



Smithsonian Institution Archives

**Smithsonian Institution Archives
Appraisal Methodology**

1997 - 1998

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Introduction

Appraisal is the process of determining the value and ultimate disposition of records. Records are reviewed for their historical, legal, administrative, and financial value. These values assist Smithsonian archivists in deciding which records are of enduring value and should be retained permanently in the Archives, and which records are temporary and should be discarded on-site or at the Records Center. If there are electronic records to be considered, SIA staff should be informed.

The tools that the Smithsonian archivists use in making informed record-keeping decisions include: evaluating records using the SIA Appraisal Methodology, conducting records surveys, and creating **records disposition schedules**. Records disposition schedules identify series of records created and/or maintained by an office, and give instructions governing the retention and disposition of current and noncurrent records series.

Before any transfer, first consult the Smithsonian Archives. An SIA archivist will conduct an email, telephone, or on-site evaluation of your records to determine whether the records should be permanently maintained in the Archives, temporarily stored in the Records Center, or discarded immediately.

The Smithsonian Institution Archives has developed special guidelines for staff at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, entitled "Saving Papers and Records of Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory Scientists" (see **Appendix G**).

Background

In March 1997, the Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA) formed an Appraisal Working Group to evaluate SIA collecting policies regarding official records of the Smithsonian and to create appraisal criteria. SIA formed this group at the recommendation of an external review committee and in response to severe storage space constraints. The group submitted a report of its findings and draft Appraisal Criteria to the SIA Director for her review in August 1997.

The draft Appraisal Criteria is a theoretical document—a hypothetical outline of the records SIA should collect and from where they should be collected. Due to the constant flux of the Smithsonian's organizational structure, the Appraisal Working Group adopted a functional analysis approach—focusing first on what the Smithsonian was supposed to do and how it went about doing it, and then identifying which records document those functions. Starting from this premise, and using the staff's knowledge of Smithsonian offices and bureaus and records created by those offices, the Appraisal Working Group identified four broad functions of the Smithsonian Institution: 1) assuring institutional continuity; 2) acquiring and maintaining the national collections; 3) conducting and supporting original research; and 4) diffusing knowledge. Each function is further divided into subfunctions (see **Appendix A**). Within each subfunction, the Criteria includes detailed lists of record types expected to best document those functions, and the offices in which one might find those record types (see **Appendix B**). The Group did not devise a plan for implementing the Criteria, but did generate a priority list of offices to survey as a means of testing the Criteria. The survey results were to help determine whether the offices and record types within the Criteria lists were accurately identified.

Soon after the Appraisal Working Group disbanded, SIA reorganized into four functional teams. The Records Management (RM) Team, assigned with surveying and appraising records, writing disposition schedules, acquiring records, and managing temporary and permanent records holdings, inherited responsibility to implement a plan to use the draft Criteria. Among the members of the RM Team, there were no veteran senior staff, and two of the members had worked at the Archives for less than one year, combined. Given staff limitations, the relative inexperience of the Team, and other project commitments, the RM Team was unable to test the Appraisal Criteria as originally planned. When the Team did use the Criteria, its members found that the Criteria was an impractical and inadequate tool for making appraisal decisions efficiently and consistently. Team members had no guidance to apply the theory to practice. In addition, it was difficult to find justifications for past appraisal decisions. Documentation of appraisal decisions existed in extant disposition schedules and memoranda within



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the General and Agreements File, but no rationale was given for these prior decisions. Without experience or a long institutional memory, the Team relied instead on more intensive conversations with records creators, advice from senior Archives staff, and comprehensive records surveys of selected bureaus to conduct records appraisals.

The first step in the RM Team's appraisal learning process was to document and justify the appraisal decisions made by the Team. RM records disposition schedules included appraisal justifications for all retention decisions, and the Team also established an appraisal log to document all independent appraisal decisions made during bureau and office visits.

In October 1998, the RM Team began a project to revise the draft Appraisal Criteria to make it a more useful document. The Team held monthly appraisal retreats, which served as a forum for the Team to discuss specific record types and independent appraisal visits to bureaus and offices, to identify offices needing schedules, to reevaluate past accessions and the SIA appraisal backlog, and to compile and create resources and procedures the Team could use to be more consistent and efficient, and to document decisions.

During the retreats, the Team reviewed the hypothetical lists of record types and records creators in the Appraisal Criteria, and added to or deleted from the lists record types and records creators based on actual experiences (survey and schedule work, and decisions documented in the appraisal log), and on the basic premise of the Appraisal Criteria itself (identifying the functions of an office and what records best document those functions). The Team also added to the Criteria information regarding the types of records the Archives does NOT want to acquire.

The final step in revising the Appraisal Criteria was to describe the processes necessary to bring theory and practice together.

Purpose

The RM Team's goal in creating this document is to make appraisal work more efficient, consistent, and better documented. The purpose is to provide archivists with an outline of procedures and a cache of resources to use when gathering information necessary to make appraisal decisions before, during and after appraisal visits or records surveys. It is a tool for conducting on-site appraisals and for creating records disposition schedules.

When making appraisal decisions, archivists should always consider both the big picture and the finer details. The functional definitions, records creators, and record types listed in the Appraisal Criteria, along with research into an office's history and mission serve as the big picture. Specific questions concerning an office's activities, record keeping practices, workflow, and the records found in an office serve as the details. Together, the resources identified in this document help archivists determine what record types are created and maintained by an office, which record types best document the functions of that office, and what role those record types and the records creator play in documenting Smithsonian history.

This document describes the processes involved in every appraisal decision: 1) Research and Preparation, 2) Records Examination, and 3) Evaluation, Decision and Documentation.

Research and Preparation: Before the Office Visit

Research and preparation is a critical and necessary stage in the appraisal process. Questions about the creation, maintenance, and use of records cannot be fully answered by reviewing only the records themselves. Before actual contact with the records, the appraiser needs to understand the context in which the records are created in order to make better informed decisions about their value.



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The Smithsonian is unquestionably a large complex organization with many units producing great volumes of records in their daily business activities and transactions. The appraiser should find as much as he or she can about individual records creators and how they fit within the parent organization. Units at the Smithsonian do not work in isolation. They engage in a myriad of activities and tasks while carrying out the Institution's overall mission. The units communicate, work, and interact with one another, and they share resources, staff, equipment, and information. The appraiser should understand the role an individual office plays at the Institution, the significance of its activities, and the best way to document these activities. Are the activities of a smaller unit best documented in the records produced by its reporting office? Or is information about the office's activities found only in its own records? Are these activities significant enough for documentation to be maintained permanently at all? The appraiser should always keep in mind office interrelationships at the Smithsonian and understand the microcosm within the macrocosm of the Institution.

The appraiser conducts preliminary background research about a records creator to learn about its history, its mission and goals, and its staff. By understanding the records creator's activities, the appraiser will have a sense of the types of records it creates or maintains. In addition to conducting research into the records creator's history, the appraiser also engages in research about the types and categories of records that the Archives has taken in the past. Past appraisal decisions create a frame of reference to make consistent decisions about the value and retention of similar records.

Preliminary research answers general questions about a records creator and its activities and helps identify specific questions to be answered during the actual bureau/office visit and contact with the records themselves. This kind of preparation saves the appraiser's and the records creator's time. The appraiser is able to ask more informed questions about the office and its records, so meaningful discourse can take place. The preparatory work reveals to the records creator that the appraiser has great interest in its activities and that the appraiser acknowledges that its records may have potential historical and research value.

The following are some tools and resources at SIA that can assist the appraiser in gathering general information about the office. A detailed list of the tools and resources is attached as **Appendix F**.

The Appraisal Criteria

The Appraisal Criteria should be used throughout the entire appraisal process. It is an intellectual framework that keeps the big picture in mind while addressing the finer details. The Criteria identifies records creators that carry out the core functions of the Smithsonian and the types of records they produce. When the appraiser researches the history of a particular Smithsonian unit, he or she should refer to the Criteria to understand where the unit fits within the organization and its role in carrying out the Institution's core functions. At the same time, the appraiser should keep in mind that the Criteria is only a building block—an intellectual construct to initiate the appraisal process. Since the Criteria is a living document, the appraiser can revise, add, and delete information from it.

Information about Records Creators

Old Smithsonian annual reports and annals are two Institution publications that contain general information about an office's history. The Archives' Collection Management System, the General and Agreements File, and the Guide to the Smithsonian Archives, 1996, can also be used to find out about a specific office's functions, mission, staff, and organizational structure. Old telephone directories provide the appraiser with information about an office's staff, staff position titles, and office divisions. Many Smithsonian units have their own web sites that contain general information about themselves.

