Processing archival collections at the University of Florida:
An introduction

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revised 2015 December 9
Section 3. Minimal Processing’s Impact on "Traditional" Processing Activities

3.1. Housing and Preservation

3.2. Appraisal and Weeding Collections

3.3. Restricting Materials
Archival collections are each unique and require varying levels of attention and description. This guide should serve as a basis for standard levels to strive for, but make sure to discuss the collections and your processing decisions with a Curator or Archivist throughout the process, whenever a question arises, or even when something catches your attention as rather unique or interesting.

Section 1: Surveying and initial processing steps

Much of the work in this section may be completed by a Curator or Archivist before you begin working on the collection. If you already have a processing plan in place, skip ahead to Section 2 to learn about physically processing the records.

1.1. Examine Existing Descriptive Information and/or Access Tools

You should gather all known descriptive information and/or access tools available for the collection being surveyed (check with the Curator/Archivist or in Archivists’ Toolkit). These may include: donor agreement forms, accession records, catalog records, preliminary inventories, finding aids, vendor’s description, etc. Look for and take notes on the following types of information, often included in administrative documents (the curator will likely have much of this information):

- Where did the collection originate? Who created the documents?
- Was the collection donated or purchased?
- Who donated/sold the collection?
- When was the collection acquired?
- Why was the collection acquired?
- What is included in the collection?
- How much was included, size-wise? (linear footage, container count, size of digital files)
- What types of material are included?
- Is there biographical information on the creator available?
- Are there any restrictions on access, usage, or copyright?
- What are the primary subjects documented?
- Where is the collection physically located?

Any or all of this information will aid in surveying. While some information, if identified, can be used to automatically populate certain survey fields (i.e. donor, collection or accession number(s), collection creator, etc.), other information will generally assist in the completion of a more thorough survey. For example, an existing description of what was donated or a preliminary collection inventory will help determine whether you have located the collection in its entirety or, conversely, that components of the collection are missing. Biographical and historical information identified on the collection creator will later help in writing the biographical/historical note.

1.2. Examine the Collection, Record Findings on the Survey Worksheet

Once you have reviewed existing documentation, you will be better prepared to review and assess the physical collection. Use the Survey and Processing Plan Worksheet to survey the physical collection and develop a plan for processing.
TIP: Surveying is part of a long term collections management strategy - a collection surveyed today, may not be processed for many years. Leave NO worksheet field empty! If a particular field is not necessary or does not apply to a particular collection, write "n/a" in the blank space. It will be clear, later, that the field was left blank intentionally. Future archivists will be confident that the survey is complete and does not need to be repeated.

TIP: When reviewing the collection, careful attention should be paid to container labeling. Container labeling can be very helpful in understanding the collection. Be sure to compare containers and their contents with existing descriptive information, noting if labels are accurate, if anything is missing, or if additional material exists.

Fill out the Survey and Processing Plan Worksheet, pages 1-4 during the physical surveying process. The notes on pages 3-4 can be in draft form at this point; just write down what you’ve learned. Working with the Curator/Archivist, fill out pages 5-7 to determine a proposed plan for processing this collection.

TIP: Much of this information is administrative and may be obtained from existing descriptive documentation. The descriptive documentation should be compared and contrasted with the physical collection and vice versa; surveyors should record discrepancies in the survey.

Section 2: Physical processing of the collection

Archival processing provides greater intellectual and physical access to collections. It promotes preservation and enables good collections management. Generally speaking, during processing, records are appraised, weeded, arranged, described, and provided with archival quality housing.

Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner introduced the concept of minimal processing in their 2005 article, "More Product, Less Process: Pragmatically Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal with Late 20th-Century Collections," as an alternative to the more traditional, time intensive approach to processing. Minimal processing, or MPLP, facilitates faster access to collections. It encourages a streamlined approach that does not get bogged down in time consuming processing tasks, such as removing staples or arranging the contents of every folder, arguing that "...good processing is done with a shovel, not with a tweezers." While MPLP was intended for late 20th century collections of business records, we can apply minimal processing strategies to collections of all sizes, types, and ages.¹

TIP: The key to successful processing is to take advantage of existing information, especially the collection’s survey record and processing plan. Processors should use the information provided therein to their advantage.

TIP: To save time, processors should take good notes to avoid having to return to reinvestigate topics when writing the finding aid.

¹ For more views on minimal processing, examine the following articles:
For instructive purposes, the processing methodology is divided into six basic steps:

2.1. Familiarize yourself with the collection
2.2. Arrange the collection
2.3. Describe the collection and create the finding aid
2.4. Finalize processing and tie up loose ends
2.5. Proofread your work
2.6. Document your decisions

2.1. Familiarize Yourself with the Collection

Examine Existing Descriptive Documents

The processing plan or packet (discussed in Section 1) should include copies of pertinent administrative and descriptive information. Processors should review this plan before beginning processing. Descriptive information may also include preliminary biographical/historical information, a list of relevant name authorities and subjects, or more general information, indicating problems that need to be addressed or that will make processing difficult.

Examine the Physical Collection

Do not move anything yet! In this step processors simply review the physical collection, making sure that the entire collection is accounted for.

To start, processors should count boxes and volumes (books)/items, comparing what they find to what the existing documentation suggests should exist. If there seems to be more or less associated with the physical collection than recorded in the existing documentation, processors should immediately consult with a Curator/Archivist.

Next, processors should review the existing container labels. There may be useful information regarding container contents, accessions or donors, the type and quantity of materials in the containers, etc. This information may prove helpful in establishing the collection’s arrangement.

Next, open containers to review the contents, noting whether existing container labels are accurate. Processors should compare and contrast what they find in the collection with what was identified in the processing plan documents. Processors should make note of any discrepancies and make note of additional materials, topics, genres, or highlights identified. If anything appears to be missing, processors should contact their supervisor immediately.

Next, identify existing groups of related materials; these groups will likely become the basis for the collection arrangement.

*TIP: Related materials may not be housed in the same box or even in consecutive boxes. For example, processors may identify a system of alphabetically or chronologically arranged files in numerous boxes throughout the collection; or processors may notice that records in one or more containers were created or maintained by the same person; or perhaps there are many of a particular type of record.*
Next, place new, temporary labels on boxes, indicating to which group of records the contents appear to belong.

Next, using the information from the new box labels, establish a list of potential series and subseries into which the collection may be arranged. Compare the list with what was identified in the processing plan. If the two lists match, processors may notify their supervisor that they are ready to move on to the next step. If the lists do not match, processors should notify their supervisor for further discussion.

