



University Recordkeeping Manual

Part Five

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Archives and Records Management Services
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Part 5 – University Archives

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Part 5 – University Archives

1. Introduction

The Archives of the University of Sydney were established in 1954. In January 2000 the University Archives amalgamated with Central Records to form Archives & Records Management Services, within the Secretariat and Corporate Information Unit. This amalgamation took place to consolidate information management resources in the University and to enable *records continuum* management (see *Glossary* for definition).

The records in the Archives date back to the University's establishment in 1850. The Archives were established to collect and preserve those records of the University appraised as having permanent value. A main function of the Archives is to make these archival records accessible to both University staff and external researchers.

Included in the Archives are: the records of the Senate (from the first Senate Minute Book of 1851); of the Professorial Board and its successor the Academic Board; and of the many administrative offices which control the functions of the University of Sydney, particularly those from the Office of the Registrar. The Archives also holds the archival records of some institutions which have amalgamated with the University, such as Sydney College of Advanced Education (and some of its predecessors such as Sydney Teachers College and the Guild Teachers' College), Sydney College of the Arts and the Conservatorium of Music. The Archives houses a collection of photographs of University interest, both prints and negatives; maps and plans; and University publications of all kinds. In addition, the Archives holds significant collections of the archives of individuals and bodies closely associated with the University.

2. The holdings

The archives are composed of those administrative records of the University having long-term value and of certain research and personal archives of University staff. Within the administrative collection are significant numbers of photographs depicting University people, buildings and events. Some photographs date to the early years of the University in the 1850s. A list of the holdings and some images can be found on the Archives website at: www.usyd.edu.au/arms/archives/

The personal archives of University staff mainly relate to teaching and research (for academic staff) or their roles in the University's administration,

however some papers relate to their extramural activities and interests or their relationships with other organisations. For example, the records of the late Sir Hermann Black relate to his time as Chancellor, cover the period of his academic career as a Lecturer in Economics and record his relationship with a number of government bodies and NGOs, such as when he was Economic Advisor to the NSW Treasury. Similarly, the anthropologist Adolphus Peter Elkin, in a career spanning more than 60 years, accumulated a wide range of material including that relating to Aboriginal communities, the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, *Oceania* (as Editor), the Australian National Research Council, the Association for the Protection of Native Races and the Aborigines Protection Board. The Archives holds over 250 boxes of Elkin material.

3. Photographs & building plans

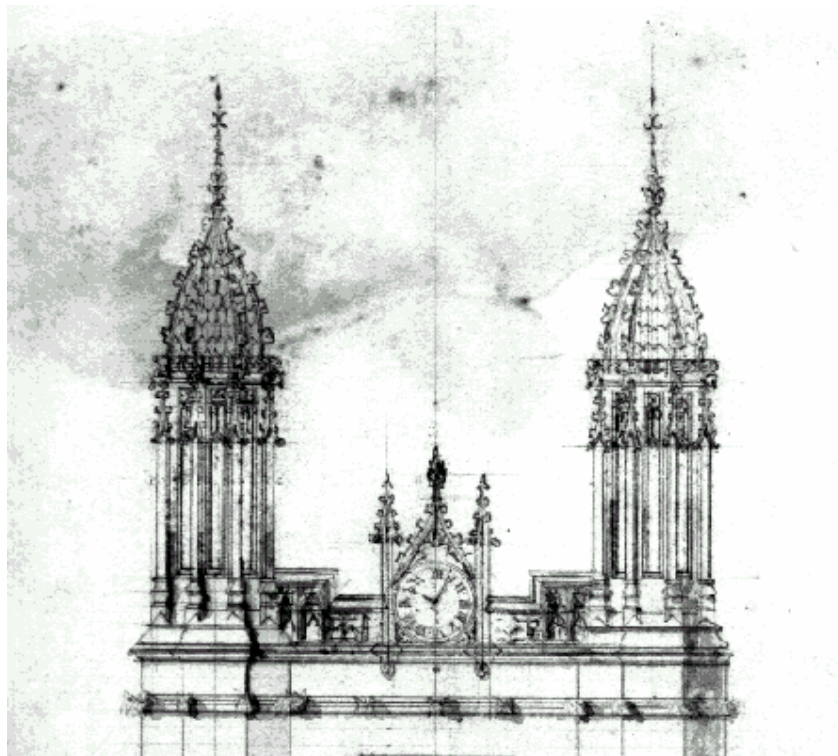
The Archives has a large holding of photographs depicting people, buildings and events from the 1850s onwards. The photographs have come from a variety of sources, with regular transfers coming from the University's Publications Office (and its predecessors). The Archives also holds the original glass plate negatives of the Professor John Smith and Harold Cazneau's photographs, many of which depict the construction of the early University buildings.



The Great Hall from what is now Science Road. E T Blackett in doorway. Late 1855.



The daughter of Professor John Woolley in his apartment. Photograph by John Smith.



A sketch of the approved Clock Tower design by Edmund Blacket

4. Appraisal and archival selection

4.1 Archival sources

Records are accessioned into the Archives from two sources. Firstly, the official administrative records of the University are disposed of according to disposal schedules authorised by the State Records Authority. This means that a proportion of all records created or received within the University are identified as having permanent value and are systematically transferred into archival custody at the end of their statutory retention period. Most archival records are identified at creation, however some, such as research grant applications, are appraised when no longer active. It is not always possible to determine the significance of a project until it is finalised and its impact on society or the field of scholarship evident.

The second method by which the Archives acquire material is by donation. The University Archives is fortunate in holding as a resource the archives of many significant members or past members of the University. A small selection of these include: the philosopher John Anderson; economist Francis Bland; geologists David Branagan, Ida Browne and Edgeworth David; anthropologists Adolphus Elkin and Herbert Hogbin; chemists Raymond Le Fevre and Archibald Liversidge; physicist Harry Messel; as well as the papers of Mungo Maccallum and Alexander Mackie. The personal archives cover almost every area of scholarship and are widely used by researchers from across the country and internationally.

4.2 Selection criteria

There are two main criteria applied when determining the value of records. These relate to their *evidential* value and *informational* value.

- (a) *Evidential*. Evidential records provide evidence of a function or activity of the organisation or its employees, what was done, when, why and what the outcomes were.
- (b) *Informational records* contain information of ongoing use or potential use to both the record creator and/or to researchers from a variety of fields of knowledge.

Under these two main criteria are four categories of records common to any organisation (see table below). Records are therefore selected against the categories for inclusion in archival collections. The University of Sydney Archives has records from all these categories covering the entire period of the University's history.

Table 1: Appraisal Criteria

Appraisal Criteria	Categories of Records	Specific Types of Records
Evidential	<p><i>Administrative Records</i> Without a proportion of records which document the details of administration the creators of the records or their successors could not operate. It would not be possible to plan, organise and make decisions or to ensure consistency or continuity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes & agenda of governing body, major administrative committees • Policy & procedure manuals • By-laws, rules & regulations • Annual reports • Reports on major projects • Strategic planning documents • Photographs • Diaries recording contemporary decision making
Evidential	<p><i>Records of Legal Value</i> These records form proof of an event or agreement. Obligations, commitments, rights and delegations of authority fall into this category. Without these records there is no security or foundation for decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memos & articles of association • By-laws, rules & regulations • Contracts • Agreements • Statutory reports • Wills • Certificate of title • Registration of patents • Licences to operate • Instruments of appointment • Instruments of delegation of authority
Evidential	<p><i>Records of Financial Accountability</i> These records document the honest and responsible conduct of financial affairs, the financial standing of the organisation and obligations. These records are essential to understand and transact business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial statements • Financial returns • Audit reports • Statutory reports • Strategic planning documents • Reports on exceptional results
Informational	<p><i>Records of Historic Interest for Public Relations and General Interest Purposes</i> Records of this type allow the context of the records creator to be understood. The social, political, economic, educational and recreational activities and the relations to the wider community are documented through these records.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above • Promotional videos • Photographs • Advertising copy • Personal diaries • Postcards • Posters • Souvenirs

Reed, Barbara, 'Appraisal & Disposal', in Judith Ellis (ed.), *Keeping Archives*, 2nd Edition, Thorpe in Association with The Australian Society of Archivists Inc, 1993, p.159.

5. Donations

The University Archives welcomes donations of the personal archives of individuals closely associated with the University. Material accepted by the Archives will be covered by a deposit agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the deposit. Once deposited, material becomes the property of the University. Access to the material will be in accordance with the conditions agreed to prior to deposit. Please contact the University archivists for advice.