Information about Records

The Collections Management System, the Guide to the Smithsonian Archives, 1996, and the General and Agreements File contain information about records the Archives has taken in the past. They can also identify record categories or series. The Appraisal Log, record surveys, and record disposition schedules are recently created tools that document and justify decisions about which records offices



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should maintain permanently or temporarily. The appraiser can use these tools to make consistent retention decisions for similar records.

When evaluating electronic records, unit websites may also describe or provide access to electronic systems within the office.

Records Examination: During the Office Visit

Visiting an office and consulting with staff offers the best means to understand the office's organization, function, and the records created and/or maintained there. Although the tools and techniques listed below can be used on-site, via email, or over the phone, the bureau/office visit provides for the most accurate appraisal of records and an opportunity for SIA outreach.

Research conducted in preparation for a bureau/office visit formulates certain safe assumptions and expectations of what the appraiser will find. Understanding what has been transferred in the past, what function the office performs, its place within a larger entity (e.g., a museum or division), and selecting questions formulated for specific offices, provides a context in which to view the records and to ask informed questions about the records' function, creation, and maintenance.

Prior to, or during the visit, the appraiser may also send the office written guidelines outlining prior appraisal decisions that exist in the General and Agreements File, and/or general guidelines on the Archives website, which lists broad categories of records that SIA wants and does not want. This information educates the records creator regarding current and past archives practices, often allowing for a more constructive conversation during the bureau/office visit.

During the Records Examination stage, the appraiser employs tools to test his or her assumptions and to refine his or her understanding of the office and its records. The following are some tools and resources at SIA that can assist the appraiser in conducting bureau/office visits and records surveys. A detailed list of the tools and resources is attached as **Appendix F**.

Information about Records

The appraiser engages the records creator in an informative discourse about the records, asking questions prepared before the actual visit—during the Research and Preparation stage. General questions concern the office's organizational structure, filing systems, and records created or maintained by the office (see **Appendix D**). The answers gathered from these questions will lead to follow-up questions and final appraisal decisions. Specific questions address certain office activities (e.g., exhibition/design, curatorial, conservation, education, registrarial, outreach activities/public affairs, and professional activities - see **Appendix E**), and office functions (categorized by the Appraisal Criteria functions - see **Appendix C**). Additional questions may also come to mind during the discourse that are not covered in the prepared lists of standard and specific appraisal questions.

During the interview with the records creator, the appraiser determines the office of record for each record series he or she surveys during a bureau/office visit, asking whether the records are unique to the office or if they are copies or fragments of an official (most complete) record set maintained elsewhere.

Taking sufficient notes is extremely important. The appraiser documents series titles, series descriptions (including the function and types of records found in the series), arrangement, volume, date spans, physical location and condition, restrictions, and often makes a preliminary appraisal decision regarding each series during the record survey. For large volumes of records, it is helpful for the appraiser to be accompanied by an additional staff person who can also take notes. This information will be used later when evaluating, justifying and documenting appraisal decisions, and when writing disposition schedules.



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The appraiser identifies and describes record series as fully as possible. Understanding records functions is essential for a clear description of the series. Reviewing the contents of files informs the appraiser about the types of records found in each series and the series' functions. If the contents are unclear, the appraiser asks the records creator for clarification. The appraiser also measures the volume of each record series and asks the records creator to estimate the annual rate of accumulation of each series, and the frequency to which and length of time each series remains in active use within the office. This information will help in formulating a disposal/transfer cycle. The appraiser also documents the inclusive dates and arrangement of each record series (e.g., alphabetic, chronologic, numeric). If there is an arrangement within an arrangement (e.g., chronologic then alphabetic by correspondent), this is also noted. This information will help when advising an office regarding how to better organize its files for more efficient retrieval of active files and transfer of inactive files to the Archives.

Before ending the office visit, the appraiser makes certain that all records have been reviewed. The appraiser asks the records creator to show where all the records are stored. Sometimes there is an area where active files are stored and another area where inactive files are stored.

Information about Records Creators

During the bureau/office visit, the appraiser also gathers additional information about the functions and activities of the records creator. The appraiser asks questions regarding the office's functions, mission, staff and activities. What is the placement of the office in relation to other offices in the department? Is it an office to which other offices report (e.g., a director, department chair, registrar, etc.)? To which office(s) does it report and what is it required to provide to that office? (More questions are listed in Appendices **C**, **D** and **E**.)

The Appraisal Criteria

During the bureau/office visit, the appraiser always keeps in mind the assumptions made during the Research and Preparation stage, and the hypotheses contained in the Appraisal Criteria. In the Records Examination stage, the appraiser tests those assumptions and hypotheses and compares the records found during the survey against the Criteria. Were the assumptions correct? Did the appraiser find additional record series? Were certain series not found? Does the office perform more or less functions than expected?

Evaluation, Decision, and Documentation: After the Office Visit

During the last stage of the appraisal process, the appraiser evaluates his or her survey notes and other information gathered during the Research and Preparation, and Records Examination stages.

Evaluation

Assumptions regarding the office's organizational structure, filing systems, office function, and record series formed during the Research and Examination stage were tested during the bureau/office visit. The site visit either confirmed and/or altered the appraiser's understanding of the records based on the hard evidence presented. As a result, the appraiser gained a fuller understanding of the office, its function, the records it creates or maintains, and its place within the Institution. If information is insufficient to make appraisal decisions, the appraiser may need to ask follow-up questions.

Final appraisal decisions are based on the overall value of the records as documentary evidence of the function and activities of the office, how the records created or maintained by an office fulfill that function, and how the office fits into the Institution at large. The appraiser should ask himself or herself several questions when determining value:

1. What function does the records creator perform as part of the Smithsonian Institution?
2. What record series within the office best document that function?



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- Is the records creator the office of record for those record series? Does the office produce and maintain the most complete documentation of a particular function or activity? If not, what is the office of record?
- If the office is not the office of record, or if records are of temporary value, what retention period should be assigned to meet the legal, administrative and fiscal obligations of the Smithsonian?
- Are certain record series considered vital records? Do the records contain information that is essential to the function, operation, and activity of the office? Are the records vital for protecting the collections and rights of the Institution (e.g., accession records in a registrar's office, or funding proposals that document planning and financing of projects/programs)?

Throughout the process, the appraiser considers all gathered information and the Appraisal Criteria. For record series that must be maintained for a certain period of time to meet legal, administrative and fiscal obligations, the appraiser should also consult prior SIA record disposition schedules, National Archives schedules, Donald S. Skupsky's *Records Retention Procedures and Recordkeeping Requirements*, and other reference sources to establish the necessary retention periods.

Decision and Documentation

When creating a record disposition schedule, survey notes are transferred to the schedule template. Series descriptions are refined, sources for decisions are cited, retention periods are assigned to each series, appraisal justifications are entered into the schedule, and functions documented by each series are noted.

If the appraiser is documenting a general bureau/office visit, he or she enters information about that visit into the Appraisal Log. The log should include the date of appraisal; the record series titles, dates and volume; the office contact person; the appraiser name; the retention decision; the Smithsonian function documented by the records; and the appraisal justification. A written statement of SIA's decision should also be sent to the records creator (with a copy placed in the General and Agreements File), giving the retention periods for each series and a justification for each decision.

Disposition schedules and statements of appraisal decisions may also include guidelines for better file maintenance. File plans, or more informal suggestions regarding how an office should keep its files, should always consider the most efficient organization for active file use, as well as for the transfer of records to the Archives.

If the appraiser discovers a records creator or a record series not appropriately listed in the Appraisal Criteria, he or she should also update the Criteria at this time.

Conclusion

This methodology, which is divided into three main stages—Research and Preparation; Records Examination; and Evaluation, Decision and Documentation—gives structure to the appraisal process. During each stage of the process, the Criteria looms in the background. The appraiser constantly refers back to the document to keep in mind the four core Smithsonian functions and the offices whose records will best document those functions. At the same time, the appraiser is always re-evaluating the Criteria—adding, modifying, and deleting inaccurate information—making the Criteria a living document and keeping it up-to-date.

By following these guidelines, the appraiser is better prepared to converse with Smithsonian records creators and to make educated, confident decisions about records that best document Smithsonian history. The process encourages the appraiser to consider each office's function within the Smithsonian, its role in serving that function, and the records that best document its activities. The appraiser gathers information and forms a hypothesis, or certain assumptions, concerning what an office does and what records it creates. During appraisal visits and actual examinations of records, the



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appraiser begins to test his or her hypothesis by applying the Appraisal Criteria. The appraiser is then equipped with a knowledge of historical context and record types—the big picture and the finer details—necessary to make appraisal decisions.

The methodology also provides a means for the appraiser to articulate and justify his or her decisions to records creators and to document those decisions for the benefit of future appraisers. This is not only beneficial to present and future SIA staff, but provides an educational outreach tool to Smithsonian offices. Smithsonian staff will become better informed regarding the types of records they create, how they are (or should be) organized, what should be transferred to the Archives or discarded, and more importantly, why. The Archives provides a service and its staff gains credibility.