2.2. Arrange the Collection

An archival collection is typically arranged in two ways: intellectually and physically. The intellectual and physical arrangements represent two distinct ways of organizing archival materials that exist simultaneously.

*TIP:* Arranging an archival collection is not a one-step process. The arrangement will continue to be refined throughout the entire process of processing.

*TIP:* Though distinctly described on the following pages, the intellectual and physical arrangements are not mutually exclusive. In fact, identifying the intellectual and physical arrangement is frequently completed at the same time.

*TIP:* Most, if not all, of the necessary housing and preservation work is completed throughout the process of assigning the intellectual and physical arrangements.

**Identify an Intellectual Arrangement**

Intellectual arrangement applies to the information contained in an archival collection, and necessitates an understanding of the intellectual relationship(s) between the many disparate papers in a collection. To establish an intellectual arrangement, collections are divided into series and subseries. A series is nothing more than "a group of similar records that are arranged according to a filing system and that are related as the result of being created, received, or used in the same activity" ([see SAA Glossary](#)). A subseries is simply a series within a series.

Processors working with a processing plan will have a preliminary list of series and subseries, identified during the survey phase. It is not unusual for this list to evolve as processors examine the collection more closely. If processors believe the collection ought to be arranged in a way that deviates from the processing plan, they must consult with their supervisor before moving on to the next step.

*TIP:* Series and subseries are NOT required in processing. They should be established only as deemed necessary by the contents of the collection. For small collections, series may not be needed and a simple folder list can suffice, but the same process can be used to decide on the arrangement of the folders.
TIP: Subseries and sub-subseries should be established ONLY when absolutely necessary. Processors should talk to their supervisor about the creation of subseries and sub-subseries prior to finalizing a collection’s arrangement.

Processors should take into consideration the principles of provenance and original order in the establishment of series and subseries.

TIP: Provenance is a fundamental principle of archives, referring to the individual, family, or organization that created or received the items in a collection. The principle of provenance dictates that records of different origins (provenance) be kept separate to preserve their context.

Provenance

First, taking into consideration the principle of provenance (see SAA Glossary), identify if more than one person or entity created the collection. Processors may decide to use different creators as a basis for the intellectual arrangement, establishing series named for and containing the different creators’ papers.

TIP: Because archival collections usually contain papers created by many people in addition to the predominant creator, do not establish provenance based series unless absolutely warranted - there should be clear evidence of multiple creators that produced records independent from each other.

For example, third party correspondence should not be considered in the creation of a provenance based series. In a majority of cases, third party correspondence will remain with the body of correspondence in which it was originally filed, regardless of the creator. Conversely, several individual bodies of correspondence, each received and/or written by several different people may result in the creation of provenance based series.

Family papers are frequently arranged into provenance based series. The papers produced by the various family members serve as the basis of the collection’s overall arrangement.

Original Order

Original order is another fundamental principle of archives. Maintaining records in original order serves two purposes. First, it preserves existing relationships and evidential significance that can be inferred from the context of the records. Second, it exploits the record creator's mechanisms to access the records, saving the archives the work of creating new access tools.

Taking into consideration the principle of original order (see SAA Glossary), processors identify if there are useful, existing groups of related records arranged according a meaningful scheme. Original order, at the intellectual stage, is important because it indicates the way the creator thought about, maintained, and used their records. Original order, if it is both meaningful and useful, will be retained. Not only is this sound archival processing, but it will make processing easier. If there is no original order, or the existing original order is not conducive to research, processors will need to impose a new arrangement.
Series and Subseries

Taking into consideration the groups of materials identified in the steps above, processors will finalize series and subseries, if applicable. Rearrangement is common sense. For example, if processors identify a hundred folders that contain correspondence, it makes sense to create a series called "Correspondence." It is not always this easy; processors should identify common genres and themes throughout the collection as potential ways to organize the collection’s information into series and/or subseries.

TIP: The new, temporary box labels identifying groups of related materials from Step 2.1 will be useful at this point.

TIP: It is not uncommon to identify several containers in a collection housing groups of obviously related files that are not physically located together. For example, in one container, processors may identify the beginning of an alphabetically arranged filing system. Several containers later, processors may identify the end of the alphabetically arranged filing system. Intellectually, the materials housed in those containers, though physically separated, belong together.

TIP: Common ways to establish series in archival collections include: Genre groups (types of materials), Topics, Time Frames, Biographical material, Correspondence, Financial records, Government records, Legal documents, Organizational records, School records, etc.

In general, there should not be an "Oversized" series. Oversized materials should be cataloged according to their intellectual position within the collection, regardless of size or format. However, these records can (and often should) be physically housed differently than standard paper records. The same can generally be said for digital records. However, photographs and similar formats are frequently stored together due to their preservation concerns and high user demand, so, depending on the collection, a "Photographs" series may be warranted.

Arranging Files within Series and/or Subseries

If the collection is being processed to the folder level, processors will provide an intellectual arrangement for files, volumes, and/or items within series and subseries. Typically, files are arranged alphabetically by title or chronologically by date of creation, but sometimes arrangement can be more complicated. No matter what the arrangement, the intellectual arrangement should evidence the informational relationships identified between the records.

TIP: Folder/volume arrangement will differ between series and subseries and across collections. When assigning an arrangement, processors should take into account the principles of provenance and original order, as well as the types of materials and information identified in the series or subseries.

For example: A loose volume may be intellectually related to a group of files housed in a container. The volume and the files should always remain together, intellectually, despite being housed separately.
Before assigning a final arrangement, it is a good idea to briefly review the contents of the files, provide new housing, as necessary, and create DACS compliant folder/volume titles. Note, too, that a series of completely and consistently labeled files will be easier to physically arrange.

*Note: For guidelines for housing and preservation, see page 22 of this manual.*

*Note: How to properly title and label folders will be discussed further in Section 2.3.*

**Identify a Physical Arrangement**

Physical arrangement refers to the physical order of the materials in the collection - how and where they are housed and stored. It is different from the intellectual arrangement, though physical arrangement and intellectual arrangement often mimic one another. Unlike intellectual arrangement, which is determined by the intellectual or informational relationships between records, physical arrangement is determined by the size, shape, type, and housing needs of the various records, regardless of the information provided therein.

