

## EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

### Transferring Records to the University Archives

This document is intended for the use of records management practitioners or other responsible officers in university business units, who have identified archival status records that need to be transferred to the university archives for long term preservation. It details the main steps required to carry out a physical transfer and advises on how to prepare records. **No records can be transferred to the university archives without the prior agreement of the University Archivist.** Please refer to the university archives collections policy available at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/resources/collections/specdivision/eua.shtml> and note particularly that “archives of University functions/activities worthy of permanent preservation will normally be identified via retention scheduling procedures and/or other appropriate guidance”. This means that regular arrangements for transfer should be governed by an agreed retention schedule, although the University Archivist may accept one-off transfers under special arrangements. When drawing up their retention schedules business units should also have considered guidance entitled “Archival Selection Criteria” also available at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/resources/collections/specdivision/eua.shtml>. The rest of this document lists the steps involved in carrying out a transfer once an agreement is in place and provides advice on physical preparation of records for transfer.

1. **Contact the Assistant to the University Archivist on extension 508373 to arrange a supply of archival quality boxes and advice on the quantity required.** It is advisable to wait until you have at least one linear metre of records ready to transfer.
2. **List and box the records.** The records transfer must be accompanied by a transfer list detailing the contents of each box to allow easy retrieval of information for the benefit of both the transferring business unit and wider usage. A tabular format such as the example given at Annex A may be appropriate. This provides a column for box number, records titles, covering dates and any access restrictions. Use written information, e.g. a file title such as “Admissions Policy”, rather than a coded reference such as “B4/12” which will be unintelligible to other users.
3. **Prepare an exemptions schedule, (if required).** If information contained in any of the records to be transferred is not to be made accessible to the public, the records must also be accompanied by a schedule justifying the withholding of that information under the exemptions specified in the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The schedule must (a) identify this information clearly, e.g. box number, file title and item (b) cite each relevant exemption explaining why it applies and (c) identify a date at which release of the information would be appropriate or should be re-considered. The business unit may wish to make use of the records transfer list form, (see Annex A) to provide the required exemptions schedule data. Wherever possible, keep boxes containing all your exempt records physically separated from boxes containing fully accessible records, and label all boxes accordingly. If the exempt information is e.g. a group of papers within a file, please ensure that the papers are ‘flagged’ accordingly and that the box label also indicates that exempt information is contained within the box. Alternatively, extract the exempt group of papers from the file and store separately in an ‘exempt’ box, but always indicate the original position in the file. This will enable replacement at the correct point in the future once the exemption no longer applies. Further information on exemptions which may apply to University records can be found at <http://www.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/>
4. **Contact the Assistant to the University Archivist to arrange collection of the boxes to be transferred, stating your name, building location and how to gain access, and number of**

**boxes.** Once the boxes have been received in the University Library they will be allocated an accession number. You will be informed of the accession number as soon as possible, and should quote it if you require to access the records in the future. Keep a copy of the transfer list so you can specify individual items for retrieval if necessary. Please note that all 'open' archives and records transfer lists will be made available for supervised public usage on request in the Special Collections reading room on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the University Library. Any requests received for information contained in any exempt records transferred will be referred to the relevant University business unit for reply.

### **Preparing Records for Transfer**

The University Archivist reserves the right to reject records whose physical condition inhibits ready usage and more generally, you can help with the long term task of physical preservation by observing the following rules when preparing the records for transfer.

If possible remove all ferrous or corrosive materials, such as pins, paper clips and staples. Instead use plain white cotton tape to hold related groups of papers together. Contact the Assistant to the University Archivist for supply details.

Do not overfill the boxes as this could damage the contents. Make sure the lid fits snugly

Realign untidy file papers using nylon ended treasury tags

If possible, split very thick files, (those over 2 inches) into one or more parts, - part 1, part 2 etc.

Box bound volumes where possible, or if too large use protective material such as bubble wrap before loading in your own storage crates or other containers

Group any loose papers together in simple file folders

Contact the Assistant to the University Archivist for advice on preparing other records formats such as maps/ plans, microforms, videos etc.



