ISU faculty are acquired by the Library as part of its general collection.

Artifacts/Three-Dimensional Objects

SCUA may be interested in **memorabilia created by or related to your department/unit/office**. However, as an archival repository and not a museum, we do not prioritize the collection of artifacts. Those that we do collect must document an important aspect of the student experience or the university's history. They must also have unique physical characteristics, hold high research value, and/or have the potential for use in exhibitions, other outreach activities, or instruction.

Publications (books, journals, etc.)

- Books published by or about Iowa State, like departmental histories, may be considered for addition to SCUA's holdings.
- For donations of Rare Books, contact Amy Bishop, by email at aebishop@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-8807.
- For all other publications, including books authored by ISU faculty, contact your Subject Librarian: <https://instr.iastate.libguides.com/findyourlibrarian>

WHEN IN DOUBT, PLEASE DO NOT THROW IT OUT! CONTACT THE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST!