

Deaccessioning Policy

Evaluation of Materials

Before the disposition of materials, an appraisal report will be completed and reviewed and the following questions will be considered by professional staff.

1. Does the material fall within the scope of current collecting policies? How does it relate to the current mission policy?
2. Is the material a duplicate or does it duplicate information already held in the collections in another format?
3. Has the material deteriorated beyond usefulness?
4. Does the Archives have a Deed of Gift or documentation that proves clear title to the material?
5. Do any externally imposed restrictions, such as donor agreements, apply to the material?
6. Does the material fall under the criteria of the State Abandoned Property Act?
7. How would deaccessioning the material affect public access to information and historical research?
8. How accessible is the material? Are funds available for processing and preservation?
9. What is the relationship of the material to other archival records, both internally and externally?

Disposition of Materials

The Archives is governed by (*List any relevant statutes or policies of parent institution.*). In practice, material to be deaccessioned may be transferred to other repositories, offered for public sale, or be destroyed. Any such disposition of material with substantial research or financial value will be governed by the following considerations:

1. Materials must be free of all legal obstacles. No materials will be deaccessioned when a written agreement between the donor and the Archives that contradicts such action exists. A reasonable attempt will be made to consult donors when materials are considered for deaccessioning.
2. Materials will not be sold to Archives staff, their immediate families, or any other organization affiliated with the Archives. All proceeds from the sale of such materials will be used solely to further the preservation or development of the Archives' research collections.
3. The method of disposition will be determined jointly by appropriate staff, the Manager of Arrangement and Description, and the Associate Director.
4. When deaccessioning is determined to be appropriate, responsibility for disposition of materials will be as follows: Materials valued at less than \$1,000 may be deaccessioned at the discretion of professional staff after consulting the Manager of Arrangement and Description; materials valued at \$1,000 to \$5,000 will require additional approval of the Associate Director and the Director; materials value at more than \$5,000 will be referred to the Archives' Board at the discretion of the Archives' Director.

Types of Deaccessioning

Once it has been determined that the materials are to be disposed of, four methods of deaccessioning materials may be used.

1. **Destruction.** Outright destruction is a suitable method of disposition for materials that have been reappraised and determined not to have any merit for continued preservation.
2. **Transfer.** Materials that have been evaluated and identified to be out of the mission of the Archives and would be better served at another repository shall be made available to that repository for transfer of ownership if the Archives has clear title to the materials. The repository receiving the collection will pay all expenses involved in shipping and sign a release form in which they assume ownership of the material. The

receiving institution may also be required, at the Archives' request, to issue a press release concerning the transfer of the collection and identify the Archives as the donor.

3. **Sale.** The sale of items such as autographed letters, stock certificates, maps, and photographs that are either duplicates or have no intrinsic or informational value to the Archives shall be conducted to maintain and preserve Archives collections. The sale of out-of-scope materials is a common practice in libraries and museums and is a method of refining the Archives' collections. The sale of such materials would best be served by a reputable book or manuscript dealer.
4. **Return to owner.** Materials may be returned to the legal owner if they have requested the return of their materials and Archives ownership of the collection cannot be clearly established.

Other Considerations

Other factors need to be considered during the deaccessioning process and apply to both the donor and the archivist.

1. Donors and records creators should be informed that factors such as a change in mission, new accessions, and financial responsibilities may preclude the perpetual preservation of a collection and that these changes may compel the Archives to dispose of materials that had been acquired earlier. Donors will be made aware of these necessary activities by clearly stating in the Deed of Gift that the Archives may dispose of parts or the entire collection based upon these factors.
2. Although appraisal and deaccessioning are needed tools for refining collections, their importance can be reduced by keeping selection policies current and by applying sound appraisal standards.