

ARCHIVES TRANSFER PROCEDURE

1. Background

The [Special Collections](#) service, housed in Arts and Social Sciences Library, Tyndall Avenue, is responsible for the acquisition, maintenance and exploitation of the [University of Bristol's archives](#). These form the corporate memory of the University and are an important historical and evidential resource for administrative and academic departments, as well as external enquirers.

Archives are records retained permanently for their historical value: that is, what they tell us about the functions and activities of the institution over time. This does not necessarily mean that they are old records: the records you and your colleagues are creating today may have historical value. Knowing whether this is the case and taking appropriate action to ensure such records are not disposed of is an essential part of good [records management](#).

A tool designed to identify the numerous classes of records created in the University and how long they should be kept is the corporate [Records Retention Schedule](#). All staff, especially those with specific records-keeping responsibilities, should be aware of the Schedule and how it relates to the records created in their business units. It is the authority to guide the timely disposal of records and to ensure that material no longer required for business purposes or for its historical value does not accumulate throughout the institution. Such accumulations of records occupy valuable space and can result in those that have value becoming 'buried' in an undifferentiated mass. The Schedule covers all records, in whatever format, and although most materials held in Special Collections are hard-copy, making provision for the long-term preservation of born-digital and other electronic records is a priority.

Please note that, although it might be considered appropriate to scan records for business purposes, it is the **original records** that are required for the archives. If a scanning project is being considered for records where the Schedule indicates they should be reappraised or transferred to the archives, Special Collections should be contacted before the records are sent for scanning.

2. Purpose

It is the purpose of this procedure to facilitate the transfer of historical records to Special Collections and to ensure that proper consideration is given to the potential historical value of records when their business use has come to an end.

If a business unit creates records that are ultimately destined for the archives, it is better to arrange for regular transfers than to allow a large volume to accumulate. This also enables Special Collections to plan storage provision and workloads and avoids the costs associated with having to send large quantities of material into commercial storage before it can be processed.

3. Records identified for "Transfer to archives"

If records within a business unit have been identified as having no further use in the day-to-day conduct of business, it is important to check the Records Retention Schedule to determine whether disposal can be carried out. If the recommended "Retention Period" has expired and the "Action at end of retention period" is "Destroy", this can be done with due regard to confidentiality of the records. For classes of records designated "**Send to University archives**", Special Collections should

be contacted to arrange for their transfer (Internal tel. 88014/email special-collections@bristol.ac.uk).

Records should not be sent to Special Collections without prior consultation. It may be necessary to arrange for weeding, packaging, transport and reception before the records can be transferred. There is limited space in Special Collections for the reception and processing of material and it may be necessary, in the case of large deposits, to send the materials directly to the Research Reserve out-store or into Restore commercial storage, see <https://www.bris.ac.uk/it-services/advice/uobonly/recordsmgt> for more information.

As mentioned above, the Schedule also covers electronic records. In cases where a digital system is being decommissioned, upgraded or replaced it is important to consider whether the data it contains falls into the **“Send to University archives”** category. If so, it is essential either that it is migrated to the new system, or that there are discussions with Special Collections about appropriate formats in which the historical data may be transferred.

4. Records identified as “Reappraise for further retention or destruction”

If records within a business unit have been identified as having no further use in the day-to-day conduct of business, it is important to check the Records Retention Schedule to determine whether disposal can be carried out. If the recommended “Retention Period” has expired and the “Action at end of retention period” is “Destroy” this can be done with due regard to confidentiality of the records. For classes of records designated **“Reappraise for further retention or destruction”** a two-stage reappraisal should take place:

It should be determined whether there is any business reason to retain the records: are they required as evidence of transactions, or referred to as precedent, however infrequently, for example? If no such reason is identified, then the next stage is to consider the historical value of the records.

Special Collections should be contacted to determine whether the records identified as having no further business use have any historical value. It may be the case that earlier records of the class are already held in the archives, or that selected records should be retained. Selection may be based on easily-determined factors, such as the budget for a project exceeding certain levels, or the refurbishment of premises relating to a listed building, for example. In such cases, it will be possible to arrange for such records, in future, to be set aside for eventual transfer to the archives. Other criteria may be more subjective and require case-by-case consideration. In such cases it may be necessary to transfer all the records to Restore to await appraisal by Special Collections staff.

If you have any queries about the content of this document, please contact **Special Collections:** Internal tel. 88014/email special-collections@bristol.ac.uk .

For more information about long term storage please see <https://www.bris.ac.uk/it-services/advice/uobonly/recordsmgt>

KA

15 November 2018