

**Nipissing University and Canadore College Archives and Special Collections**

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# ACQUISITION POLICY

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By Peter Houston, August 2015

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## PURPOSE

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This policy governs the acquisition of records and publications by the Nipissing University and Canadore College Archives and Special Collections (the “Archives”) through transfer, donation, loan, or purchase. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that only records and publications which directly support the Archives’ mandate and that have been acquired through established means and an appropriate selection process are allowed to become part of the holdings. The Manager of Archives and Special Collections (the “Manager”) oversees the application of the policy, and has authority to decide which records and publications are acquired.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Archives acquires records in all media formats, digital and non-digital, regardless of their physical form and characteristics. **Records** are defined as data or information in a fixed form that are created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and set aside/preserved as evidence of that activity for future reference.<sup>1</sup> Records differ from publications in that they are typically unpublished. Types of records include:

- Textual records, including correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, diaries, and memoranda
- Audiovisual records, including photos, video recordings, and audio recordings
- Architectural and technical drawings
- Maps and charts

The Archives only acquires records that have **archival value**, that is, ongoing usefulness or significance based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, which justifies their continued preservation.<sup>2</sup> The Manager decides which records have archival value and should be acquired. Only original records are usually acquired, not copies, and especially not copies of records that are available in other archival repositories.

The Archives acquires **publications** in all formats that, due to their rarity, value, condition, or informational content, must be kept separate from the library’s circulating collections and safeguarded in the Archives Room. Publications are defined as any copy of a work that is distributed to the general public with the consent of the author. Examples include books, journals, magazines, newspapers, catalogues, musical albums, and films.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of “record” from the Society of American Archivists’ *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005: <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/r/record>

<sup>2</sup> Definition of “archival value” from the Society of American Archivists’ *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005: <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/archival-value>

The Archives will not acquire records or publications

- that cannot be properly preserved and made accessible in a reasonable period of time
- that have been illegally and/or unethically obtained
- for which ownership is uncertain or contested prior to their donation or transfer

Physical objects/artefacts are not usually acquired by the Archives.

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## SCOPE OF ACQUISITION

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### INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS OF NIPISSING UNIVERSITY AND CANADORE COLLEGE

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The Archives selectively acquires the institutional records of Nipissing University and Canadore College, including records of:

- Governing bodies and administrators, such as the Board of Governors, the Academic Senate (Nipissing University only), their committees, and the offices of the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Chancellor (Nipissing University only)
- Faculties, schools, and academic programs

Ideally, institutional records are selected and acquired by archives through a records management program, however, neither the University or College currently have such a program in place. Selection and acquisition are therefore conducted on an ad hoc basis by the Manager in collaboration with offices and departments.

Records to be acquired by the Archives include those that must be retained by the University or College in accordance with provincial or federal legislation, or those that have significant administrative, fiscal, or historical value. The Archives mostly acquires operational records, meaning the records that document the policies, decisions, and functions of the University and College. The Archives does not usually acquire purely administrative records, that is, those records common to all large organizations concerning activities like the management of property, facilities, finances, personnel, equipment, and information technology.

Records must be past the active and semi-active stages of their life cycle to be eligible for acquisition. All transfers to the Archives are permanent and once transferred, records cannot be returned to the originating office or department, although they can be consulted in the Archives' Reading Room.

## PRIVATE RECORDS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE NIPISSING UNIVERSITY AND CANADORE COLLEGE

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The Archives selectively acquires records of private individuals and organizations that are significant to the academic and cultural history of Nipissing University, Canadore College, and their predecessor institutions: North Bay Normal School / Teachers' College, Saint Joseph's School of Nursing, and Cambrian College's North Bay campus. Records are acquired from current and past faculty members, administrators, alumni, and students, as well as from organizations representing these groups.

Selection for acquisition is based on the significance of the records' creator to the academic and cultural heritage of the University or College, and the degree to which the records reflect their relationship to their institution.

## PRIVATE RECORDS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF NORTH BAY AND AREA

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The Archives selectively acquires private records that are significant to the history of North Bay and area, including the records of prominent local individuals, families, businesses, and organizations. The Archives should acquire these records in concert with other local and regional heritage institutions, respecting their mandates and acquisition areas, and preferring to collaborate rather than compete.

## PUBLICATIONS

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The Archives selectively acquires publications that are relevant to the history of Nipissing University, Canadore College, or the North Bay area. Publications are also acquired by the Archives that require special protection due to their rarity, age, monetary value, subject matter, or intrinsic value. Other types of publications are better kept as part of the Library's circulating or reference collections, where they are more easily accessible.