As mentioned above, for most collections, the physical and intellectual arrangements will mimic each other. Sometimes, however, they will not. This is especially common in collections with special formats, like photographs and audio/visual materials, or oversize materials. In these cases, the special formats or oversized items will usually be housed together, apart from files, so that shelf space and supplies are not wasted, and in cases where special climate control is required.

*Note: Materials removed from the main body of the collection due to size, shape, type, or housing needs will be described in the proper intellectual order, as though not removed. This will be discussed further in Section 2.3.*

*Note: How to properly assign container numbers will be discussed in Section 2.3.*

**Arrange Containers**

First, processors should rearrange containers and/or file groups in order to bring together series or subseries that were intellectually identified in the previous step, but were not found physically together.

*TIP: This will not destroy original order! In fact, it is likely that this step will restore original order that was previously compromised in the process of boxing, storing, and transporting the records to the archival repository.*

*TIP: During the course of physically arranging a collection, it is common for all necessary rehousing and/or preservation work to be completed. Refer to page 22 for more information on housing and preservation.*

*TIP: At this point, processors should not worry about separating materials in need of specialty housing due to size, shape, type, or housing needs. It will be easier to maintain the intellectual order of the collection by keeping related materials together at this point. It will also be easier to provide special housing at the end of processing when processors have a better idea of what types of housing are needed.*
Arrange Folders, Volumes, and Other Materials

Next, if the collection is being processed to the folder level, a physical arrangement should be established for files, volumes (books), and other materials, within series and subseries. Whenever possible, all records, no matter the type, should be foldered and housed in containers in order of the intellectual arrangement.

While folders will be assigned a physical arrangement, processors will generally NOT arrange papers within folders. Files should never be spilt or combined, unless done so to conserve supplies or time, or to aid in description.

For more information, processors can consult the volume *Arranging and Describing Archives* (2005), by Kathleen Roe, for guidance in how to arrange files within series and/or subseries.

Arrange the Series and/or Subseries

Once series and subseries have been established, and folders, volumes, and other items within the series and subseries are arranged, processors should identify a logical arrangement for the series. There are many ways to organize series groups within a collection. For example, series can be arranged by organizational hierarchy, alphabetically by series title, chronologically, in order of informational importance, etc. Prior to finalizing the series arrangement, processors should consult with their supervisor.

Processors can consult the volume *Arranging and Describing Archives* (2005), by Kathleen Roe, for further guidance in how to assign comprehensive collection level arrangement to various types of archival collections.

*TIP: When deciding on an arrangement for series or subseries, and for records within series and subseries, processors should be able to provide a comprehensive explanation of how the records are intellectually arranged and why. If it is not possible to describe the arrangement, it is likely that processors will have to impose order in a different way, to enable greater ease in research. How to properly describe the arrangement of a group of records will be discussed further in Section 2.3.*

If a collection houses many types of records, requiring a variety of housing, establishing a system for arranging materials to save shelf space is recommended. One way is to arrange collections in the following order: all record cartons, letter, and/or legal document cases should be shelved first, with files housed within document cases in proper intellectual order; all oversized and/or custom-made containers should be shelved next, placed in order of size and arranged to maximize shelf space (large flat files may be stored separately in the flat files/map cases); all volumes (books) should be shelved together, at the end of the collection. Volumes should rest on their tail or back, depending on size and condition.

2.3. Describe the Collection and Create the Finding Aid

Archival collections are described at the collection, series, subseries, folder (folder titles only), and/or item levels, with increasingly detailed information provided at each subordinate level. Different collections and/or different processing scenarios, however, warrant different levels of description. In minimal processing, collection level description, consisting of an abstract, biographical/historical note,
and a scope and contents note that includes a list of series and/or subseries is usually sufficient. Descriptions for each series and/or subseries and a container inventory or list of folder titles should normally be added for a more fully described collection. In either case, though researchers encounter collection description in the above listed order, processors compose the collection description in the reverse order, creating folder titles first, then the scope and contents note, then the biographical/historical note and, finally, the abstract.


Processors should avoid spending significant time with any aspect of the collection, so it is important to pay attention to details that are readily available or have been noted in the existing descriptive documents, reviewed in Section 2.1.

**Titling and Labeling Folders**

Creating good folder titles is important in minimal processing – this is often how researchers decide if a collection contains information that makes research worth their time and, sometimes, travel.

Folder titles should be descriptive, but concise and to the point. Retaining existing folder titles is recommended unless they are found to be inaccurate. Existing folder titles can be enhanced with additional information and/or dates. Processors are advised, however, to enhance titles only in ways that clarify the informational contents of the file.

*TIP: Adding subjective descriptive words like "large" or "small" provide no additional subject-based information and are usually not helpful to reference archivists or researchers.*

Processors are also warned to pay attention to phrasing when constructing folder titles, and to be as accurate as possible. Take a look at the example provided below:

**Example: Meeting regarding potato farming in Hastings, Florida, 1995**

Is this a meeting about potatoes farmed in Hastings, Florida, or is it a meeting about potato farming, generally, which was held in Hastings, Florida? A researcher may be interested in only one of these topics and an unclear title such as this one may be misleading, resulting in a researcher wasting time or missing useful information altogether.

It is important that folder labels are informative and that they look good. Folder labels should be legible and consistent throughout the ENTIRE collection, so that reference archivists and researchers browsing a collection will always know where to find vital information such as the collection name, folder title, date, and box and folder numbers. Properly labeled folders will also ensure that materials are returned to their rightful location within a collection.

EVERY folder in the collection should have at least the following information on it (see *Figure I* for an example of how to layout information on folders):
• Collection name and/or number, or at least a consistently applied abbreviation of the collection name (Generally a combination is used, e.g., Haskins MSS 0327; consult with your supervisor to obtain the correct collection number.)
• Folder title
• Dates
• Box number and folder number (if numbering folders)

Reminder: Abbreviations are not acceptable! Processors must write out the words BOX and FOLDER.

Capitalize ONLY the first word and proper nouns in folder titles.

Existing adhesive folder labels, common in 20th century collections, should be removed, if possible, and the information transcribed directly onto the folder label tabs. For extremely large collections, new folder labels may be used. Consult with a supervisor regarding this option. If supply availability allows, refoldering collections is recommended.

