



Archivist's Code of Ethics

This Code consists of two parts: "Principles" and "Application of Principles."

Principles

1. Archivists appraise, select, acquire, preserve, and make available for use archival records, ensuring their intellectual integrity and promoting responsible physical custodianship of these records, for the benefit of present users and future generations.
2. Archivists have a responsibility to ensure that they and their colleagues are able to perform these and other professional activities in an environment free of discrimination and sexual or personal harassment.
3. Archivists encourage and promote the greatest possible use of the records in their care, giving due attention to personal privacy and confidentiality, and the preservation of records.
4. Archivists carry out their duties according to accepted archival principles and practices, to the best of their abilities, making every effort to promote and maintain the highest possible standards of conduct.
5. Archivists contribute to the advancement of archival studies by developing personal knowledge and skills, and by sharing this information and experience with members of archival and related professions.
6. Archivists use their specialized knowledge and experience for the benefit of society as a whole.

Applications of Principles

A. Appraisal, Selection, and Acquisition

A1. Archivists appraise, select, and acquire records in accordance with their institutions' mandates and resources. These activities should be guided by consideration for the integrity of the fonds. Archivists document the criteria which governed the appraisal, selection, and acquisition of records.

A2. Archivists do not compete for acquisitions when competition would endanger the safety of the records; they cooperate to ensure the preservation of records in repositories where they can be effectively managed and used.

A3. Archivists, in determining acquisition, take into full consideration such factors as authority to transfer, donate or sell; financial arrangements, implications, and benefits; plans for processing; copyright, and conditions of access. Archivists discourage unreasonable restrictions on access or use, but may accept as a condition of acquisition clearly stated restrictions of limited duration and should suggest such restrictions to protect personal privacy. Archivists observe all agreements made at the time of transfer or acquisition.

A4. Archivists appraise the monetary value of records for purchase or tax benefit for donation based on fair market value of the records at the time of purchase or deposit and in keeping with the principles, guidelines, and regulations established by relevant appraisal bodies and the government.



B. Preservation

B1. Archivists endeavour to protect the intellectual and physical integrity of the records in their care. Archivists document all actions which may alter the record.

B2. Archivists who find it necessary to deaccession archival records should make every effort to contact the donors or their representatives, and inform them of the decision. Archivists endeavour to offer the records to other repositories in preference to destruction. Archivists document all decisions and actions taken with regard to deaccessioning.

C. Availability and Use

C1. Archivists arrange and describe all records in their custody in order to facilitate the fullest possible access to and use of their records.

C2. Archivists make every attempt possible to respect the privacy of the individuals who created or are the subjects of records, especially those who had no voice in the disposition of the records. Archivists should not reveal or profit from information gained through work with restricted records.

C3. Archivists inform users of any restrictions on access and use placed on records. Archivists should apply all restrictions equitably.

C4. Archivists should endeavour to inform users of copyright restrictions on records, and inform users that it is their own responsibility to obtain copyright clearance from the copyright owners.

C5. Archivists protect each users' right to privacy with respect to information sought or received, and records consulted. Archivists may inform users of parallel research by others only with the prior agreement of the individuals concerned.

D. Professional Conduct

D1. Archivists who use their institutions' records for personal research and/or publication must make these activities known to both their employers and to others using the same records. Archivists, when undertaking personal research, must not use their knowledge of other researchers' findings without first notifying those researchers about the use intended by the Archivist.

D2. Archivists who acquire records personally, should inform their employers of their acquisition activities, should not compete for acquisitions with their own repositories, should not use privileged information obtained as a consequence of their employment to further these personal acquisition interests, and should maintain appropriate records of their acquisitions.

E. Advancement of Knowledge

E1. Archivists share their knowledge and experience with other archivists for their mutual professional development.

E2. Archivists share their specialized knowledge and experience with legislators and other policy-makers to assist them in formulating policies and making decisions in matters affecting the record-keeping environment.