



August 2006

A Message from the University Archivist

The holdings of the University Archives, which date from the 17th century to the present, encompass permanent University records, including publications, as well as theses and dissertations, faculty papers, course curricula, and alumni/ae memorabilia. The holdings include a broad range of formats, from paper files, books, and periodicals to photographs and audio and video recordings.

Researchers from Harvard and around the world visit the Harvard University Archives regularly to conduct historical research on a wide array of subjects ranging from biography to the changing nature of specific academic disciplines, research, and teaching practices.

In addition to preserving the documentary heritage of Harvard University, the Archives has a vital second mission: to set and implement policies for the management of University records, including the promotion of records storage and retrieval efficiencies. This second area is known as records management, and it involves the Archives not only in the day-to-day management of information at Harvard University, but also in helping to determine the archival holdings of the future.

This document is intended to provide guidelines for all faculty at Harvard in managing a wide range of personal and professional files and related University records. Our intent is to recommend simple categories for the various files and records that you may have in your office, and to offer basic information on how those materials can best be maintained in accordance with the University's records-management policies.

More information is available by visiting the Archives web sites at <http://hul.harvard.edu/huarc> or <http://hul.harvard.edu/rmo>. You can also call or e-mail the Archives at 5-5961 or rmo@hulmail.harvard.edu.

Cordially,

Megan Sniffin-Marinoff
University Archivist

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Introduction

About the Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to help you and your staff to manage your files and to ensure that you have ready access to information that you need over the long term. The guidelines are based on best practices, federal and state privacy and confidentiality regulations, University records-retention policies, and a survey of current methods used by your colleagues at Harvard.

Major File Groups

You may already use methods that are similar to these. If you find that your files contain material that is not reflected in the guidelines, please let us know at rmo@hulmail.harvard.edu. We will be happy to work with you to develop a system that meets your specific needs.

Personal and/or Professional Files

- Autobiographical Materials
- Consulting Files
- Professional Contact Files—“people files”
- Professional Organization and Conference Files—“travel files”
- Reference Files
- Research Files—Project Records
- Special Media
- Speeches and Presentations
- Student Evaluations and Recommendations
- Teaching Files
- Writings—published and unpublished

University Records

- Conference Files: records created in the course of organizing University events, such as conferences
- Department and Committee Records: records created in your capacity as a University administrator, department chair, or University committee chair or member
- Research Files—Administrative Records: records created in the course of a sponsored research project

Policy Overview

University records are governed by University policies. Retention periods are set forth in the University’s General Records Schedule (GRS). For more information regarding the management of these files and records, contact Records Management Services in the Harvard University Archives (5-5961 or rmo@hulmail.harvard.edu).

Personal Files or University Records?

Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish between personal/professional files and University records. For further guidance, consult the list that begins on page 4 of this publication.

Electronic Files

Recommendations for managing electronic files are located on page 7.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The University is required by law to protect some categories of information about individuals, including health records, student records, records concerning human subject research, and some financial and employment records.

- The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** requires any school, college, or university receiving federal funds to protect the confidentiality of student information.
- The **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)** restricts access to medical information about individuals, including medical records and other personal health information. HIPAA privacy regulations may also apply to records of human subject research, including biomedical, psychological, and epidemiological research.
- The **Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR 46)** govern all records of research involving human subjects. Compliance with these regulations is overseen by:

The Standing Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Education, and the Kennedy School of Government

The Office for Research Subject Protection and Committee on Human Studies at the Medical and Dental Schools

The Human Subjects Committee at the School of Public Health

For detailed information, see the Harvard University Information Privacy and Security web site at <http://www.security.harvard.edu>.

Records subject to privacy and confidentiality regulations should be segregated from other records, retained securely, and destroyed confidentially. Contact Records Management Services at the Harvard University Archives at 5-5961 or rmo@hulmail.harvard.edu for information on confidential destruction services.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

Department of Health and Human Services Regulations

Harvard's Information Privacy and Security Web Site

Personal / Professional Files

Autobiographical Materials

Includes curricula vitae and bibliographies, honors, awards, degrees, press releases, diaries, oral histories and interviews, genealogies, biographical publications.

Organize autobiographical materials by category or document type, then chronologically by date.