The result when following this methodology is more efficient working relationships with offices, more consistent appraisal decisions, and documented rationale for those decisions. Appraisal becomes less of an individual art form, and more of a structured process.



Appendix A: Functions Description

A. Assuring Institutional Continuity

Covers such areas as governance and institutional management that sustain the Smithsonian.

1. Policy and Financial Management
Addresses activities at the highest level with the broadest scope, such as institutional governance, direction and planning; policy development and creation; budget formulation, advocacy and execution; and asset growth, insurance, maintenance and allocation.
2. Human Resources
Addresses those activities which document personnel management at the highest Smithsonian decision-making levels, including recruitment; employment; personnel actions; benefits; and employee health and safety.
3. Facilities Management and Safety
Addresses activities concerning the maintenance, management and security of all Smithsonian physical properties and collections, and the security of personnel and visitors, including property construction, maintenance and renovation; property and inventory management; disaster planning; broad security activities, including preventing theft, fire and property damage, and ensuring employee and visitor safety; planning and decision-making for construction and renovation; and compliance with appropriate regulations and statutes.
4. Public Programs and Development
Addresses all those activities the Smithsonian undertakes which are aimed at communicating information about the Institution, as well as soliciting support for the development and enhancement of Smithsonian programs, including Smithsonian-wide activities (oversight of policy development and program initiatives for public programs and development; coordination of all contacts with print and broadcast media; press response to the Smithsonian; Smithsonian campus-wide communications and campus-wide staff organizational groups and activities; dissemination of general information to the public; generating visitor statistics; fund-raising planning, coordination and analysis; membership recruitment and benefits; and major events of institution-wide significance), and unit-level activities (planning, development and analysis of public programs and development initiatives; unit-level communications with and publication for selected constituencies; significant special events organized and hosted at the unit level; monitoring and analyzing public response to significant public programs; and dissemination of unit information for print and broadcast media.)
5. Institutional Information Management
Addresses those activities to develop and manage Smithsonian records, information technology, and information services and resources, including planning, development and execution of significant information technology systems, programs and special projects; program development and management of temporary and permanent Smithsonian records; and policy creation and management of significant information services to Smithsonian staff for the purpose of institutional continuity.
6. Legal Management
Addresses activities in which the legal status, rights, obligations, procedures and concerns of the Smithsonian Institution are formulated and implemented, including policy development and planning regarding the institution's legal status, rights, obligations, procedures, and concerns; litigation of cases on behalf of the Smithsonian; contract negotiation and formulation; donation of properties and assets via gifts, bequests, deeds, wills, and estates; development of SI projects, programs, policies or other initiatives requiring legal expertise and input; discontinuance of SI programs, bureaus, museums or other initiatives requiring legal expertise and input; the securing of or infringement against SI in cases of copyrights, trademarks, licenses and patents; and defense of SI against charges of discrimination in hiring and employment practices.
7. Institutional Assessment
Addresses activities carried out to evaluate the degree to which Smithsonian offices do, or do not, perform mandated functions in accordance with statutory or regulatory requirements,



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Smithsonian policy statements, and, where applicable, best practice as defined by relevant professional groups, including audits of operations of Smithsonian bureaus and offices for conformity to relevant institutional requirements; and assessments of Smithsonian programs performed by outside professional groups to determine how well their activities reflect best professional practice in a field or discipline.

B. Acquiring and Maintaining the National Collections

Covers the development, management, care and preservation of the National Collections, which include the holdings of Smithsonian Institution museums, libraries, and archives.

1. Acquisition, Loan and Disposition of Collections
Addresses those activities concerning the development, revision, and implementation of collecting policies; the acquisition of permanent collections through donation, purchase, or exchange; the loan of collections; the deaccession of collections; and the maintenance of legal custody over permanent collections.
2. Conservation and Preservation of Collections
Addresses activities concerned with the physical care of collections.
3. Intellectual Control of Collections
Addresses activities to catalog, classify, arrange, and describe collections.

C. Conducting and Supporting Original Research

Covers research conducted by Smithsonian staff, including fellows, and the funding, support and evaluation of that research.

1. Research
Addresses activities involved with the conduct of original research.
2. Support and Funding for Research
Addresses activities to seek, manage and monitor support and funding for research, through various sources, including central Smithsonian or Smithsonian bureau-level resources and programs; internal and external grants; and contracts.
3. Evaluation or Review of Research
Addresses activities to evaluate research work from within the Smithsonian Institution. External evaluations will not fall within the SIA appraisal policies.

D. Diffusing Knowledge

Covers exhibitions, productions and events created using Smithsonian resources for the purpose of educating, entertaining, or instructing the Smithsonian's diverse audiences.

1. Exhibitions
Addresses activities concerning conceptualization, planning, funding, execution and evaluation of exhibitions.
2. Productions
Addresses activities concerning conceptualization, planning, and funding, of productions, including print, electronic and broadcast media. SIA will seek to collect designated series of core productions, and others as opportunity permits.
3. Events
Addresses activities concerning conceptualization, planning, funding, and execution of events, including educational courses and tours, symposia and seminars, festivals, lectures and performances.



Appendix B: Types of Archival/Non-Archival Records and the Offices Most Likely to Create the Records

A. Assuring Institutional Continuity

1. Policy and Financial Management

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Minutes of the Board of Regents and its committees, sub-committees, and special ad hoc bodies
- Documentation regarding Smithsonian policy development and creation
- Final budget proposals and submissions
- Budget planning, advocacy and final appropriations
- Records of endowment earnings
- Records of bequests, estates, wills, deeds of gift, and other real properties
- Samples of Standard Forms
- Annual financial reports

Type of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Accounting working files (e.g., bank statements, canceled checks, and cuff files)
- Chronological Administrative Files (if significant information is documented elsewhere)

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Board of Regents
- Office of the Secretary
- Secretariat (Counselors to Secretary)
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art
- Office of the Chief Financial Officer
- Office of Planning, Management, and Budget
- Office of the Comptroller
- Office of Policy and Analysis
- Office of the Treasurer
- Office of Government Relations
- Museum/Unit Directors (for budgets)
- Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center
- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Accounting Office
- Smithsonian Business Ventures

2. Human Resources

Types of records of enduring value include:



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- Unit Directors' policy, planning and management files, including employee training initiatives, and the implementation of applicable laws and guidelines regarding human resource activities
- Documentation of advertisement and recruitment of research staff
- Selection committee minutes and reports
- Announcements of selections
- Trust Fund personnel records
- Smithsonian-produced manuals (final products), and lists of training materials

Type of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Equal Employment Opportunity case files
- Time and Attendance Files
- Non-Smithsonian manuals
- Manual production files (research and information files, drafts)

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Office of Human Resources
- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Office of Human Resources
- Office of Equal Employment and Minority Affairs
- Office of the Ombudsman
- Office of Safety and Environmental Management
- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art
- Museum Directors

3. Facilities Management and Safety

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Design and construction files for major construction and renovation projects
- Annual security incident reports
- Horticultural design and development files
- Records of interaction with applicable municipal and federal agencies
- Documentation of planning and decision-making concerning construction and renovation, including funding and architectural competitions

Types of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Facility Services Requests

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations
- Offices of Division Directors under OFEO
- Office of Contracting
- Office of the Treasurer



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- Office of the Secretary
- Secretariat (Counselors to Secretary)
- Museum Directors
- National Zoological Park, Police Department

4. Public Programs and Development

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Documentation regarding Smithsonian policy, planning and development for public programs, national and international museum community outreach (e.g., National Museum Act), audience development and fund-raising
- Publications, including significant newsletters, magazines and reports
- Selected websites chosen according to importance and uniqueness
- Smithsonian-wide and unit-level press information, including press releases, press kits and packages, public service announcements
- Press coverage, including news and broadcast clips
- Summaries of visitor services activities
- Visitor statistical reports
- Summaries of planning, execution and success of membership campaigns, including event files for significant events, ephemera, correspondence, and meeting minutes
- Summaries of planning, execution and success of fund-raising campaigns, including event files for significant events, ephemera, correspondence, and meeting minutes
- Summaries of demographic analyses and membership plans
- Documentation regarding significant Smithsonian-wide and unit-level events and programs, including their planning, production and public and participant responses
- Documentation regarding significant campus-wide groups and organizations, including charters, annual reports; Directors' and Committee Chairs' records (including correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, etc.), final drafts of papers or speeches (unpublished), meeting minutes, photographs of significant events and people, program files (including correspondence, memoranda, email, interim and final reports pertaining to the planning, development, and execution of programs), organization newsletters (2 copies each), summary financial reports (including audit reports, and annual reports), summary membership data and annual member publications

