

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INSTITUTIONAL SELF-EVALUATION

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1. Legal Authority

There must be explicit documentation of an archives' legal status and authority.

- a. Is there documentary evidence of the archives' legal existence (e.g. charter, articles of incorporation, legislative act)?
- b. Does the archives comply with any legal requirements to maintain its authority and status?

2. Purpose

The archives must have a formal statement of its goals and priorities.

- a. Is there a formal statement of the goals and priorities of the archives?
- b. If the archives is part of a larger institution, is the archives' statement of purpose consonant with the purposes of that institution?

3. Governing Authority

The governing authority of the archives should adopt statements of basic policy and establish areas of administrative authority. These policies and administrative procedures are designed to meet the goals and priorities set by the archives.

- a. Does the governing authority (e.g., board of trustees) act as a policy-making body only?
- b. Does the governing authority delegate administrative functions (e.g., budget making and personnel management) to the administrator of the archives?
- c. Is the administrator responsible for reporting to the governing authority of behalf of the staff?

4. Planning and Evaluation

Staff should be involved in both planning and evaluation of the specific goals and priorities of the archives. If the archives is part of a larger institution, the administrator of the archives should be involved in the planning and evaluation processes of that institution as they affect the archives.

- a. Have specific goals and priorities been established within the framework of the archives' statement of purpose?
- b. Does the archives carry out planning and program evaluation?
- c. Is there a formal annual report, supported by records-keeping procedures on acquisitions, processing and use of holdings?

5. Budget and Finance

The financial resources dependably available to the archives must be adequate to carry out its stated purpose. These available resources must be contained in a separate budget for the archives. Staff should have the opportunity to contribute to the budget-making process, and the administrator should be involved at a higher level if the archives' budget is part of a larger budget.

- a. Are the financial resources dependably available to the archives sufficient to carry out its stated purposes?
- b. Does the archives have its own budget?

6. Staff

Every archives must include on its staff at least one person who possesses, through training or experience, professional competence in archives management. The archives must also

have sufficient staff to supply services commensurate with its volume of holdings and the needs of its researchers.

- a. Does the archives staff include at least one member who possesses, through training or experience, professional competence in archives management?
- b. Are the number and training of the staff sufficient to carry out the stated purpose and operational goals of the archives?
- c. Is the proportion of unprocessed collections decreasing?
- d. Are personnel policies such as promotion and dismissal procedures, annual job performance reviews, and grievance procedures clearly delineated?
- e. Is there a manual of procedures used in daily operations of acquisition, processing and reference so that staff members may readily understand procedures in use?
- f. Are salaries and fringe benefits adequate to insure a qualified and effective staff?
- g. If volunteers and other non-regular workers are used in the archives, is their use determined by staff and administrator together to achieve optimum ratio of such workers to supervisory personnel?
- h. Do archives personnel policies encourage the professional development of the staff through continuing education, involvement in professional organizations, and scholarly research?
- i. Are staff prohibited from personal collecting, buying, or selling of material in areas that might result in conflict of interest with the repository?
- j. Are adequate support services, such as microfilming, audiovisual duplicating services, and legal services available as needed?

7. Physical Facilities

The archives should provide adequate and suitable space and facilities for processing, storage, and use of its records.

- a. Does the archives have adequate space for receiving, arranging and describing records and collections?
- b. Does the archives maintain secure storage areas that permit the efficient retrieval of records?
- c. Does the archives have sufficient and appropriate space to house both the volume and the variety of its current holdings?
- d. Have adequate plans been made to insure storage for anticipated growth in holdings?
- e. Does the archives maintain sufficient space for readers in a clean, well-lighted and quiet environment free from distraction?
- f. Does the archives have provisions for handicapped users?
- g. Does the archives have space for readers with special needs (e.g., computers, scanners, tape records, cameras) and equipment or access to equipment for using all the record forms among its holdings (e.g., projectors, lightboxes, microfilm readers, tape decks, audiovisual equipment, computer facilities)?

8. Legal Authority to Receive Records and Acquisitions Policy

- a. Does the archives have the authority to receive the records of the parent institution of which it is a part?
- b. If the archives acquires private papers or records from other organizations, does it have a written acquisitions policy for such materials?
- c. Is the authority to receive records and/or the acquisitions policy reviewed periodically to determine whether they enable the archives to fulfill its obligations to the parent institution or meet the research needs of its patrons?

d. Do the holdings of the archives fit logically into the areas identified in the policy statements?

e. Does the archives have a written plan for improving the documentation in the areas of weakness by targeting persons and groups for collection emphasis and establishing priorities in the acquisition of new holdings?