Consulting Files

Includes proposals, contracts, reports, correspondence, notes.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by project/organization name. Recommended for smaller projects.*
- *Option B—Arrange by project, then by topical category. Within each category file material by name, topic, or year as appropriate. Recommended for larger projects.*

Records generated from non-University work may be governed by federal/state regulations or contractual agreements.

To ensure ready access, contractual agreements should be filed with corresponding project files in clearly marked separate folders.

Professional Contact Files (“people files”)

Includes letters, printouts of e-mail correspondence, review and promotion records, papers and articles, applications, curriculum vitae, news clippings.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by personal name.*
- *Option B—File alphabetically in A to Z letter files (e.g. “B” folder, “C” folder, etc. for people represented by too few documents to merit separate personal folders).*

Using either option, files may be sub-grouped by category as appropriate (e.g. students, researchers, visiting scholars, peers).

File evaluations and recommendations about colleagues and other professionals in separate folders to maintain confidentiality.

FERPA regulations may apply to records related to current students.

See http://security.harvard.edu/for_students/ferpa.php.

Professional Organization and Conference Files (“travel files”)

Includes agendas, meeting minutes, reports, correspondence, notes.

File alphabetically by committee name, subject, or topic, then by year as appropriate. Transfer chairperson’s records to the incoming chair.

Records created in the course of official University activities are subject to University records policies. See “Administrative Records” on page 6 of these guidelines and consult the General Records Schedule at <http://grs.harvard.edu>.

Reference Files

Includes vertical subject files, directories, manuals, personal reference libraries of books and journals.

File by subject, or name of author, or type of material as appropriate.

Personal / Professional Files

Includes proposals and planning records, research notes, research data (such as lab and field notebooks), documentation, analyses and reports of findings, correspondence, meeting minutes.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by project name. Recommended for smaller projects.*
- *Option B—Arrange by project, then by topical category. Within each category file material by name, topic, or year as appropriate. Recommended for larger projects.*

Records of research projects conducted under University auspices may be subject to University records policies. See “Administrative Records” on page 6 of these guidelines and consult the General Records Schedule at <http://grs.harvard.edu>.

Includes photographs and negatives, slides, audio and videotapes, specimens and artifacts, compact discs, motion picture films, maps, plans, drawings, three-dimensional objects and models, memorabilia.

- *Option A—Organize special media in a scheme parallel to corresponding paper or electronic files (e.g. teaching records, research project records).*
- *Option B—Organize special media by medium, then by subject/topic as appropriate, then by date.*

Label special media with names, dates, subjects, sources, and any other appropriate identifiers. Annotate media to relate materials to other files.

Includes speech notes, abstracts, slides, transparencies.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by title.*
- *Option B—File chronologically by date of event.*
- *Option C—File by year or year range, then alphabetically by title.*

Includes letters of recommendations and evaluations for students.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by personal name.*
- *Option B—File alphabetically in A to Z letter files (e.g. “B” folder, “C” folder, etc. for people represented by too few documents to merit separate personal folders).*

Files may be sub-grouped by category as appropriate (e.g. graduates, undergraduates).

File evaluations and recommendations separately from other correspondence and keep them secure to maintain confidentiality.

FERPA regulations apply. See http://security.harvard.edu/for_students/ferpa.php.

Includes lecture or class notes, course syllabi and outlines, assignments and exams, grading guidelines, manuals, notebooks.

- *Option A—File by course title/number, then by semester or academic year.*
- *Option B—Group by course, then file by lecture title.*

**Research
Files—
Project
Records**

**Special
Media**

**Speeches
and
Presentations**

**Student
Evaluations
and
Recommendations**

**Teaching
Files—
Course
Materials**

Personal / Professional Files

Teaching Files—

Student Course Work

Includes grade reports, attendance records, graded assignments or exams, papers.

File by course title/number, then by semester or academic year. File student course work separately from course materials to maintain confidentiality. FERPA regulations apply. See http://security.harvard.edu/for_students/ferpa.php.

Writings, Published and Unpublished—Working Files

Includes manuscripts, unpublished papers, drafts or notes, publishers' contracts and related correspondence, comments, referees' reports, galley proofs.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by project name.*
- *Option B—Group records by project name, then file alphabetically by category as appropriate.*

To ensure ready access, file publishers' contracts and related correspondence in a clearly marked separate folder.