Types of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Intern and participant files, including applications and agreements
- Membership renewal forms
- Pledges
- Gift and Prospect Listings

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of Policy and Analysis
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art
- Museum Directors



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- The Smithsonian Associates
- Office of Public Affairs
- Museum public affairs and external affairs offices
- Office of Development
- Museum membership and development offices
- Smithsonian Press
- Smithsonian Magazine
- Temporary offices for major and/or pan-institutional projects and exhibitions
- Visitor Information and Associates' Reception Center
- Smithsonian Photographic Services
- Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies
- Museum education offices

5. Institutional Information Management

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Documentation regarding Smithsonian policy, planning and development for significant information technology systems, programs and special projects
- Policy and guidelines for archival and records management
- Documentation of management and use of Smithsonian records
- Documentation of significant information resource programs and services for Smithsonian staff
- Policy and guidelines for use of services by Smithsonian staff
- Summary reports of Smithsonian information service and use

Types of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Reference requests and responses
- Rights and reproduction files
- Maintenance files for computer systems

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art
- Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Museum information technology offices
- Smithsonian Institution Archives
- Smithsonian Photographic Services
- Museum Directors
- Smithsonian Institution Libraries
- National Anthropological Archives (regarding official Smithsonian records)

6. Legal Management



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Types of records of enduring value include:

- Records documenting overall SI legal business and activities (central reading files of OGC)
- Litigation case files of significance (including court records) which document legal precedence, SI procedures and policies, SI legal obligations and mandates, or the legal status of the Smithsonian
- Records of gifts, bequests, deeds, wills and estates
- Legal records concerning special projects, programs, policies or other initiatives
- Legal records concerning the discontinuance of programs, bureaus, museums, or other initiatives
- Records of standards of conduct and conflicts of interest
- Records regarding legislation and legislative history of concern to SI
- Legal records regarding discrimination in hiring and employment
- Legal opinions, advice and assistance
- Records concerning SI copyrights, patents, trademarks and licenses

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art
- Office of the General Counsel
- Office of Contracting
- Museum/Unit Directors

7. Institutional Assessment

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Records which document the conduct of business in a bureau or office.
- Special project records, where applicable.
- Audits

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art
- Office of Inspector General
- Museum/Unit Directors

B. Acquiring and Maintaining the National Collections

1. Acquisition of Collections

SIA will archive only the inactive files pertaining to the acquisition of collections and specimens. Active files should be maintained by the office of use.

Types of records of enduring value include:



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- Documentation of the Smithsonian's legal rights to the collection
- Records of bequests
- Acknowledgments of transfer and receipt
- Deeds of gift
- Loan records
- Records of transfer for collection use in exhibitions
- Accession and deaccession files
- Library acquisition files
- Final versions of collecting policies for Smithsonian units
- Final versions of accession policies for Smithsonian units
- Annual statistical reports of acquisitions
- Correspondence and memoranda regarding the acquisition of collections
- Documentation of collecting committees and other bodies which implement collecting policies
- Collection Information Systems

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Registrarial offices
- Curatorial offices
- Museum Directors
- Office of the General Counsel
- Office of the Secretary
- National Collections Program
- Collection committees
- Smithsonian Institution Libraries
- Smithsonian Institution Archives
- Special Collections Archives

2. Conservation and Preservation of Collections

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Documentation of preservation and conservation planning and decision-making
- Preservation and conservation policies and training
- Documentation of grant and other funding for preservation and conservation of collections
- Curatorial correspondence and summary reports concerning processing and physical care of collections, including facilities and holdings maintenance.
- Condition reports
- Treatment reports
- Conservation and treatment photographs
- Certain animal records

Offices expected to produce archival records include:



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- Registrarial offices
- Collection managers
- Conservation laboratories
- Office of Sponsored Projects
- Museum membership and development offices
- Curatorial offices
- Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education
- National Zoological Park, Department of Animal Health

3. Intellectual Control of Collections

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Documentation and metadata describing Collection Information Systems and bibliographic systems
- Curatorial correspondence and research and field notes concerning description and research of collections
- Photographs and scientific illustrations of collections
- Final reports in development process, summary proposals and needs assessments
- Awarded contracts
- Committee minutes documenting development

Type of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Data survey worksheets

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Registrarial offices
- Curatorial offices
- Office of the Chief Information Officer, Smithsonian Institution Research Information System
- Collection managers

C. Conducting and Supporting Original Research

1. Research

Types of records of enduring value, regardless of media, include:

- Field/lab/research notes/photographs/illustrations/film footage
- Correspondence with colleagues pertaining to research and collections
- Research reports, including content based editorial comments/notes/correspondence
- Unpublished manuscripts (final draft), including content based editorial comments/notes/correspondence
- Nomenclature lists and notes
- Professional activities files, including photos of colleagues, ephemera (e.g., program – not registration forms and logistics), professional conferences, symposia, and workshops attended in support of original research, papers presented including lectures, slides/photographs
- Departmental records regarding departmental research planning



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- Raw data – data should reside in the department for use there (NOTE: If raw data is found among personal papers, determine if it is associated with SI collections. If so, consult with the department to gain a clear understanding of the significance of the data). Case by case appraisal.

Types of records NOT of enduring value:

- Manuscript drafts of published articles/papers/research results
- Information files
- Registration forms, logistical correspondence, and travel
- Standard requisitions
- Published results
- Reprints
- Routine correspondence
- Plates and photographs used in publications

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Curatorial offices
- Museum/Unit Directors (level to which researchers report)
- Editorial offices (e.g., Peale Papers, Joseph Henry Papers, etc.)

2. Support and Funding for Research

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Research funding proposals
- Contacts with donors/sponsors
- Progress reports
- Technical reports
- Final research reports
- Correspondence
- Audits
- Summaries of grant/funding activity
- Statistical overviews of Smithsonian fellowship activities
- Fellowship proposals
- Review committee minutes and reports at level of funding office or organization
- Peer level review committee minutes, reports, memoranda and correspondence
- Final grants
- Significant departmental memoranda and minutes

Types of records NOT of enduring value:

- General inquiries

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Office of Sponsored Projects
- Curatorial offices
- Office of Fellowships and Grants



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- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Office of Contracts and Procurement
- Museum/Unit Directors
- Office of Development
- Editorial offices (e.g., Peale Papers, Joseph Henry Papers, etc.)

3. Evaluation or Review of Research

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Professional Activities and Evaluation Committee (PAEC) files
- Review committee minutes and reports

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Curatorial offices
- Museum/Unit Directors
- Office of Sponsored Projects

D. Diffusing Knowledge

1. Exhibitions

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Exhibition Proposals
- Exhibition Committee Meetings
- Correspondence
- Installation Photos
- Contracts
- Checklists
- Lender Files
- Facilities Reports
- Exhibition Research Files, documenting curatorial activities, such as analysis, interpretation, and development of the content of the exhibition (e.g., annotated articles, notes)
- Exhibition Scripts (final, unless controversial)
- Exhibition Catalogs
- Summary exhibition funding and budget information
- Exhibition floor plans
- Educational information to support the exhibition
- Visitor Comments
- Press Reviews
- Newspaper Clippings
- Press Releases
- Ephemera (rack cards, brochures, postcards)
- Original loan agreements

Types of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Purchase orders



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- Requisition forms
- Photographic images of single objects
- Drafts of scripts (unless controversial)
- Duplicate loan agreements
- Duplicate condition reports
- Insurance and shipping invoices and statements
- Internal memoranda about general administrative issues
- Information files (e.g., copies of articles and newspaper clippings, samples used solely as reference source, bibliographies, note cards)

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Curatorial offices
- Registrarial offices
- Museum Directors
- Office of Exhibits Central
- Museum exhibit offices
- Temporary offices for major and/or pan-institutional projects and exhibitions
- Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service
- Museum design and production offices
- Museum education offices
- Museum public affairs offices
- Office of Public Affairs
- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art

2. Productions

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Documentation of production planning and development
- Annual summaries of production activities
- Curriculum packets from significant education programs
- Press/publication catalogs
- Policies and correspondence about promotion and advertising
- Record copies of designated core productions, examples include:
- Record copies of Smithsonian Press publications
- Record copies of Smithsonian magazines and newsletters
- Record copies of Smithsonian Research Reports
- Record copies of Smithsonian Torch
- Record copies of The Associate



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- Record copies of The Blue Bulletin
- Selected websites chosen according to importance and uniqueness

Types of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Manuscript drafts and notes for published materials that contain only editorial (grammatical) comments
- Correspondence and notes pertaining to the actual production of publication
- Plates and photographs used in publication

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Smithsonian Press
- Office of Public Affairs
- Smithsonian Magazine
- Air & Space Magazine
- Office of the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer
- Office of the Under Secretary for Science
- Office of the Under Secretary for Art
- Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies
- Museum education offices
- Smithsonian webmasters and website development committees

3. Events

Types of records of enduring value include:

- Documentation of significant event planning and development (large exhibition openings, visits by major figures, unique events, e.g., Secretary's Inauguration, 150th Birthday Party, etc.)
- Annual summaries of significant event activities
- Photographs of significant events
- Video or audio recordings of significant events
- Significant event texts (e.g., transcripts) to speeches, lectures, and other presentations
- Accepted final proposals
- Final reports
Committee meeting minutes
- Ephemera (programs, invitations, brochures)
- Guest/Participation lists
- Schedules, agendas, and itineraries to significant events
- Newspaper clippings

Types of records NOT of enduring value include:

- Caterer lists
- Purchase orders
- Vendor lists and information
- Requisition forms



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- Menus
- Floor and seating plans
- Bids and quotations
- Notes
- Routine memoranda and correspondence with vendor

Offices expected to produce archival records include:

- Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies
- Museum education offices
- Office of Special Events and Conference Services
- Museum special events offices
- Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Heritage
- The Smithsonian Associates
- Office of Development
- Office of the Secretary
- Museum Directors
- Office of Public Affairs
- Museum public affairs offices
- Smithsonian Photographic Services
- Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education



Appendix C: Functional Questions

A. Assuring Institutional Continuity

1. Policy and Financial Management
 - What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - What is the function of the office?
 - What programs does the office create?
 - How are decisions and policies made?
 - Where are decisions and policies documented (office of record)?
 - What types of records document decision-making and policy creation (meeting minutes, notes, task force minutes and reports, draft decisions and policies)?
 - What types of records document decisions and policies (e.g., meeting minutes, policy issuances, reports)?
 - Who receives copies of decision and policy documents?
 - What is the reporting structure of the office?
 - Where is the budget planning, advocacy and submission process managed?
 - Does the office raise funds independently from the Smithsonian?
 - Does the office receive endowment funds?
 - Does the office channel budgetary and financial records through central Smithsonian administration (e.g., OPMB, OC, OCon)?
 - Does the office produce annual financial reports?
2. Human Resources
 - What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - Does the office channel personnel matters through central Smithsonian administration (e.g., OHR, OEEMA)?
 - What types of records are contained in the personnel files?
 - Does the office create its own personnel manuals and/or training manuals?
 - Does the office recruit staff independently of central Smithsonian administration (e.g., OHR)?
 - Does the office have personnel selection committees? Does the committee produce documentation of the selection process (e.g., minutes, reports)?
3. Facilities Management and Safety
 - What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - Does the office employ the Smithsonian Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations for all renovation, construction, and horticultural design projects?
 - Does the office produce unique renovation, construction or horticultural design and development records unique from OFEO records?
 - Does the office create and maintain contracts and documentation of contractual relationships concerning renovation, construction, horticultural/grounds maintenance, or security?
 - Does the office conduct fundraising for construction independent of central Smithsonian administration?



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- Does the office employ the Smithsonian Office of Protection Services for all security issues?
 - Does the office's security staff create policies or records unique from OPS?
4. Public Programs and Development
- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - What programs does the office create?
 - What publications does the office create?
 - Does the office produce a website? Where is it maintained?
 - Does the office have its own public affairs division?
 - Does the office report visitor statistics to the Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer, or does it record those statistics independently?
 - Does the office produce an annual report?
 - Does the office produce a calendar of events?
 - Does the office have its own membership division?
 - Does the membership division produce annual demographic analyses and membership plans?
 - Does the office have its own development division?
 - Does the office conduct fundraising campaigns or capital campaigns independent from central Smithsonian administration?
 - Does the office have its own special events division?
 - Does the special events division coordinate major unit-level or Smithsonian-wide events?
 - What types of records document the planning, development and production of the office's programs and events?
 - Where is the planning, development and production of the office's programs and events best documented?
5. Institutional Information Management
- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - Does the office have its own information technology division?
 - Does the office create significant technology systems, programs and special projects (systems other than routine technology administration, e.g., email, local area networks)?
 - Does the office develop and/or create policies regarding information management (e.g., technology management and security, records management)?
 - Are the policies Smithsonian-wide, or unit-wide?
 - Does the office produce annual reports?
6. Legal Management
- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - Does the office employ the Smithsonian Office of General Counsel for all legal business and activities?
 - Does the office maintain original records of gifts, bequests, deeds, wills, or estates, including lease agreements?



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- Does the office employ the Smithsonian Office of Equal Employment and Minority Affairs for all discrimination and hiring concerns?
- Does the office maintain original copyright, patent, trademark or license records?

7. Institutional Assessment

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- Does the office produce annual reports?
- Does the office employ the Smithsonian Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for all financial audits?
- Does the office maintain any records of financial audits unique from OIG?
- Does the office participate in audits or self-assessments of their programs?
- What records document program audits (e.g., staff evaluations of programs; outside task force or contractor assessments, reports, and recommendations for programs; internal review committee meeting minutes and reports)?

B. Acquiring and Maintaining the National Collections

1. Acquisition of Collections

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- What is the office function?
- What is the organizational structure of the office?
- To whom does the office report?
- Does the office have a published collections policy? (If yes, ask for copy)
- Does the office have a collections information filing system in place?
- Where is the filing system?
- What type of records are created and how are they arranged in the system?
- Does the office produce records of gifts and bequests? If yes, what do these records include?
- How does correspondence relate to the acquisition of collections? Is it filed with the accession files?
- What is the estimated yearly accumulation of the records?
- Does the office prepare and submit year-end reports on acquisitions?

2. Conservation and Preservation of Collections

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- Does the office maintain records on preservation and conservation of the collections?
- If yes, what type of records are maintained? Do they include correspondence, summary reports, or photographs of collections?
- What do the records document? (e.g., conservation policies and training; grant and other funding; processing and physical care of collections; facilities and holdings maintenance, etc.)
- Does the office produce condition reports? If so, are they different from those in conservation or registration?

3. Intellectual Control of Collections

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- Does the office have records documenting intellectual control of the collections?



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- What types of records does the office produce? (e.g., accession records; curatorial correspondence pertaining to research of collections; photographs and scientific illustrations of collections; final reports and/or summary proposals; needs assessments; loan records, etc.)
- How are the records maintained? Where?
- What is the relationship, if any, between the office and the Registrar?
- What makes the records unique?
- If the office maintains accession records, how are they different from the records kept by the Registrar?
- Does the office maintain deaccession records? How are they different from records kept by the Registrar?
- If the office maintains loan records, how are they different from the records maintained by the Registrar?
- Does the office maintain records on objects currently on exhibition? If so, are these records different or the same as those kept by the Registrar, curatorial offices, design office, and the exhibition office? Are copies of these records sent to any of these offices?
- Does the office produce image files? Why (e.g., study, reference, security)?
- In what format are the image files (e.g., digital, prints, negatives, transparencies)?
- Who in the office is responsible for handling rights and reproduction?

C. Conducting and Supporting Original Research

1. Research

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- What is the organizational structure of the department? Do they have a mission statement? (If yes, ask for a copy)
- What are the reporting lines for the department and the research scientists?
- Is there a list of research projects outlined in the annual report?
- Are there departmental records documenting research planning?
- Are there minutes of departmental planning meetings? If so, where is the record set of minutes filed?
- Are there departmental summary reports of research activities? If so, where is the record set filed?
- Does the office produce any publications or a departmental newsletter? If so, where are the record sets of these publications or newsletters filed?
- Does the office produce field notes/notebooks?
- Are field notes/notebooks associated with a specific collection made using SI funds or on SI time? Which collection? Inclusive dates?
- Are there unpublished manuscripts (final drafts)?
- Are there drafts of manuscripts with substantive, content-based comments?
- Does the office produce image files associated with collections or research?
- In what form are the image files (e.g., digital, prints, negatives, transparencies)?
- Are image files originals? If not, where are original image files retained (with the registrar/Image R&R)?



