

McGill University Archives Terms of Reference

Approved by the Executive Committee, McGill University Board of Governors
January 17 2005

1. Mission statement

The mission of the McGill University Archives (MUA) is to promote good governance, and accountability, through the protection of the University's documentary heritage and records/information assets, in all formats, by combined archives and records management services.

2. Role and responsibilities of McGill University Archives

The McGill University Archives (MUA) is the University's official custodian of archives and records. It serves as the University's official archival repository, which includes the archival appraisal, selection, arrangement and description, preservation and provision of access to records, in all formats, that accurately represents the total life of the institution. The MUA is also responsible for the development of policies related to archives and records management.

The MUA is responsible for the provision of University records management services. These services includes the systematic control of records in all formats from their creation, or receipt, through their processing, distribution, organization, storage, and retrieval, to their ultimate disposition. In particular, MUA records management services includes the management of records created and/or accumulated by the University through their life cycle (active, semi-active, inactive), and long-term preservation or destruction in accordance with *McGill University Records Retention Schedule (MURRS)* and international archives and records management standards.

The MUA is responsible for the development of *MURRS*, including ensuring that *MURRS* is regularly updated, approved and submitted to provincial authorities in accordance with relevant legislation; that *MURRS* is reflective of University record-keeping best practices; and that the University community is aware of *MURRS* requirements.

The MUA provides expert leadership in the continuing protection of McGill University's information assets and documentary heritage by remaining informed about record-keeping practices in use across McGill and of evolving record-keeping best practices including, in particular, developments in information technologies related to record-keeping.

The MUA is responsible for promoting awareness of McGill's record-keeping obligations, and of the MUA's role in the preservation of the University's documentary heritage.

3. McGill University Archivist

McGill University records, in all formats, shall be managed and preserved through the functions of a central University Archives office under the direction of the University Archivist.

McGill University records shall not be removed or destroyed without the joint approval of the University Archivist, as signatory of *MURRS*, and the heads of academic or administrative units responsible for the creation and/or accumulation of such records.

The University Archivist is the official keeper of the University's records, including the University Charter, and is responsible for the maintenance, management, and security of records held by the MUA. The University Archivist is the University's authority on and advocate for McGill historical, record-keeping, and records/information management issues.

The University Archivist is authorized to enter into donor agreements consigning papers to the University Archives.

4. Records management

A. McGill University Records Retention Schedule (MURRS)

In accordance with relevant legislation McGill University will maintain a records retention schedule which shall be known as the *McGill University Records Retention Schedule (MURRS)*.

Amendments to *MURRS* shall be made by the McGill University Archives in consultation with creating offices and submitted for approval to the Quebec Ministry of Culture through the McGill University Secretariat, in accordance with relevant legislation.

B. Responsibilities of heads of units

The heads of academic and administrative units (deans, chairs and directors) are responsible for ensuring that records created and/or accumulated in their units are managed in accordance with these Terms of Reference.

C. Responsibilities of McGill employees

McGill employees have a duty to ensure the security and management of records while in their care, and to comply with the policies and procedures of the University Archives, including the management and transfer of records to the University Archives in accordance with *MURRS*.

5. McGill University Archives Acquisition Policy

The MUA will acquire original archival records, in all formats, that document McGill University programs and activities or that enhance its teaching and research programs.

Acquisitions will include three major categories of materials: 1) official records of McGill University including records described in *MURRS*; 2) materials documenting the broader McGill University community, including the private papers of groups such as staff/faculty associations, student organizations, and private/research papers of McGill University faculty, staff and students; and, 3) private and/or organizational papers in support of historical research.

In its capacity as the University's official repository, the MUA will foster a spirit of cooperative acquisitions in consultation with heritage and collecting bodies both within and outside McGill University, respecting and reflecting the acquisition interests of the MUA and other collecting institutions.

In support of historical research, and given the resources available for the preservation and management of archival collections, the MUA may also seek to acquire the papers of persons and organizations not directly affiliated with McGill University but whose archives constitute a valued documentary resource. Such acquisition decisions will be based on an appraisal of the papers according to international archival standards including attention to resource implications and the collecting interests and mandates of McGill and non-McGill collecting partners.

Archival materials include but are not limited to the following, in all formats: minutes of meetings, correspondence, legal records, curricular and student records, University and student publications, personnel and financial records, drawings, paintings of a documentary character, electronic/digital records, sound recordings, micro-forms, motion pictures, still photographs and prints, posters, letter-press and near-print publications, teaching aids, special and annual reports, calendars, manuals, scrapbook and like materials.

6. Definition

For the purpose of these Terms of Reference, "records" refers to documents, compilations of documents and files, in each case in all formats.

The following records are subject to *MURRS* and to the policies of the University Archives:

All records created and/or accumulated by the University including but not limited to faculties, departments, institutes, schools, and centers of research or services;

And all records created and/or accumulated by all persons employed by the University in the performance of their duties as University officials, professors, or administrative and support employees.

7. General

McGill University is not responsible for the management of records created and accumulated by affiliated hospitals. Affiliated hospitals and other public bodies are required to produce their own retention schedules governing disposition of records. The McGill University Archives may however negotiate the transfer of selected historical records to its care from such bodies where the records are appraised to be in support of research and teaching.

All policies and procedures of the McGill University Archives will conform to applicable legislation, McGill University policies, and reflect international archival and records management standards.