5.1 Cultural Gifts Program

The University Archives is registered with the Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts Cultural Gifts Program. Under the Program, donors of significant items may be eligible for a tax deduction for the market value of the gift, under Subdivision 30-A of the *Income Tax Assessment Act* 1997. For further information about this scheme, contact the University archivists or access the website on www.dca.gov.au

6. Disposal

The University comes under the NSW State Records Act, 1998 and disposal of records must be undertaken in accordance with various General Disposal Authorities or disposal schedules. These schedules are available in hard-copy form from the State Records Authority or via the Web at: <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/> for more information regarding the Act and its requirements, see Part 7 of the Manual – *Retention & Disposal*.

The General Disposal Authorities or GDA's cover the most common records created across agencies. In 2005, the State Records Board approved an authority for universities, GDA23. This GDA is a functional disposal schedule covering university-specific records and it describes the type of records created, stipulates a retention period and prescribes a final disposal action, either destruction or permanent retention. It replaced the earlier document, GDA 9.

Most records in government agencies are destroyed at the end of their retention periods, with less than 5% retained permanently as archives. Archival records are selected carefully using the criteria described in the table above. Some of the records created in the University and designated in GDA23 as archives are:

- Master sets of policies
- Master list of graduates
- Student academic transcripts/final results
- Master copies of maps of the University (all versions)
- Master set of meeting papers of Senate and Academic Board
- Master set of by-laws and rules set by the University
- Examination papers – master set of questions
- Master set of approved curricula
- Records relating to successful external accreditation

Please contact the University Archives if you have any questions regarding records disposal.

7. Using the Archives

The Archives are open to staff of the University and to external researchers. Opening hours are between 9-1, 2-5 Monday to Thursday, by appointment as space is limited, please telephone or e-mail the Reference Archivist for an appointment. If you are conducting personal, that is, non-administrative, research you will be asked to complete a researcher application form.

While most material is on open access, some collections or part of collections are restricted. Please do not be offended if you are refused access.

As archival material is unique and irreplaceable, it is preferred that pencils are used when taking notes. Facilities are available for notebook computers to be used. Due to copyright issues, the unique nature of archives and often their fragility, no manuscript material can be photocopied. In some circumstances, some documents and photographs can be scanned and electronic copies supplied. Unfortunately it is no longer possible to arrange photographic copies. Fees apply for the scanning service.

Most collections have a finding aid or guide, although detail varies. Material is arranged according to archival principles where the original order is maintained if possible.

8. Services

8.1 Consultancy services are available to University offices and departments. Advice is provided regarding disposal, appraisal, storage media and management of records. Please contact the University Archives to arrange an appointment.

8.2 Search Room services. Archives staff are available to assist researchers in the Search Room in using the guides, locating relevant resources and developing research projects.

8.3 Telephone/mail and e-mail enquiries. Archives staff provide limited information to external researchers who enquire by telephone, mail or e-mail, however we are unable to answer detailed research enquiries. If your request is likely to require lengthy research and you are not able to make an appointment to use the Archives in person, you should engage a research agent to conduct the research on your behalf. Lists of researchers are available from the **Professional Historians Association of NSW** on <http://www.phansw.org.au/Register/rch.html> and the **Society of Australian Genealogists** at <http://www.sag.org.au/>

8.4 Exhibitions. The Archives mounts exhibitions and displays to support significant University events and celebrations, for example, the Sesquicentenary. Sufficient notice must be given to allow for design,

research and copying of material (where necessary). Original material will only be displayed under certain conditions, to prevent damage or loss.

8.5 Copying. Original manuscript material cannot be photocopied but photographic copies can be arranged, depending on the condition of the item and whether the University holds copyright. Fees apply for this service..

8.6 Talks and workshops on archives management or on the collection may be arranged upon request.

9. Transferring administrative records to the Archives

Before transferring records, please contact the Archives in advance and we will provide you with standard archive boxes free of charge. Please provide a list of contents, especially if a variety of material or a large quantity is being transferred.

10. Storing records of long term value

Records in the office which have been identified as archives should be stored and managed so as to preserve them and so as to minimise the impact of daily use. Archives such as minutes of major University committees should be produced on archival quality, acid-free paper and the master copy or original forwarded as quickly as possible to the University Archives.

Other records which may need to be retained in the office for a longer period, should also be copied onto acid-free paper and stored securely in a stable environment with limited temperature and humidity variations.

Avoid the use of metal pins and clips, as they rust over time and destroy the paper. Documents on thermal paper, such as that used in some fax machines, deteriorate rapidly and can become illegible within a short space of time. Such documents should be copied onto acid-free paper.

11. Contacts

For appointments, information or advice, contact:

University Archives

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University of Sydney NSW 2006
Telephone: +61 2 9351 2684
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E-mail: archives@mail.usyd.edu.au