Multiple processing projects have determined that refoldering collections is no more time consuming than relabeling existing folders. Information provided on labels may be minimal, and refoldered collections are better labeled and easier to use post-processing. Processors are also less likely to forget to include pertinent information on folder labels and there are fewer mistakes in data entry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ShortName</th>
<th>MSS ####</th>
<th>Folder title: Be descriptive, yet concise</th>
<th>dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subseries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cetera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1: Example folder**

**Dates**

Dates are recorded for every level of the collection: collection, series, subseries, and folders. In most cases, assigning dates is straightforward - processors identify the earliest and latest dates of creation for all records within the particular level in question. For example, if a folder houses correspondence written from 1900 to 1905, the folder date will be 1900-1905. Assigning dates to materials can get complicated, however, especially when dealing with copies of original materials. If a folder houses only photocopies of correspondence written from 1900 to 1905, for example, the folder date will be the date the photocopies were made. The date of the original correspondence will be included as part of the title. In this example, the folder title and date may look something like this:

Correspondence, 1900-1905 (photocopies), 2012.

**DATA ENTRY TIP:** In this case, the date, 2012, will be entered into the "Date expression" field. 1900-1905 will be entered into the title field, together with "Correspondence."

**DACS rules for dates**
Follow DACS (*Describing Archives: A Content Standard, 2013*) description rules for formatting dates. In DACS, the year of the document’s creation is preeminent - dates are always formatted with the year first, except in the case of estimated dates. Years and months are NEVER abbreviated. Examples of how to format dates in various circumstances are provided below:

**Inclusive date range:**

Inclusive dates are used when the contents of a collection, series, subseries, or folder were created across a span of years. The inclusive date range includes the earliest identified date and the latest identified date within a collection, series, subseries, or folder. For example, a folder that contains several letters written during the years 1849 to 1851 will have an inclusive date range that looks like this:

1849-1851 (note there are NO spaces around the dash)
NOT 1849-51

*DATA ENTRY TIP: Inclusive dates are entered in the two four-digit numeric fields under "Inclusive dates." The dash, separating the beginning and end dates of the span, as shown above, does not get entered into the database.*

**Accruals:**

Collections that continue to grow from periodic accruals technically have an open-ended end date, but it should NOT be recorded that way in the finding aid. Processors should treat accruing collections as though the date of the most recent accrual was the end date for the collection.

For example, if the records of Company X are transferred to the archives every five years, the dates of the collection will be updated every five years, after accessioning the most recent accrual. If the archives received the most recent accrual in 2012, and the earliest known date in the collection is 1965, and the latest known date in the collection is 2012, the date would be recorded as such:

1965-2012
NOT "1965-" OR "1965-(Ongoing)"

**Bulk Dates:**

Bulks dates are used to denote a smaller span of time, within a larger inclusive date range. This is important to note when the majority of records in a collection, series, subseries, or folder fall within a smaller span of time, making the inclusive date range misleading. For example, if a collection’s inclusive dates range from 1895 to 1958, but there is only one document from 1895, researchers will want to know that there are not many 19th century records in the collection. The collection dates will look like this:

1895-1958, bulk 1925-1958

*DATA ENTRY TIP: Bulk dates should be recorded in the two four digit numeric fields under "Bulk dates," and used in conjunction with the inclusive date range fields.*
Single Dates/Exact Single Dates:

Single dates are recorded when a record or group of records was produced during a single year and/or on a single day. Single dates should be recorded as follows, note that no punctuation is added to dates and that months are written out and NEVER abbreviated:

1958
1958 March
1958 March 17
1958 March-August (Note that there is no space around the dash)
1958 March 15-August 31 (Note that there is no space around the dash)
NOT March 17, 1958
NOT 1958, March 17
NOT Mar. 17, 1958

DATA ENTRY TIP: Single dates or exact single dates should be entered into the "Date expression" field, keyed exactly as displayed, including the dash, as in the example of the range of months.

Significant Gap in Records:

Like bulk dates, making note of a significant gap in coverage is important. Taking the example from above, and assuming that there is only one document from 1895 and the rest of records fall within 1925-1958, another way to record the dates for that collection is:

1895, 1925-1958

DATA ENTRY TIP: This date information should be entered into the "Date expression" field, keyed exactly as displayed, including the dash that separated the date span 1925-1958. Note that there are no spaces surrounding the dash.

Estimated Dates:

Estimated dates are used when records are not dated, but processors are able to determine an approximate date of creation based on other information in the collection or general knowledge of the subject and/or time period. Estimated dates can be date ranges or single dates, and can be recorded in any of the following ways:

approximately 1952-1978 after 1967 January 5
circa 1970-1979 1967 or 1968
probably 1967 1960s
approximately 1967 circa 1975 August
before 1967
DATA ENTRY TIP: This date information should be entered into the "Date expression" field, keyed exactly as displayed.

Circa and other words used to denote an approximate date should be written out in full. NEVER as c. or ca., for example.

No Dates:

Frequently, records are not dated and there is not enough time or information for processors to assign an estimated date. In such cases, folders, subseries, series, and/or collections should be identified as having no date. This information should only be recorded as follows:

undated (note that undated is not capitalized)
NOT n.d.

While it is not uncommon for records to be undated, there are several types of records that are RARELY undated, including most financial records, official documents, and published materials.

DATA ENTRY TIP: "undated" should be entered into the "Date expression" field.

DATA ENTRY TIP: If the date is serving as a title of a series, subseries, or folder, the dates should still be entered into the appropriate date fields; the title field should be left empty.

When materials are not dated, "undated" should always be recorded. This way reference archivists and researchers can be sure that a date does not exist, rather than that a date was not assigned.

Other date forms:

In the case of other date forms (Quaker dates, Hebrew dates, etc.), processors should record the date as found in the folder title, and record the Gregorian equivalent in the date field. A note regarding the dates should also be included in the scope and contents note.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Processors are advised to avoid abbreviations. Few are absolutely standardized and it is easy to use several different abbreviations for the same word interchangeably, making research in an online environment difficult.

Acronyms, on the other hand, are often important to include. However, acronyms must be fully introduced prior to use. Researchers using an online finding aid are less likely to read a finding aid from start to finish. If an acronym is not introduced in each section of the finding aid, researchers are likely to miss the introduction of the acronym if it is not in the part of the collection in which they are interested. This can be problematic, as many acronyms are used by different organizations, depending on the subject and geographic region, resulting in researchers being misled. For example, the acronym FTA is used by at least two very different organizations. At the national level, it stands for the Federal Transit Administration, while in Florida it may refer to the Florida Trail Association.
Acronyms should be fully introduced in each descriptive element of the finding aid. For example, if the collection is about the organization, Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC), it should be introduced as such in the abstract, biographical/historical note, scope and contents note, and in series inventories or folder lists.