## MEANS OF ACQUISITION

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The Archives acquires records through the following three means:

- 1) **Record transfer** – A direct transfer of institutional records of archival value from a University or College office or department to the Archives. Since there are currently no institutional records management programs in place, transfers of records are arranged on an as-needed basis by the Manager, who works with University and College staff to select records of archival value.

Each transfer must be accompanied by a [Record Transfer Form](#), to be completed and signed by a representative of the office or department, as well as the Manager of Archives and Special Collections. Record transfer forms must be permanently retained by the Archives as the official record of the transfer of ownership.

- 2) **Donation** – A transfer of private (i.e. non-institutional) records to the Archives from individuals or organizations that are not part of the University or College.

Before any donation takes place a [Deed of Gift](#), which documents the terms of the donation and the transfer of ownership, must be completed and signed by the donor and the Manager. Deeds of gift must be permanently retained by the Archives as the official record of the transfer of ownership.

- 3) **Purchase** – Private records are only purchased in exceptional cases when acquisition by donation is impossible, the Manager has appraised the records and deemed their cost justified, and there is an acquisition budget to cover the purchase. All purchases must be approved by the Manager and the Executive Director, Library Services.

The Archives acquires publications through donation or purchase, as described above. Acquisition decisions are made by the Manager in consultation with Liaison Librarians from relevant subject areas. Publications should not be transferred from the library's existing collections to the Archives solely because of their age, condition, or format, but must first pass the formal selection process.

All records and publications acquired become the permanent property of the Archives, and may be reformatted, described, made accessible, exhibited, disposed of, and used in any manner that the Manager deems suitable and that is consistent with the terms agreed upon in the [Deed of Gift](#) or [Record Transfer Form](#).

The Archives cannot accept loans of records or publications due to the liability, cost, and risks that it would be necessary to assume as temporary custodian. The only exception is in rare cases where the Manager agrees to acquire reference copies of records from a donor who cannot part with the originals; in this case, a short-term loan may be arranged via a [Condition of Loan Agreement](#) while Archives staff copy the records before returning the originals.

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## SELECTION FOR ACQUISITION

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Records and publications are acquired selectively by the Archives based primarily on their relevance to the Archives' mandate to build and maintain holdings that support teaching, learning, and academic research at the University and College. The Manager oversees the selection of records and publications for acquisition, and is ultimately responsible for all

decisions. The Manager only accepts records or publications for acquisition that are worth the investment of time and resources required to preserve and make them accessible over the long-term. Other factors that may be taken into consideration when selecting material for acquisition include:

- The Archives' existing holdings, as records or publications may be more desirable if they complement or augment existing holdings, and less desirable if they duplicate them.
- Physical condition, as the high cost of conservation may necessitate rejecting records or publications that are in poor condition if the Manager cannot justify the cost of caring for them.
- Serious preservation risk, as acquiring mouldy or infested records could pose a danger to the Archives' existing holdings.
- Access restrictions, which may prevent acquisition if they are too restrictive and could conflict with the Archives' mandate to make its holdings publicly accessible.
- Format, as acquisition of records in obsolete digital or machine-readable formats is not possible if they are unreadable and would be prohibitively expensive to reformat.
- The acquisition policies of other archives, as records may be more appropriately acquired by other archives if they better fit their acquisition policies.

Publications have special criteria, and at least one of the following must be met in order to be eligible for acquisition:

- Relevance to the academic and cultural history of the University and College. Types of relevant publications include:
  - Faculty monographs
  - Theses, dissertations, and major research papers
  - Academic calendars
  - Convocation programs
  - Yearbooks
  - Staff and faculty directories
  - Newspapers, magazines, and newsletters published on campus
- Relevance to local or regional history. These may complement records in the Archives' holdings and can provide useful secondary sources to researchers carrying out primary source research.
- High value. Valuable publications acquired through the Library's Collections Policy may be housed in the Archives to ensure their preservation and security if they have one or more of the following characteristics:
  - Rarity – Publications with limited print runs or few known examples in existence that would be difficult or impossible to replace.
  - Age – Published prior to 1850.
  - Monetary value – Valued at over \$200.

- Intrinsic or aesthetic value – Possesses unique characteristics such as a special binding type, edition number, inscriptions, illustrations, or maps, which make the publication valuable.
- Significant collection – A collection of publications that individually may not fit the above criteria, but which have substantial value as a complete whole and must be kept together.

Publications removed from the library's circulating collection because of age, fragility, or poor physical condition will not be accepted by the Archives for these reasons alone, but must possess at least one of the above criteria.

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### APPROVAL AND REVISION HISTORY

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**Prepared by:** Peter Houston, Manager of Archives and Special Collections, 2014

**Approved by:** Nancy Black, Library Executive Director, 2014