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- How are these images used (e.g., study, reference, security)?
 - Does the office have unpublished illustrations associated with research? (Do not want illustrations/plates that have been published.)
 - Are there nomenclature notes or lists?
 - Are there professional activities files directly related to research (e.g., ephemera, conference/symposia/workshops attended, manuscripts of lectures/papers given [final drafts], slides/photos).
 - Is raw data present in the files? If so, raw data should remain in the department with associated collections.
 - What is the significance of the raw data?
 - How is raw data stored (e.g., cards, electronically, etc.)?
 - What is the format of raw data stored in electronic form? How is it backed up?
2. Support and Funding of Research
- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - Does the office have records of funding proposals (final drafts)?
 - Does the office have records of accepted and rejected grant proposals? Are they filed together or separately?
 - Are there records of final grants?
 - How are funds transfers documented? What goes to OC, OSP or OCon? Who administers research funds (e.g., grants, contracts, etc.)?
 - Who is the office of record for funds transfers? Does the department have originals or copies of financial documentation?
 - Is there correspondence with research sponsors?
 - Is there general correspondence with colleagues regarding research?
 - Is there significant departmental correspondence/memoranda regarding the funding or the research projects?
3. Evaluation or Review of Research
- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
 - Are there technical reports relating to research methodology, techniques used/developed, etc.?
 - Does the office produce an annual report? Where are the record sets of these reports filed?
 - Are there summary reports regarding grant/funding activities? Audits?
 - Are there progress reports?
 - Does the office produce annual reports or financial reports? Office of record?
 - Are there reports regarding grant/fellowship funding?
 - Are there summary/final reports regarding research?
 - Are there departmental review committees?
 - Are there minutes or reports from departmental review committee meetings?
 - Are there minutes or reports regarding peer review committee meetings?
 - Does the office conduct PAEC reviews?
 - Who maintains the PAEC files?



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- Where are the PAEC files stored?

D. Diffusing Knowledge

1. Exhibitions

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- Who maintains the most complete set of exhibition proposals? How are they arranged? Are rejected proposals filed with accepted proposals? Are the proposals included with the minutes of the Exhibition Committee? Do the minutes of the Committee include discussion of proposals that were eventually rejected for exhibition?
- Who maintains the most complete set of the Exhibition Committee meeting materials? What types of records do they include?
- How are exhibition files organized? What is included in the files? How are the files unique? Can non-enduring records be easily weeded from the files?

2. Productions

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- Does the office have summary reports of production activities?
- What records best document the planning and development of the publication? (This does NOT include the routine administration of the production process).
- Are there committee meeting materials? If so, what is included in them?
- Who has the most complete set of publications?

3. Events

- What is the size, volume, dates, and arrangement of records?
- Is there a central file system?
- How is the office organized? Who is responsible for organizing events?
- How are event files organized? Can non-enduring records be easily weeded?
- Does the office produce a calendar of events (or something similar)? If so, what information is included? How is it maintained? How often is it produced? If not, are events featured/listed elsewhere and with which office (VIARC, TSA, etc)?
- How are invitation lists maintained?
- What is unique about the event files?
- What kinds of events does the office sponsor?
- Is there a record set of all event notices, announcements, invitations, and other ephemera filed separately from the event files?
- What types of records can be found in the event files?
- Is there a list or summary of all events that the office sponsored? If so, what information is included in that list or summary?
- Are there committee meetings? If so, are there minutes?



Appendix D: Standard Questions to Ask When Conducting Records Surveys and Appraisals

The records survey and appraisal process is divided into three distinct segments: research and preparation before visiting the office; inquiries made during an office visit; and follow-up questions asked after an office visit. The answers gathered during the process provide the basis for later appraisal decisions.

The following questions were compiled to assist Archives staff in accomplishing as comprehensive a survey and appraisal of records as possible. The questions address issues of function, organization, specific records created and filing systems.

1. RESEARCH AND PREPARATION: Before the Office Visit

Organizational Structure

- What is the office mission and/or function? Do you have a written mission/function statement? If so, how may we acquire a copy?
- What is the organizational structure of your office? Do you have an organizational chart? If so, how may we acquire a copy?
- Is the department organized into divisions or sections? If so, what are the divisions/sections? What are their mission/function?
- What are the office reporting lines? To whom does one report?
- Does the office have a staff of interns, fellows, or volunteers?
- How many staff members are in your office? Do you have a staff listing? If so, how may we acquire a copy?
- Are there office committees? If so, what are they and what are their missions/functions?
- Has a departmental history or overview ever been written? If so, how may we acquire a copy?
- Where does the office fit within the four SI functions?
- Does the department operate special programs? What are they?
- What is unusual or unique about the department? Why?
- What is most important to document about the office? Why?
- Does the office receive funding through grants or other outside sources? Please explain.
- Does your office submit information about your volunteers, interns, and fellows to another SI office (e.g., OSP, VIARC, OFG, etc)? If so, what do you submit?

Filing Systems

- Does the office maintain central files?
- If the office maintains central files, where are they located in the office? Are they in one location?
- Does the office have a file plan? (If so, ask for a copy)
- Are non-current central files stored in another office storage facility? If so, where are non-current office records also stored?
- Does the office have vertical (upright) or lateral file cabinets for central files? How many cabinet drawers do the files currently occupy?
- What is filed in the central files?



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- Who in the office is responsible for maintaining the central files?
- Does the individual responsible for maintaining the central files also decide what records are to be filed there? Who makes this decision?
- Who uses the central files?
- In filing records, are duplicate copies maintained by office staff?
- Describe the structure and method of the central filing system now in place (e.g., alphabetic, subject, numeric, project number, chronological).
- What is the estimated yearly accumulation of the records?
- What are the overall dates of non-current central files?
- How frequently are the central files records used?
- How old must records be before they are considered non-current and sent to storage?
- How does the office keep track of what is sent to storage?
- What is the overall cubic footage of non-current records?
- Based on a file plan or not, describe the structure and method of the office filing system currently in place (e.g., alphabetic, subject, numeric, project number, chronological).
- How does the office decide when and whether to weed out files? Is this decision made by individual staff members or administration?
- How does the office decide when to set up new files?
- How does the office decide when to send records to the Smithsonian Institution Archives?

Records Created or Maintained

- Does the office produce annual reports?
- Does the office produce photographs or other audiovisual materials?
- Does the office participate on committees?
- Do committees produce minutes? Where are the record sets?
- Are there minutes to staff meetings? Where is the record set?
- Does the office produce press releases and/or press reviews?
- Does the office keep visitor logs?
- What is the volume of the record series?
- What are the inclusive dates of the record series?
- What is the estimated annual accumulation of the record series?
- What is the office's function?
- Does the office generate organization charts?
- What is the organizational structure?
- Does the office have a schedule?
- Is there documentation for electronic records, or an electronic record keeping system? Is there sufficient documentation that will ensure that future users of these records can access and understand the records? Is the documentation in paper or electronic format? (For example, documentation can be a printout of a disk directory, a user manual for a database, program codes for a database, or a list of database fields and descriptions of those fields.) What has been transferred in the past from this office?



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- Does the office have policy and/or procedure manuals?
- What series document the office's function? - Check the appendices in the Appraisal Criteria for a listing of typical records produced as an expression of the office's function.
- How do the records document office activities? SI activities?
- Does the activity have significance outside of the SI?
- What do the records document and how? Who created the records?
- What have we appraised in the appraisal log from this office, or that is similar to series within this office?

Electronic Records Created or Maintained

[Try not to think of electronic records as a record type, but as a record form.]

- What kinds of electronic records does the office create and maintain?
- What is the function of the electronic records?
- What types of electronic records (e.g., meeting minutes, correspondence, memoranda, word-processed documents, databases, email, web sites, graphic design files, image files, audiovisual records)?

2. RECORDS EXAMINATION: During the Office Visit

Organizational Structure

- What are the office reporting lines? To whom does one report?
- Are there office committees? If so, what are they and what are their missions/functions?
- Is a function better documented elsewhere? If so, where?
- Does the department operate special programs? What are they?
- What is unusual or unique about the department? Why?
- Does the office receive funding through grants or other outside sources? Please explain.
- Does the office submit information about volunteers, interns, and fellows to another SI office (e.g., OSP, VIARC, OFG, etc)? If so, what is submitted?

Filing Systems

- Does the office have vertical (upright) or lateral file cabinets for central files? How many cabinet drawers do the files currently occupy?
- In filing records, are duplicate copies maintained by office staff?
- Describe the structure and method of the central filing system now in place (e.g., alphabetic, subject, numeric, project number, chronologic).
- What is the estimated yearly accumulation of the records?
- How does the office keep track of what is sent to storage?
- Based on a file plan or not, describe the structure and method of the office filing system currently in place (e.g., alphabetic, subject, numeric, project number, chronologic).
- How does the office decide when and whether to weed out files? Is this decision made by individual staff members or administration?
- How does the office decide when to set up new files?



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- How does the office decide when to send records to the Smithsonian Institution Archives?

Records Created or Maintained

- Are there central files?
- How are the records created?
- Who creates the records?
- Who uses the records?
- When are the records filed?
- What are the inclusive dates of records?
- What is the volume of series/records?
- What is the estimated annual accumulation of the series/records?
- Do the records serve an administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical purpose?
- Are these duplicate records? Unique records?
- Are the records detailed, drafts, or finals?
- Are there restrictions, e.g., privacy?
- Do the records document an activity we want to document?
- How do we know it is something we want to document? Some indicators may be controversy, size, expense/cost, uniqueness, firsts, openings.
- What is the format of the records (e.g., paper, audiovisual recordings, photographs, electronic)?
- Does the office cull/purge/weed its records? How often?
- What electronic systems document the office's function? What systems are used?
- Does another office maintain the official copy of records series within this office? Consider where else an activity may be documented.