Archival acronyms are not to be used; few researchers are versed in archival terminology.

The Word Miscellaneous

The word miscellaneous is a dirty word in archival description! Processors are advised to avoid the use of miscellaneous and other similar words, like assorted, various, etc., but sometimes it is the only way to describe a folder or series full of random, unrelated papers.

TIP: Anytime you use the term "miscellaneous," include a description of at least the type(s) of material included in the folder or series and/or dates. For example, titling a folder "Miscellaneous financial records, 1900-1905" is much more helpful than titling the same folder "Miscellaneous records."

Finding Aid Notes

Scope and contents note, biographical/historical note, and abstract:

Finding aids typically contain the following descriptive notes: abstract, biographical/historical note, collection level scope and contents note, and, when necessary, scope and contents notes for each series and/or subseries. Notes contextualize the collection, detailing its importance and uniqueness. Notes are also used by researchers to determine a collection’s usefulness to their research.

TIP: Review existing descriptive documents before you begin. Existing descriptive information may be repurposed or used as a starting point for more in depth research and writing. Sometimes little revision or addition is necessary.

If you use other publications to create notes, be sure to cite the source using the Chicago Manual of Style.

Scope and contents note:

The scope and contents note is a narrative description about the contents of the collection. It is a place to discuss collection highlights, obvious gaps in records, or unique perspectives on topics presented in the collection. Collection information should be provided in complete sentences and should be organized in the same order as the collection’s intellectual arrangement.

It is impossible to describe everything, so do not try. Focus on the most important information.
In every scope note, at least the following information should be included:

- An introductory sentence that clearly states the primary creator(s) of the collection and the collection type, i.e. personal papers, business records, etc.
- A brief summary of the primary subjects documented in the collection
- Types of materials found in the collection (genres or documentary forms) such as minutes, diaries, reports, water colors, documentaries
- Functions or activities resulting in the creation of the records
- Date spans of the collection
  Decades are written without an apostrophe: 1920s; in the narrative flow of notes, use normal date order, such as July 22, 2009; when describing a span of dates within the narrative flow of notes, "from 1800 to 1900" is the preferred format, NEVER: 1945-1947 or 1945-47.
- How the collection may be useful to researchers and why (this is really the highlights section)
- How the collection is arranged
- A list of all Series and Subseries, if applicable, with date spans
- If applicable, brief descriptions of the contents of each series

The scope and contents note is formulaic, and can be organized into four basic parts:

1. Describe the contents of the collection broadly. Include the types of materials present, the main subjects covered in the collection, as well as date ranges. If one or two topic(s)/subject(s)/person(s) represent the bulk of the collection, that should be noted too.
2. Immediately following the broad description of the collection, within the context of a sentence, list the number of series, titles, and date spans.
   - Series should be listed in order of the collection’s intellectual arrangement.
   - Always place quotes around the name of the series within the context of the scope and contents note.
3. Looking at series individually, describe each briefly, mentioning date ranges, highlights, gaps in the records, arrangement, and any unique perspectives offered.
   - Series should be described in an order that reflects the collection’s intellectual arrangement.
4. Lastly, describe how the collection fits within the more general context of history and how this collection will be useful to researchers. Collection processors inevitably become the authority of the contents of the collection and are best able to speak to the usefulness of the collection.

TIP: If processors have never written a scope and contents note before, take advantage of the Scope and Contents Note Worksheet to get started.

For more detailed information on writing scope and contents notes, refer to Arranging and Describing Archives (2005), by Kathleen Roe, and Describing Archives: A Content Standard (2013).

Biographical/Historical note:

The biographical/historical note provides important historical context. It is about the subject of the collection, USUALLY the creator, who may be a person, institution, or business. Sometimes, the creator of a collection is a collector, and then the biographical/historical note focuses on the subject of the collection with some information provided about the creator. The biographical/historical note should cover the general scope of the person, institution, or business, but it should focus on the aspect of the
person, institution, or business that is reflected in the collection and provide context for the era and geographic location in which the creator lived or operated.

Every biographical or historical note should include some or all of the following information:

- **Name:** This may include titles, married names, aliases, pseudonyms, common or popular names, and acronyms (if an institution or business), and changes of name
- **Geographic Location(s):** Birthplace, place of business, etc.
- **Birth/Death Dates (as exact as possible) OR Business operation dates**
  
  *TIP: Birth and death dates are almost always different from the collection dates, as the collection may document only a fraction of a person’s life or a business’s operation.*
- **Education:** Where and when was the person educated, what degrees were earned, etc.
- **Type of business conducted by the person, institution, or company**
- **What the person, institution, or company is known for, or why the person, institution, or company is important? How do they fit into the general context of history?**
- **Relationships (parentage, marriage, business partners, etc.)** found in the collection

For more information on writing biographical/historical notes, refer to *Arranging and Describing Archives (2005)*, by Kathleen Roe, and *Describing Archives: A Content Standard (2013)*.

**Abstract:**

The abstract is a brief and tidy statement that sums up the collection. It includes the most basic and essential information from the biographical/historical note and the scope and contents note. It serves as the primary gateway to the collection, and is usually included in the collection’s MARC record.

*TIP: Though the abstract is the first descriptive element encountered by a researcher, the abstract should be written last. The easiest way to compose the abstract is to combine the first paragraph of the biographical/historical note and the first paragraph of the collection level scope and contents note, and then edit down to the most important aspects.*

The abstract should describe the collection in a few sentences, which should include the following information:

- **Who or what the collection is about**
- **Date span of the collection**
- **What types of records are housed in the collection**
- **Be sure to reference important subjects, names, and/or keywords**

For more information on writing abstracts, refer to refer to *Arranging and Describing Archives (2005)*, by Kathleen Roe, and *Describing Archives: A Content Standard (2013)*.

**Box and Folder Numbers**

Every box (or container), folder, volume, and/or loose item in the collection should receive a number. Folders, volumes, or items housed within a box or container should be labeled with BOTH a box number and folder/volume/item number. In consultation with your supervisor, you may decide to forego numbering each folder in larger collections.
**TIP:** To avoid numbering the collection multiple times, do not assign box and/or folder numbers until the collection is fully processed, as the order of series and/or folders will likely change over the course of processing.

