

# The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## University Archives – Collection Development and Access Policy

(Approved by Administrative and Planning Committee on 13th August 2019)

### 1. Purpose

The major function of the University Archives is to identify and collect **records of historical value to the University**. This paper provides a framework for developing the archival collection. The Access Policy which governs the use of the collection is also included.

### 2. Mission of the University Archives

The mission of the University Archives is to systematically collect, organize, preserve, and make available records of enduring historical value created or received by the University for research, teaching, learning, or administrative use and sharing of cultural heritage.

### 3. Definitions

The following definitions are extracted from the website of Society of American Archivists:

- 3.1. **Active records / current records:** Records that continue to be used with sufficient frequency to justify keeping them in the office of creation.
- 3.2. **Appraisal:** The process of determining whether records and other materials have permanent archival value.
- 3.3. **Archival value / Historical value:** The ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, justifying their continued preservation.
- 3.4. **Archives:** The division within an organization responsible for maintaining the organization's records of enduring value.
- 3.5. **Creating office / Originating Office / Office of origin:** The corporate body or administrative unit in which a group of records is created or received, and accumulated during the course of business.
- 3.6. **Inactive records:** Records that are no longer used in the day-to-day course of business, but which may be preserved and occasionally used for legal, historical, or operational purposes.
- 3.7. **Transfer:** The process of moving records as part of their scheduled disposition, especially from an office to a records center, or from a records center to an archives.

#### **4. Collecting Focus**

The University Archives seeks to collect original and unique archival records which document the following major functions of the University:

- 4.1. **Administration:** university governance, policy development, budget planning, resources allocation, campus planning, manpower planning, student admission, donation, collaborations and exchange.
- 4.2. **Learning and teaching:** development of academic programs, quality assurance, learning support, extension programs.
- 4.3. **Research and knowledge transfer:** research projects, funding, grant applications, knowledge transfer activities.
- 4.4. In addition to University's official records, records originated from other sources will also be acquired if they document the establishment of the University and the University's impact on society. Examples are records from The National Archives of the United Kingdom and the Public Offices Record of Hong Kong.
- 4.5. **Archives of CUHK Colleges and CUHK-owned independent entities,** e.g. CUHK Medical Centre, are managed and maintained by the individual college or unit.

#### **5. Types of Materials Collected**

The University Archives collects materials in print, digital or other formats, including:

- 5.1. Documents: committee meeting records, policy statements, strategic plans, correspondences, organization charts, academic proposals, reports, statistics, course curriculum, etc.
- 5.2. Publications: calendars, directories, annual reports, newsletters, press releases, etc.
- 5.3. Audio and visual materials: photos sound and video recordings of important events, such as congregation, inauguration ceremonies, conferences, visits, etc.
- 5.4. Selected artifacts and ephemera: samples of identification card, graduate diploma, and memorabilia, etc.

#### **6. The Role and Responsibilities of the University Archives**

- 6.1. The Chinese University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap 1109) states that the University Secretary together with the Registrar are the joint custodian of the records of the University. Upon the establishment of the University Archives, the University Secretary and the Registrar authorize the University Archives to preserve the University's historical records.

- 6.2. Departments should consult the University Archivist for disposition of any historical records which might be of archival value.
- 6.3. The University Archives is the permanent repository of the University's historical documents. Its functions include:
  - 6.3.1. Select and collect historical records from various offices and academic departments for permanent retention;
  - 6.3.2. Organize and preserve historical records; and
  - 6.3.3. Provide access to non-restricted historical records.

## **7. Identification and Retention of University's Historical Records**

- 7.1. The Archivist has the responsibility to review and evaluate the historical value of inactive files kept at originating offices.
- 7.2. Records of historical value that are no longer actively used should be transferred to the University Archives.
- 7.3. Records reaching 25 years old and kept at originating offices should be reviewed by the Archivist to determine their archival value for permanent preservation.
- 7.4. Subject to the recommendation of the University Secretary and the Registrar, records of dissolved Council and Senate committees, e.g. Committee on Coordination of Administration, Committee on Dual Teaching System, etc. should be transferred to the University Archives for permanent retention.
- 7.5. The Vice-Chancellor's Office keeps current records and records of the two preceding Vice-Chancellors. Records of other preceding Vice-Chancellors should be transferred to the University Archives for review of their archival value and permanent retention.
- 7.6. If any historical records need to be kept by the originating office for more than 25 years, the office should apply in writing with justification and obtain permission from the University Secretary or the Registrar.

## **8. Access to University Archives Collection**

- 8.1. Archival documents will be classified into FOUR categories with different levels of access restriction:
  - 8.1.1. **Open records:** Documents in general distribution and are intended for public use. These include official publications, announcements, public reports, bulletin, speeches, etc. These records are open for public access.
  - 8.1.2. **General administrative records:** Administrative documents, such as policies, manuals, staff handbooks, etc., which contain no sensitive or confidential information are **closed**

**for 25 years** from the date of their creation, or 25 years from the last creation date if the creation process spans a period of years.

8.1.3. **Restricted administrative records:** Administrative documents which contain **sensitive or confidential information are closed for 50 years** from the date of creation, or 50 years from the last creation date if the creation process spans a period of years.

8.1.4. **Records with personal information:** Records which contain **personal information about individual staff or students are closed for 80 years** from the date of creation.

8.2. The originating office may advise the level of access of restricted records.

8.3. During the closure period, records are accessible to their originating office only. Other university offices may request access permission from the head of the originating office for official purposes. In cases where the originating office of the records no longer exists, the University Secretary and the Registrar shall exercise the discretion in granting the permission to access the records.

8.4. During the closure period, university offices that need to access the files of the Vice-Chancellor Office for official purposes will require permission from the University Secretary.

8.5. Access to non-restricted records can be arranged with the University Archives, and users can consult the records in the designated Library reading room under supervision.