Electronic Records Created or Maintained

[Try not to think of electronic records as a record type, but as a record form.]

- What is the function of the electronic records?
- What types of electronic records (e.g., meeting minutes, correspondence, memoranda, word-processed documents, databases, email, websites, graphic design files, image files, audiovisual records)?
- Are the records of enduring value? Does the information contained in the records meet our appraisal criteria?
- Do the electronic records duplicate paper records? Is the electronic version the archival/official copy, or the only copy?
- If the electronic records are archival, how do they link to archival paper records with similar function, or of similar type?
- Is the value of the records improved by its electronic format?
- Can the records creator ensure the integrity of the electronic records? Could changes have been made to alter the official record?
- What software is used to create records?
- Where are electronic records stored (e.g., shared drive, hard drive, CD)?
- How does the office use email?



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- Is email used for routine administrative announcements and correspondence?
- Is email used as correspondence and memoranda that documents policies, programs, decision-making, and activities or communications with offices outside the unit, throughout the Smithsonian, or with the general public?
- Is email used to distribute documentation of the office's programs and activities (e.g., meeting minutes, reports, policy issuances)?
- Does office staff print out email documenting policies, programs and decision-making?
- If not, how are the messages stored?

3. EVALUATION, DECISION, AND DOCUMENTATION: After the Office Visit

Organizational Structure

- Is a function better documented elsewhere? If so, where?
- Are financial/accounting records handled by central SI offices, or internally within the unit? Please explain.

Electronic Records Created or Maintained

[Try not to think of electronic records as a record type, but as a record form.]

- Are the records of enduring value? Does the information contained in the records meet our appraisal criteria?
- Do the electronic records duplicate paper records? Is the electronic version the archival/official copy, or the only copy?
- If the electronic records are archival, how do they link to archival paper records with similar function, or of similar type?
- Is the value of the records improved by its electronic format?
- Can the records creator ensure the integrity of the electronic records? Could changes have been made to alter the official record?



Appendix E: Appraisal Questions Regarding Specific Offices and Activities

Registrar

- Does the office produce checklists? Is this the record copy? Is it different from other checklists (e.g., exhibition/design, curator, conservation)? If so, how?
- Does the office have or participate in an exhibition committee?
- Does the exhibition committee produce minutes? If so, who maintains the record set?
- Does the office maintain donor files/information?
- Does the office keep lists of bequests?
- Does the office maintain documentation of transfer of collections, deeds of gift?
- Does the office maintain acknowledgments of transfer and receipt?
- Does the office have final drafts of collection policies?
- What is the collection information management system?
- Does the office maintain accession records?
- Does the office produce original loan agreements?
- Does the office maintain lender files?
- Does the office maintain object condition and treatment reports? If so, are they different from those in conservation? How?
- Does the office maintain object condition and treatment photographs? If so, are they different from those in conservation? How?
- Does the office produce research reports?
- Does the office produce technical reports?
- Does the office produce or maintain image files?
- What form are the image files (e.g., photographs, slides, transparencies, jpeg, tiff)?
- How are the image files used (e.g., study, reference, security)?
- Are image files duplicated in an Image R&R office?
- What is the office of record for image files associated with the office?

Curators

- Does the office produce records of research activities?
- Does the office produce records of the planning and funding of research projects?
- Does the office produce exhibition records that detail research, analysis, development, interpretation, and content? If so, are they different from those in the exhibition office? How?
- Does the office maintain exhibition floor plans, installation photographs? Who maintains the record copy?
- Does the office produce exhibition scripts – final draft only [permanent] unless exhibition is controversial? If Exhibits/Design has a script, is it different from the curator's? If so, how?
- Does the office produce checklists? Is this the record copy? Is it different from other checklists (e.g., exhibition/design, registrar, conservation)? If so, how?
- Does the office have or participate in an exhibition committee?
- Does the exhibition committee produce minutes? If so, who maintains the record set?



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- Does the office maintain donor files/information? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- Does the office keep lists of bequests? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- Does the office maintain documentation of transfer of collections, deeds of gift? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- Does the office maintain acknowledgments of transfer and receipt? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- Does the office have final drafts of collection policies? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- What is the collection information management system?
- Does the office maintain accession records? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- Does the office produce original loan agreements? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- Does the office maintain lender files? If so, are they different from those kept by the registrar? How?
- Does the office maintain object condition and treatment reports? If so, are they different from those in conservation? How?
- Does the office maintain object condition and treatment photographs? If so, are they different from those in conservation? How?
- Does the office produce research reports?
- Does the office produce technical reports?
- Does the office produce or maintain image files?
- What form are the image files (e.g., photographs, slides, transparencies, jpeg, tiff)?
- How are the image files used (e.g., study, reference, security)?
- Are image files duplicated in the Registrar's office or an Image R&R office?
- What is the office of record for image files associated with the office?

Exhibitions/Design

- Does the office produce exhibition records that detail research, analysis, development, interpretation, and content? If so, are they different from those in the curator's office? How?
- Does the office produce any exhibition catalogs or other ephemera (rack cards, postcards, brochures, handouts)? Are these the record copies? If not, where are the record copies kept?
- Does the office maintain exhibition floor plans, installation photographs? Who maintains the record copy?
- Does the office produce exhibition scripts – final draft only [permanent] unless exhibition is controversial? If curators have a script, is it different from curators'? If so, how?
- Does the office produce checklists? Is this the record copy? Is it different from other checklists (e.g., curator, registrar, conservation)? If so, how?
- Does the office have or participate in an exhibition committee?
- Does the exhibition committee produce minutes? If so, who maintains the record set?
- Does the office collect visitor comments?
- Does the office produce research reports?



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- Does the office produce technical reports?
- Does the office produce or maintain image files?
- What form are the image files (e.g., photographs, slides, transparencies, jpeg, tiff)?
- How are the image files used (e.g., study, reference, security)?
- Are image files duplicated in the Registrar's office or an Image R&R office?
- What is the office of record for image files associated with the office?

Conservation

- Does the office produce checklists?
- Does the office have or participate in an exhibition committee?
- Does the exhibition committee produce minutes? If so, who maintains the record set?
- Does the office maintain object condition and treatment photographs?
- Does the office produce research reports?
- Does the office produce technical reports?
- Does the office produce or maintain image files?
- What form are the image files (e.g., photographs, slides, transparencies, jpeg, tiff)?
- How are the image files used (e.g., study, reference, security)?
- Are image files duplicated in the Registrar's office or an image R&R office?
- What is the office of record for image files associated with the office?

Education Offices

- Does the office produce records of teaching activities?
- Does the office produce student records other than official student records?
- Does the office produce records of research activities?

Outreach Activities/Public Affairs

- Does the office produce any exhibition catalogs or ephemera (rack cards, postcards, brochures, handouts)? Are these the record copies? If not, where are the record copies kept?
- Does the office produce a calendar of events?
- Does the office produce any publications, departmental newsletters?
- Does the office have audio or video recordings of events?
- Does the office maintain schedules, itineraries, agendas?
- Does the office keep transcripts of speeches, lectures or presentations?
- Does the office maintain files of guests/participants?
- Does the office keep invitations, programs or other ephemera?
- Does the office collect visitor comments?
- Does the office produce research reports?
- Does the office produce technical reports?
- Does the office produce or maintain image files?
- What form are the image files (e.g., photographs, slides, transparencies, jpeg, tiff)?
- How are the image files used (e.g., study, reference, security)?



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- Are image files duplicated in an Image R&R office?
- What is the office of record for image files associated with the office?

Professional Activities

- Does the office have audio or video recordings of events?
- Does the office maintain schedules, itineraries, agendas?
- Does the office keep transcripts of speeches, lectures or presentations?



Appendix F: Appraisal Tools and Resources

The following are tools and resources to be consulted by the RM Team before, during, and after office appraisal visits. They will assist the team members to make informed appraisal decisions.