**TIP:** Prior to assigning numbers to any part of the collection, processors should ensure that all boxes in the collection are adequately stuffed. Boxes should be full, so that folders support each other and do not slouch, but should not be so full that it is difficult to remove or refile folders.

**TIP:** Throughout processing, processors can prep folders with "box" and "folder," written in the proper location on the folder tab. This will make the process of recording box and folder numbers at the end of processing significantly less time consuming.

**Box numbers:**

Boxes should be numbered consecutively from 1 to however many boxes there are in the collection, including any and all oversize or custom built boxes. Box numbers should be assigned in the order in which boxes sit on the shelf. Assign numbers to oversize or custom built containers AFTER they are placed on the shelf in an order that makes sense in regard to their size and shape – making sure that boxes are arranged to minimize use of shelf space. Box numbers should be prominently and consistently marked on box labels.

Oversize boxes should be assigned a regular number, starting with whatever number follows the last numbered document case in a collection. For example, if the last document case is number 10, the first oversize or custom box will be number 11. Oversize boxes are NEVER assigned a separate numbering scheme or called "Oversized" as part of their box number.

**Folder numbers:**

Folders should be numbered within boxes, with both the box and folder numbers clearly and consistently recorded on the folder tab throughout the entire collection.

New box and folder numbers assigned during processing should be easily identifiable; existing numbering schemes should be erased or clearly noted as having been superseded.

When recording the box and folder number on folder tabs, processors should write out BOX and FOLDER on each folder tab. The words box and folder should NOT be abbreviated in any way.

No matter the size, shape, or contents of a box, folders should be consecutively numbered from 1 to however many folders there are in a box, with each box starting with a new folder 1.

**Volume numbers:**

All loose or individually boxed volume(s) (only those that are not otherwise housed) should be shelved together, after the last box in the collection. Volume(s) should be shelved on their tails, backs, or spines, depending on size and condition. Volumes resting on their tails or spines should be arranged in intellectual order on shelves. Volumes resting on their backs should be shelved in size order, with the largest volume on the bottom. Only after volumes are placed in order on the shelf, can they be assigned
numbers. Volumes should be numbered from 1 to however many volumes there are in the collection. Numbers should be recorded prominently and consistently on each volume(s)’s bookmark label.

Item numbers:

Occasionally collections house loose items (only those not housed in a box), which should be shelved and numbered in the same manner as volumes. Items should be numbered from 1 to however many items there are in the collection. An artifact tag can be used to record the number on the item.

Completing the Finding Aid and Other Data Entry Tips

Depending on the level to which a collection is processed, processors will bring together the abstract, biographical/historical note, scope and contents note, and/or a collection inventory, or box and folder list, among other descriptive elements, to create a finding aid. It is not necessary to use Archivists’ Toolkit or encoding language to create finding aids. Depending on the collection size or the processor’s computer skills, processors will likely create a document using MS Word (for notes) and Excel (for folder lists), which can be later transformed into the necessary format by the Processing Archivist.

Additional finding aid notes:

In addition to the abstract, biographical/historical note, scope and contents note, and collection inventory, finding aids may also include the following (often these notes are standard texts added by the Processing Archivist, but please make note of any of these on the processing worksheets):

- Language of the materials note: This note tells researchers and reference archivists what language(s) are present in the collection.
- Conditions governing access note: This note lets researchers know whether they can have access to a collection.
- Conditions governing use note: Many collections are made available for research, even though copyright restrictions dictate how the materials or information contained therein may be used.
- Immediate source of acquisition note: This note contains information on from where and how the repository received the collection.
- Separated materials note: Depending on available shelf space, special housing, and/or environmental needs, collections are sometimes stored in multiple locations within a repository. The separated materials note contains information on which materials were separated from the main body of the collection, if any, and why.
- Related archival materials note: Few single archival collections represent the extent of materials available on a given topic. Often, there are companion collections within a particular repository’s holdings and sometimes several different repositories house related collections.
- Preferred citation note: The "Preferred citation" note alerts researchers to the holding repository’s preferred method of citing sources. (This is always a standard text.)
- Processing information note: The "Processing information" note is a free format field, where processors may include a variety of information regarding the processing of a collection. This can be used to: (1) to give credit to and thank a funder, or (2) to describe any unusual circumstances that effected processing in any way.
Name and Subject Authorities (Access terms)

Like in library cataloging, name, subject, and genre (record type) authorities are identified for archival collections. Using only authorized headings (such as from the Library of Congress or the Art and Architecture Thesaurus) is recommended. However, the Processing Archivist can check for these during the processing of the finding aid. Processors should note important names, locations, subjects, and genres on the processing worksheets.

**TIP:** Do not identify more authorities than are necessary to bring attention to the most important people and subjects represented in the collection. Identifying 5-10 names, subjects, and genres combined should be sufficient, and possibly too many for smaller collections.

At the University of Florida, we currently use the following controlled vocabularies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of term</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects and geographical areas</td>
<td>FAST headings</td>
<td><a href="http://fast.oclc.org/searchfast/">fast.oclc.org/searchfast/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons and organizations</td>
<td>Library of Congress Name Authority File</td>
<td><a href="http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names.html">id.loc.gov/authorities/names.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical features and materials</td>
<td>Art &amp; Architecture Thesaurus</td>
<td><a href="http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat">www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genres and forms</td>
<td>Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms</td>
<td><a href="http://id.loc.gov/authorities/genreForms.html">id.loc.gov/authorities/genreForms.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual iconography</td>
<td>Thesaurus for Graphic Materials</td>
<td><a href="http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/graphicMaterials.html">id.loc.gov/vocabulary/graphicMaterials.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4. Finalize Processing, Tie-up Loose Ends

There are always loose ends at the end of a processing project, and they are always different. Here are some things to keep in mind:

**Misplaced Records/Files**

Processors should inspect their work area, as well as the collection’s original storage location, making certain that all files, volumes, items, and boxes of records have been accounted for, processed, and returned to their proper location within the collection.

Processors should go back to the collection’s existing documentation, especially the survey and processing plan, to ensure that all records were included in processing. Processors should consult with staff as well as their supervisor if they discover material not accounted for in their arrangement and finding aid.