Reprints

Includes articles, books, book reviews.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by title.*
- *Option B—File chronologically by date of publication.*
- *Option C—File by year or year range, then alphabetically by title.*

University Records

Conference Files

Includes records created in the course of official University activities that are subject to University records policies. See “Administrative Records” below and consult the General Records Schedule at <http://grs.harvard.edu>.

Department and Committee Records

Includes correspondence, meeting minutes and committee files, brochures and programs, notes, travel expense and reimbursement materials.

- *Option A—File alphabetically by name of organization or event, then chronologically by date.*
- *Option B—File chronologically by date of event.*
- *Option C—File by year or year range, then alphabetically by name of organization or event.*

Files collected in an official capacity should be returned to the organization when no longer needed.

Research Files—Administrative Records

Includes grant applications and contract files, policy and procedure manuals, financial records, search and personnel records, equipment maintenance records, logistics and meeting arrangement records, reports.

Arrange by project, then by topical category, then by subject/name as appropriate. File administrative records separately from project records.

University records are governed by University records retention policies that are set forth in the University's General Records Schedule (GRS). For more information regarding the management of these files and records, contact Records Management Services in the Harvard University Archives (5-5961 or rmo@hulmail.harvard.edu).

Electronic Files

Currently, there is no comprehensive long-term strategy for preserving and maintaining access to e-mail and other electronic records. You may need to print out e-mail or other electronic documents you want to keep and file them in corresponding paper files. Be sure to back up your files on a server or on portable media such as CDs. Files may be kept in traditional hard copy or electronically. When files are kept electronically, in the form of e-mail, spreadsheets, text documents, digital slides, digital images, CAD files, databases, digital audio or video files, or web files, the following guidelines should be observed.

Keep e-mail in- and out-boxes tidy by deleting temporary information, printing out important messages (remember to file them!), and saving messages for future reference in designated mailboxes or folders.

Make use of the hierarchical directory structure (multi-level mailbox/folder system) in e-mail and desktop electronic filing systems to organize e-mail and other electronic files:

- *Option A—Create category/subcategory/topical folders as appropriate. File individual documents into topical folders.*
- *Option B—Create category folders and a year-range folder for each category, then subcategory/topical folders as appropriate. File individual documents into topical folders.*
- *Option C—Create a year-range folder, then category/subcategory/topical folders as appropriate. File individual documents into topical folders.*

Use consistent naming conventions and implement version control in the filename. This will facilitate electronic sorting, searching, and precise file identification:

- *Naming Convention Option A—Capitalize each word (e.g. ConferencePresentation).*
- *Naming Convention Option B—Put underscores between words (e.g. conference_presentation).*
- *Version Control Option A—Use revision dates (e.g. ConferencePresentation20050215).*
- *Version Control Option B—Use revision numbers (e.g. conference_presentation_01).*

Certain applications, such as Course iSites, may require the use of specialized naming conventions. Consult with the application support teams for advice.

For more information regarding e-mail and desktop file management, see Guidelines for Managing E-mail at Harvard University: http://hul.harvard.edu/rmo/policies_04a.shtml and Electronic Desktop Management Guidelines <http://hul.harvard.edu/rmo/downloads/ElectronicDesktopManagementGuidelines.pdf>.

Overview

E-mail Files

All Electronic Files

Naming Conventions

Further Information

A Special Note

Donating and Transferring Your Personal Papers to the University Archives

Since its founding, the Harvard University Archives has collected and preserved the personal papers of Harvard faculty. Among the many Harvard faculty whose papers reside in the University Archives are: John K. Fairbank, Oscar Handlin, Ruth Hubbard, Nathan Huggins, George Kistiakowsky, Wassily Leontief, Samuel Eliot Morison, Henry Murray, Talcott Parsons, John Rawls, David Riesman, Josiah Royce, Emily Vermeule, George Wald, Fred Whipple, and John Winthrop.

Tenured faculty are encouraged to consider donating their papers to the University Archives. If you are interested in giving your papers to the University, visit the web site of the Harvard University Archives at <http://hul.harvard.edu/huarc/donating.shtml>. For more information, you can also call or e-mail the Archives at 5-5961 or rmo@hulmail.harvard.edu.

Managing Faculty Files

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Archival Programs

<http://hul.harvard.edu/huarc>

Records Management Services

<http://hul.harvard.edu/rmo>

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