9. Field Work and Records Management

In order to identify records to be retained or destroyed, the archives should prepare records disposition schedules in conjunction with the other administration subdivisions of the parent institution. Where appropriate, the archives should devise a manuscripts acquisition strategy that will enable it to obtain the types of materials that are compatible with its acquisitions policy.

a. Has the archives surveyed the extant records of the parent institution and prepared suitable records disposition schedules?

b. Does the archives maintain a contact file of information regarding negotiations with individuals, groups, or the several subdivisions of the parent institution?

c. Does the archives inform donors of their rights and responsibilities as well as those of the archives?

10. Appraisal and Accessioning

All acquisitions should be appraised to identify permanently valuable materials. The archives should maintain adequate records to document the acquisitions process and should record wherever possible the provenance of all accessions. The archives may assist donors in obtaining monetary evaluation whenever appropriate, but may not themselves evaluate gifts to their own institutions for tax purposes. The archives should also attempt to secure legal title and copyright to all accessions and these agreements should be recorded in a deed of gift or other instrument.

a. Does the archives maintain a record of accession that records the date of the transaction, the title of the accession, the donor

or office of origin, the volume of the accession, any restrictions concerning access to or use of the materials, and procedures regarding the disposition of unwanted materials?

b. Does the archives maintain records that adequately record the transfer or destruction of all records from the several subdivisions of the parent institution?

c. Does the repository conclude a written gift agreement with each donor specifying provisions regarding property rights, copyright, disposition, and access to the collection?

d. Does the archives avoid restrictions on access that appear difficult or impossible to administer?

e. Does the archives appraise all materials offered or received to ascertain whether they should be retained permanently?

f. Does the repository have procedures for weeding collections at the series, file folder, and item levels?

g. Does the archives assist donors in obtaining financial evaluations of their gifts for tax purposes?

11. Arrangement

Records and collections should be arranged in accordance with basic archival principles, namely the principle of provenance and the principle of original order. That is, records of different offices or origin or from different sources should not be intermingled, and records should be retained, wherever possible, in their original organizational pattern and in their original filing arrangement in order to preserve all relationships. If the original order has been lost, documents and files of documents should be arranged or grouped in a meaningful relation to one another. Documents should be properly boxed and labeled, and stored so that they are easily maintained and readily retrieved.

a. Wherever possible, does the archives arrange records according to the principles of provenance and original order?

b. If the original order has been lost, are records grouped in a meaningful relation to one another at as many as necessary of the following levels: record group of comparable control unit, subgroup, series, file unit, and document?

c. Does the detail of labeling of acid-free folders and boxes conform to the level of arrangement and description?

d. In arranging records, does the archives staff remove extraneous objects, flatten folded records, and note documents requiring repair?

e. Have the photographic and other non-textual records been evaluated and separated from textual records and filed separately, if such separation is desirable?

12. Description

The archives should design a system of finding aids to provide essential information about the holdings for records users, and to enable the archivist to retrieve records. Finding aids should employ the techniques of group and series description rather than item description, and a brief description of all records is preferred to a detailed description of some. The level of description of records depends on their research value, the anticipated level of demand, and their physical condition. Finding aids may include, as appropriate, guides, inventories or registers, card catalogs, special lists, shelf and box lists, indexes, calendars, and, for machine-readable records, software documentation.

a. Does the archives maintain a system of finding aids that provides general control of all its holdings as well as providing for detailed control as necessary?

b. Does the level of descriptive control conform to the research value and appropriate level of arrangement of the records group or collection?

c. Does the archives provide software documentation for machine-readable records?

d. Does the archives record the physical location of records so that staff can readily locate them?

13. Conservation

The archives should maintain environmental conditions at appropriate levels and techniques should be employed to protect, repair, and restore records. The archives should guard against fire, water, light, adverse temperature and humidity conditions, acidic pollution of air, dirt, mold, and vermin. Trained personnel should use only conservation methods that do no harm to records. It is essential that nitrate or other unstable photographic materials be copied on safety film and the unstable originals destroyed.

a. Does the archives maintain temperature and humidity conditions within acceptable ranges?

b. Does the archives maintain an environment free of dirt, mold, and vermin?

c. Does the archives protect records from sunlight and other sources of ultraviolet light?

d. Does the archives avoid storing records directly beneath overhead pipes or roof air-conditioning units, or in areas subject to seepage or flooding?

e. Is the building and all storage equipment, except for records containers, made of steel or other fire resistant material?

f. Does the archives have access to a facility for the repair and restoration of documents?

g. Does the archives allow only those conservation treatments that are reversible and can do no harm to records?

h. Does the archives permit conservation services to be performed only by trained personnel?

i. Does the archives appropriately provide for the deacidification of records before they are repaired?

j. Does the archives provide for copying on safety film of nitrate base photographic materials?