**Dates**

After processing, it is common for a collection’s inclusive and/or bulk dates to change. Processors, should review their collection inventory, or folder list, and make sure that the inclusive and/or bulk dates recorded at the collection, series, and/or subseries levels reflect the earliest and latest dates identified in the folder list.
Content Connectivity

Processors should review the finding aid, making sure the collection is described accurately, and that information provided in the various components of the finding aid is compatible and consistent. For example, if series dates are provided in the collection level scope and contents note, the dates should match the dates provided at the series level, and match the dates connected to folders within the series.

Box and Folder Numbers

It is easy to make mistakes in assigning box and folder numbers when working quickly! Processors should count the number of folders in each box in the collection, making sure that the folder count matches what was recorded in the finding aid.

TIP: Verifying the accuracy of box and folder numbers can be completed during data entry. After completely entering each box, processors should count the folders in the box and compare the number of folders to the number recorded on the last physical folder as well as in the finding aid.

Collection Extent

Though the collection was measured during the survey, it likely grew or shrank during processing. Once a collection is completely processed and shelved, processors should re-measure the collection in 2 ways:

Calculate the linear footage:

There are many ways to calculate linear feet. Processors should measure linear feet by measuring each container and volume in the direction papers are stacked.

For example, a standard document case will measure 5 inches or .42 linear feet. Our slightly larger document boxes measure 7 inches, or .58 linear feet. A large flat box will usually measure 3 inches or .25 linear feet, though it may measure significantly more in shelf feet. Likewise, volumes should be measured across the text block, including the front and back cover. Processors should take the total number of inches and divide by 12 to calculate the linear feet.

Container/Volume/Item count:

Processors should count and record the number of containers, loose volumes, and items in the collection. Foldered and boxed volume(s) and/or item(s) should NOT be counted separately as part of the volume(s) and/or item(s) count.

2.5. Proofread the Finding Aid

As in all writing, the information provided in a finished finding aid should be clear and concise, and free of error. In addition to correcting spelling and grammatical errors throughout the entire finding aid, processors should review the abstract, biographical/historical note, scope and contents notes, and the collection inventory for clarity and accuracy in description. Processors are advised to look out for inconsistencies in formatting, punctuation, and/or terminology. Finally, processors should identify any aspects of the collection that are not adequately described, return to the collection for review, and provide additional descriptive information as necessary.
TIP: You cannot provide full details for everything. Return to the collection for additional information only when an obvious lack of information or error in description compromises the effectiveness of the finding aid.

2.6. Processing Worksheets

The processing worksheets collect data on processing progress, as well as identify unresolved preservation issues and make recommendations for future digitization and/or exhibition work. Together, the information collected on the worksheets allows us to track progress, collect statistics on processing times and costs, identify successes and failures, and to provide useful collection related information for future collections’ management and planning. Documentation of processing also provides valuable information about a collection for future archivists and processors. Printable versions of these documents are available from the Processing Archivist.

Processing Worksheet

At the end of each day of processing, processors should fill out the "Processing Worksheet," especially the "Daily Log of Processing Activities," located on page 3 of the worksheets. The daily log collects the number of hours devoted to different processing activities, including arrangement and description, editing finding aids, and writing blog posts (if this is part of your activities). Certain fields on page 1 should be filled out at the beginning of processing, while other fields should be filled out at the end of processing. Page 1 also collects post-processing summary data, taken from the Daily Log of Processing Activities. The Processing Worksheet collects narrative, anecdotal information on the successes and failures of minimal processing.

Preservation Worksheet

In minimal-style processing there is little time for preservation work, but that does not mean processors should ignore preservation issues. The "Preservation Worksheet" enables processors to identify concerns that are prevalent in the collection, where to find those materials within the collection, and to reflect on how severe they believe them to be.

Digitization/Exhibition Worksheet

Digitization, for preservation, exhibition, or online access, is a core aspect of current processing priorities. Every collection processed should have some records digitized. The "Digitization/Exhibition Worksheet" allows processors the opportunity to highlight records in the collection they believe to be particularly worthy of digital reproduction and/or exhibition. The information provided on this worksheet will ideally provide repository staff with ideas for future digitization/exhibition work, or for planning larger initiatives.

Checklist

An established checklist ensures that every task is completed and that all collections receive the same level of attention. When processors are confident that all processing work is completed, they should review the "Processor’s Checklist," physically checking off each item as they determine the task to be complete.
Meeting with Supervisor

Ideally, processors will meet and work with their supervisor throughout processing. Even so, a post-processing meeting should be scheduled to discuss processing the collection, the completed finding aid, and data collected on the worksheets.

Section 3. Minimal Processing’s Impact on "Traditional" Processing Activities

The decision to minimally process a collection will impact the level to which "traditional" processing activities are completed, and repositories must decide for each collection what sacrifices are worth the savings in time and other resources. How a collection is housed, the extent to which preservation work is performed, and appraisal and weeding activities, will be limited. Additionally, processors will not have time to scrutinize collections to identify all sensitive material in a collection and assign restrictions.

3.1. Housing and Preservation

Housing and preservation work is contingent on collection needs, the type and amount of supplies available, and time. Housing and preservation work will differ from collection to collection.

Housing and preservation guidelines:

Boxes/containers (record cartons and/or document cases):

- Collections should be transferred to acid free, archival quality containers (not necessarily new).
- Record cartons should all be loaded consistently, so that when shelved, the folders within face the same direction from one record carton to another. (Reference archivists will thank you!)
- Containers should be packed tight, so that folders support each other and do not slouch.

  **TIP:** If a container is packed to the point of distortion, or if it is difficult to remove or insert files, the container is overstuffed. If files can move around or are sagging within the container, then it is understuffed.

Folders:

- Folders will be replaced as supply availability allows.
- Generally, legal size folders are used for all collections to avoid having some oversized folders requiring separate housing or mixing letter and legal folders in the same box.

Oversize material and special formats:

- Oversize material and special formats will be foldered as necessary and housed in appropriate containers. These containers should be shelved immediately following the group of predominant containers in the collection (usually record cartons or document cases, for example).
- Flat or oversize boxes filled with different-sized folders should be loaded from largest to smallest, with the largest folders on the bottom.
- Flat or oversize boxes filled with files of the same size, should be loaded in intellectual order.
- Oversize containers should be arranged on the shelf to minimize use of shelf space.