1. RESEARCH AND PREPARATION: Before the Office Visit

Collections Management System

- Contains agency history and biographical information; restrictions on existing collections; and records SIA had taken in the past
- Helps to identify records series and dates
- Provides a subjective rating of the value of existing SIA collections

Appraisal Criteria

- Documents SI functions, SI office(s) that perform the functions, and types of records that document those functions

Appraisal Log

- Documents prior decisions from bureau/office visits

Appraisal Questionnaires (Standard and Specific) for Appraisal Visits

- Provides general information about the office and can be used in preparation for visit

Biographical Files

- Contain biographical information of records creator

Database Survey (1996-1997)

- Asks what type of systems offices use and determines to what extent electronic records (ER) document office activities
- Reveals how ER are used, organized, and maintained, and how they relate to paper records

Electronic Records Survey Questionnaire

- Asks what type of systems offices use and determines to what extent electronic records (ER) document office activities
- Reveals how ER are used, organized, and maintained, and how they relate to paper records

General and Agreements File

- Contains agency information; restrictions on existing collections; and records SIA had taken in the past
- Helps identify records series and dates
- Contains agreements and surveys

Guide to the Smithsonian Archives, 1996

- Contains agency history and biographical information; restrictions on existing collections; and records SIA had taken in the past
- Helps identify records series and dates

Institutional Memory

- Senior staff members can provide background information about an office, person, and records



Smithsonian Institution Archives Appraisal Methodology

Records Management Files

- Contain agency information; restrictions on existing collections; and records SIA had taken in the past
- Help identify records series and dates

Records Management Reference Publications (e.g., Donald S. Skupsky's *Records Retention Procedures and Recordkeeping Requirements*)

- Provide records retention guidelines and consideration

Schedules of Other Government Agencies (e.g., National Archives and Records Administration, General Records Schedules)

- Provides records retention guidelines and consideration Provides examples of schedules and disposition instructions

SI Annual Reports and Annals

- Provide background information about offices, such as organization, function, activities, and staff

SI Schedules

- Provide records retention guidelines and decisions

SI Unit Websites

- Provide background information about offices, such as organization, function, activities, and staff telephone directories
- Contain personnel information, position titles, and office organization

Written Guidelines for Offices and Professional Societies, including deeds of gift (same functions as schedules)

- Outline appraisal decisions agreed upon by offices. Guidelines tell offices what SIA wants and does not want. They are written confirmation of appraisal decisions.

2. RECORDS EXAMINATION: During the Office Visit

Appraisal Questionnaires (Standard and Specific) for Appraisal Visits

- Answers from the questions can lead to follow-up questions and help to make decisions about records

Bureau Visit(s)/Staff Conversations

- Answers follow-up questions

3. EVALUATION, DECISION, AND DOCUMENTATION: After the Office Visit

Appraisal Criteria

- Documents SI functions, SI office that performs the functions, and types of records that document those functions

Appraisal Log

- Documents decisions from bureau/office visit and can be used to revise the Criteria

Bureau Visit(s)/Staff Conversations

- Answers follow-up questions
- Notes of the visit

Collection Value List

- Provides a subjective rating of the value of existing SIA collections

Database Survey (1996-1997)



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- Answers will help RM Team make appraisal decisions and ultimately, it will help RM Team transfer the records

Electronic Records Survey Questionnaire

- Answers will help RM Team make appraisal decisions and ultimately, it will help RM Team transfer the records

General and Agreements File

- Contain agency information; restrictions on existing collections; and records SIA has taken in the past
- Help identify records series and dates
- Document appraisal decisions and retention periods
- Help create new schedules and revise existing ones
- Contain agreements and surveys

Guide to the Smithsonian Archives, 1996

- Contains agency history and biographical information; restrictions on existing collections; and records SIA had taken in the past
- Helps identify records series and dates

Institutional Memory

- Senior staff members can provide background information about an office, person, and records

Records Management Files

- Contain agency information; restrictions on existing collections; and records SIA had taken in the past
- Help identify records series and dates
- Document appraisal decisions and retention periods
- Help create new schedules and revise existing ones

Records Management Reference Publications (e.g., Donald S. Skupsky's *Records Retention Procedures and Recordkeeping Requirements*)

- Provide records retention guidelines and consideration

Schedules of Other Government Agencies (e.g., National Archives and Records Administration, General Records Schedules)

- Provide records retention guidelines and consideration
- Provide examples of schedules and disposition instructions

SI Schedules

- RM Team can modify existing schedules and create new ones
- Document appraisal decisions

Written Guidelines for Offices and Professional Societies (same function as schedules)

- RM Team can write guidelines as follow-up to appointment/visit
- RM Team can copy guidelines in G/A files to document to document decisions
- RM Team can put these decisions in appraisal log



Appendix G: Saving Personal Papers and Archival Records of Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory Scientists

The Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA) developed these guidelines to assist SAO scientists, their families, their colleagues, and scholars who study them, to preserve and make accessible their personal papers and archival records. This appendix identifies types of material to save and why they should be preserved.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Preserving the final results of research provides only half the story of scientific exploration. Scholars frequently seek information that sheds light on what influenced the development and progress of scientific research. Therefore, sketchy notes, diaries, journals, informal reports, and correspondence among colleagues can provide evidence of how and why research progressed down one path and not another. Such material provides the context in which the research was developed and demonstrates external and internal factors that influenced the evolution of scientific research.

Although published results are more widely available through electronic bibliographies and over the Internet, they are substantially more concise. Detailed information documenting calculations and instrumentation is usually lost in publication for the sake of brevity. That supportive documentation could be a rich source for scholars seeking insight into the scientific processes, their pitfalls and breakthroughs and how they occurred.

WHO SHOULD SAVE?

SAO employees engaged in scientific exploration in all disciplines have a stake in preserving the history of science. The records of SAO scientists, administrators, instructors, and research collaborators provide a historic legacy. These guidelines describe records that could be potentially useful to researchers.

WHAT SHOULD BE SAVED?

Historians and researchers make use of a wide range of records in their research. Major categories include personal and professional papers of SAO scientists, records of scientific institutions and collaborations, and apparatus. SI archivists and historians can provide advice on potential research value before records are destroyed or deposited with the archives. Many of these records may be in electronic form. Of particular interest are records that track the development and progress of ideas and investigation. They are usually:

- Correspondence (including email)
- Laboratory/field/research notebooks, journals, and other research files
- Diaries and appointment calendars
- Drafts of scientific publications
- Other scientific writings
- Photographs and other illustrative material
- Biographical material
- Nomenclature lists
- Unpublished manuscripts (first and final drafts)
- Papers and lecture notes presented at professional conferences, symposia, or workshops
- Research data and planning files

Non-scientific documentation offers valuable insight into the social, political, educational, economical, and religious influences in the lives of SAO scientists. Records that document the personal lives of scientists and their teaching careers are usually: correspondence with friends and family; student course work (class notes, syllabi, transcripts, and extracurricular activity material); journals/diaries;



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teaching material prepared for classes (class lectures, syllabi, and reading lists); and informal photographs highlighting the human side of scientists' lives.

Institutional records that document research development, support, and/or collaboration should also be preserved. They are usually:

- Grant and contract files (applications, correspondence, and notes)
- Policy and procedure manuals
- Reports (technical, progress, final research)
- Minutes and circulars to committee meetings
- Summaries of grant/funding activities
- Research funding proposals
- Final grants
- Significant departmental and administrative memoranda

HOW TO SAVE?

SI archivists are trained to preserve historical papers and records, and to make them accessible to researchers. They will be glad to discuss your papers and answer your questions concerning the value of your material and issues regarding confidentiality, copyright, and permission for access. Do not worry if the papers seem messy or disorganized. It is best not to try to disturb their order. They, in consultation with you, subject experts and historians, will make decisions on what to safely discard and what to retain, and they will arrange the material in a way that makes them most accessible to researchers. Removal, editing, or rearrangement, unless done expertly, can destroy much of the value of the collection.

Unidentified notes and letters can be misleading and cause controversy. If you can clarify important details as to the who, where, what, and when, please do so. Make your annotations directly on the document using a soft #1 (SB) pencil. Avoid using labels, clips, or staples as they will damage the document.

Photographs should be fully identified to maximize their use. Again, using a soft #1 (SB) pencil, note the names, dates, and places on the back of the photograph. Avoid using labels, clips, or staples as they will damage the image. Photograph albums should be kept intact with all notes attached.

There are items that can be discarded, but this should be done conservatively. They are usually:

- Multiple copies of publications
- Clean (unmarked) galley proofs
- Travel documents and arrangements (unless associated with special circumstances, e.g., visa difficulties, war/revolutions, or accidents)
- Brochures, maps and printed matter circulated for conferences.
- Minutes, circulars, reports, and examination papers to university and professional society meetings (unless annotated by the chairman)
- Complimentary offprints, preprints, and reprints can be discarded. They should be retained, however, if they are heavily annotated, rare, foreign, ephemeral, or are difficult to find. Published papers may also be retained if they give a comprehensive tour d'horizon of a given field or discipline during a particular period.

Please note that the information in this appendix provides only general and preliminary recommendations, and the lists of records described are not inclusive.

Special thanks to the American Institute of Physics for permission to incorporate information from their "Scientific Source Materials" publication for this appendix.