14. Access

The archives must provide opportunity for research into the records it holds. The archives should be open for research use on a regular and stated schedule. It should provide adequate space and facilities for research use and should make its records available on equal terms of access to all readers who abide by its rules and procedures. Any restrictions to access should be defined in writing and carefully observed.

- a. Is the archives open for research use on a regular and stated schedule?
- b. Does the archives have a written statement of its access policies?
- c. Does the archives maintain a written record of restrictions on access to or use of its materials?
- d. Does the archives administer restrictions equitably for all researchers?
- e. Does the archives observe conditions of access or use that it has agreed to or is bound to enforce?
- f. Does the archives have a policy for evaluating whether an unprocessed collection should be made available to patrons?
- g. Does the archives have a written policy outlining circumstances under which records will be loaned?
- h. Does the archives show knowledge of and conformity with applicable laws regarding freedom of information and privacy?

15. Reference

The archives should provide information about its holdings and assist and instruct patrons in the use of those holdings. Staff members familiar with the collections and capable of making informed decisions about legal and ethical considerations affecting reference work

should be available to assist readers. The archives should report its holdings to appropriate publications so that potential users may know of their existence. The archives should assist users by providing photocopies of materials in its possession whenever possible.

- a. Does the archives systematically provide guidance to sources appropriate to the reader's interest?
- b. Does the archives provide for readers written guidelines containing information about policies affecting research use, such as access policies, rules for use of materials, security rules, sample citations, photocopy policies, copyright provisions, and other specific information?
- c. Does the archives make finding aids available to readers?
- d. Does the archives attempt to inform readers of parallel research?
- e. Does the archives have a written policy outlining the amount and kind of information that will be provided from the records for patrons unable to search the records themselves?
- f. Does the archives report its holdings to appropriate cataloging agencies and publications to inform researchers of its holdings?
- g. Does the archives maintain adequate records of its reference services (e.g., the number and types of users, their topics, the collections used, the number and nature of telephone and mail requests, and the number of photocopy orders filled) to permit analysis of reference needs, to provide protection in cases of theft or abuse, and to permit planning and evaluation of reference services?
- h. Does the archives maintain or have access to a collection of general reference tools, manuals, standard monographs, and other reference materials likely to be needed by both staff and patrons?
- i. Does the archives have a written policy outlining its photocopying policies?

j. Does the archives maintain or have access to facilities to make electrostatic, microfilm, or photographic copies, as well as copies of any non-textual records the archives may hold?

k. Does the archives refuse to provide copies when the copy process risks damage to the original?

l. Does the archives conform to the requirements of copyright legislation when providing patrons with copies of records?

16. Security

While making records available to interested patrons, the archives should also take precautions to protect records from theft, damage, and abuse from staff or readers. The archives should develop appropriate policies and procedures to protect against such hazards, and should also develop policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies that may arise.

a. Does the archives have protection against unauthorized entry, fire, flood, and loss of heat to prevent frozen pipes?

b. Does the archives have a written policy for handling possible theft or abuse of records, disorderly persons, medical emergencies, or other emergencies threatening staff, readers, or records?

c. Does the archives have a written disaster recovery plan?

d. Has the archives been advised by local crime prevention and fire prevention units?

e. Does the archives require readers to register, to identify themselves and to sign an agreement to abide by the rules and regulations of the institution?

f. Does the archives require readers to leave coats, briefcases, packages and other belongings outside the reading area in a secure place provided for them?

g. Does the archives control access to and from the reading area?

h. Does the archives close stacks and processing areas to readers?

i. Does the archives provide supervision of the reading area at all times?

17. Outreach Activities

The archives should seek to inform and educate its various constituencies (scholars, students, donors, records creators, and the general public) about its goals, programs, and holdings through exhibits, publications, and educational programs. The archives should seek to stimulate use of archival holdings to augment the public's awareness of its heritage and to assist policy makers. The archives may also serve as an educational laboratory for students at various educational levels.

a. Does the archives organize exhibits to attract and inform one or more of the archives' constituencies?

b. Does the archives insure that exhibited documents are protected from harmful light and heat, theft, and other damages?

c. Does the archives offer, in conjunction with academic departments and other interested groups, cooperative programs that increase and improve the use of archival resources while providing instructional guidance for readers?

d. Does the archives conduct programs such as conferences and fellowships to encourage scholarly use of holdings?

e. Does the archives have a publications program to advance the interests of various programs and to serve as least part of the archives' constituency?

f. Does the archives publicize its activities by reporting to appropriate news media significant accessions, openings, exhibits, staff achievements, fellowship awards, conferences, and other activities?