  **TIP:** Processors should NOT assign box numbers to oversize or special format containers until after they are situated on the shelf in their final order. This is discussed further in Section 2.3.
Volumes:
- Volumes that fit into the predominant container used to house the collection (usually legal-size document cases, for example) should be foldered and housed in the container, spine down, in its proper intellectual location, even if there are other volumes in the collection.
- Volumes that do not fit into the predominant container used in the collection should be shelved together, after all of the containers, including oversize containers.
- Volumes should sit on their tail or back, depending on size and condition. Volumes shelved standing on their tails should be shelved in intellectual order. Volumes shelved on their backs can be stacked in size order, from largest on the bottom to smallest on the top.
- For loose volumes, processors will use bookmarks to record vital information, including the name of the collection, title of the volume, and date(s) of the volume. The bookmark should also prominently display the volume number. Further information on labeling volumes is discussed in Section 2.3.

Preservation worksheet:
- Though little preservation work may be completed, processors should fill out the "Preservation Worksheet," to identify preservation issues not addressed during processing.

Other preservation rules:
- Use only pencil while working on a collection.
- Do NOT unfold papers within folders.
- DO remove paper clips and use a folded sheet of acid-free paper to keep documents together (Do NOT use plati-clips).
- Do NOT remove staples, unless they impede processors’ ability to properly identify documents; are immediately damaging material (rusting staples, causing papers to tear, etc.); or if it is known that an entire collection will be digitized.
- DO remove rubber bands.

3.2. Appraisal and Weeding Collections

Appraisal and weeding are great ways to reduce the size of a collection; however, such activities can be time consuming and may require expert advice. The time needed to significantly reduce the size of a collection using either of these methods should be considered. Consult with your supervisor regarding these tasks.

3.3. Restricting Materials

According to the Society of American Archivists, "archivists may place restriction on access for the protection of privacy or confidentiality of information in the records." However, according to Mark Greene, "imposing restrictions where neither law nor donor wishes demand is a danger." While it is often important to restrict records to protect the privacy of the record(s)”s creator or third parties, it is also important to remember the primary role of the archivist - to provide access to information and to enable accountability.
If a collection houses sensitive or restricted material, include a collection level note in the finding aid alerting researchers to the restrictions. In addition, folders containing restricted items should be noted at the folder level, both on the physical folder and in the finding aid.

Folder titles should include the notation "[RESTRICTED]" at the end. If an entire series will be restricted, it is not necessary to write "restricted" on each folder.

**Social Security Numbers:**

In most 20th century collections, processors will encounter Social Security numbers, which, if attached to living individuals, are problematic. Social Security was not instituted until 1935, however, so they are not an issue in collections pre-1935. Social Security numbers are also never reused. If processors can prove that an individual is deceased, their Social Security number does not need to be a concern. For individuals who are (or may be) still living, Social Security numbers will need to be redacted from records that are being retained or records can be restricted if redaction is too time or labor intensive.

**Other sensitive issues:**

What is considered sensitive will vary between collections and repositories. Consider the following as potentially, but not necessarily, sensitive topics: Native American topics, court records that are not official, board minutes that are not official or are recent, field notes in anthropological or archeological collections, to name a few. Please review the following chart, "Sensitive Materials Processing Guidelines Overview," produced by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which identifies sensitive issues and proposes solutions on how to handle them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Records</td>
<td>Report Cards</td>
<td>Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If donor or donor’s family: no restriction necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcripts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papers with grades</td>
<td>If donor or donor’s family: no restriction necessary. If NOT donor or donor’s family: restrict for 70 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tests with grades</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters of recommendation</td>
<td>No restriction necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miscellaneous student records/materials</td>
<td>Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. Restrictions may be necessary if material identifies 3rd party individuals and includes evaluation of any kind; the records need not be official institutional records governed by FERPA to warrant a privacy restriction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refereed Journal Records</td>
<td>Refereed journal correspondence and writings</td>
<td>If donor’s own work, no restriction. Discard if donor was the referee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refereed Grant Records</td>
<td>Refereed grant proposals</td>
<td>If donor’s own work, no restriction. Discard if donor was the referee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Material</td>
<td>Salary information</td>
<td>If donor, no restriction necessary. If donor’s family, consult donor about restriction. If unrelated 34d paper, leave open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charitable giving/potential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banking, investments, insurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Income tax records</td>
<td>Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If donor, no restriction necessary. If donor’s family, consult donor about restriction. If unrelated 3rd party, leave open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical/Health</td>
<td>Medical bills</td>
<td>Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Materials</td>
<td>Health Insurance correspondence</td>
<td>Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded. If person represented is still alive, consider restriction for conditions relating to mental or reproductive health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical correspondence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physician journals</td>
<td>If end date is more than 70 years old, then no restriction is necessary. If end date is less than 70 years and individual patients and ailments are identified, restrict for 70 years from end date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient files</td>
<td>Restrict for 70 years from end date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Material</td>
<td>Court materials</td>
<td>Public records: no restriction necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legal case files</td>
<td>If donor’s personal case file(s), no restriction necessary. If donor’s family personal case file(s), consult donor for restriction. If lawyer’s case files, restrict for 70 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Materials</td>
<td>Business administrative files</td>
<td>Restrict at donor’s request only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pay stubs</td>
<td>Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded (or redact number from records); otherwise, no restriction necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resumes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee records</td>
<td>Always check for SSN: mandatory restriction if person is still alive and SSN is recorded; otherwise, no restriction necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grievance files</td>
<td>Restrict for 70 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sensitive Content</td>
<td>Sexual activity</td>
<td>If content is explicit AND 3rd parties are identified, restrict until death of person(s) represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual identity</td>
<td>If 3rd parties are identified, restrict until death of person(s) represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drug use</td>
<td>If content is explicit AND 3rd parties are identified, restrict until death of person(s) represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental health concerns</td>
<td>If donor, consider restriction. If donor’s family or 3rd party, consider restriction until death of persons represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reproductive health concerns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marital discord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student records (non-donor) that require restrictions due to FERPA include:

- Biographical information: Date and place of birth, gender, nationality, race and ethnicity, identification photographs, disabilities
- Academic information: Grades, test scores, evaluations, courses taken, academic specialization and activities, official communications regarding status, internship program records
- Coursework information: Papers and exams after they are graded and recorded, class schedules, disability accommodations, written or recorded communications (including email) that are part of the academic process
- Disciplinary records: Actions or proceedings, including investigation, adjudication, or imposition of sanctions by an educational agency or institution with respect to an infraction or violation of the internal rules of conduct
- Financial records: Including financial aid forms, records, and correspondence
- Any other records or logs containing identifiable student information, maintained by the University for any reason