Staff guide to University Archives Transfer Procedures

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1 Introduction

This guide outlines staff procedures for transferring records to the University Archive held by the Special Collections and Archives.

1.1 What is the University Archive?

The **University Archive** contains **records** which document the operations of Lancaster University from its conception in 1961. The collection embraces every aspect of the University's activities, including teaching, research, student administration and welfare, governance, academic quality control, finance and fundraising, risk, legal affairs, and estates and facilities.

Cared for by the Special Collections and Archives (SCA) in the Library, this important collection is the corporate memory of Lancaster and is maintained over time to ensure it provides an accurate and comprehensive picture of our history and development. The collection is available for our own communities to use as well as researchers from outside the University.

1.2 What should be transferred to the University Archive?

The University Archive is made up of **accessions** which have been sourced directly from officers at Lancaster as well as some materials from external sources, such as former students and staff. The scope of the University Archive is guided by the University Archives Collection Development Policy which follows the SCA vision along with the wider collection development policy and policies on collections care and access.

The University Archive contains **records** which are no longer required for active business purposes but have been deemed suitable for permanent retention by the Lancaster University Retention Schedule. These are records which contain vital information about the development or operations of Lancaster University or have another historical importance. These are records which are not labelled as 'destroy' on the retention schedule. These records can be in any format and include official documentation as well as photographs, technical drawings, publications and ephemera.

1.3 What shouldn't be transferred to the University Archives

We do not accept records which still need to be accessed frequently for active business purposes or records which require temporary storage following regulations set by funders or UK legislation. Please look at the records management page or contact records-management@lancaster.ac.uk for advice on how to manage these types of records.

Research Data should be managed following the Research Data Sharing and Archiving Policy and wouldn't normally be considered part of the University Archive. For more information see the Research Data Management pages or contact rdm@lancaster.ac.uk. The Special Collections and Archives will consider physical records created by research projects, but these will be considered a **distinct collection** rather than part of the University Archives.

Archive material which falls outside the scope of the University Archive collection policy may be consider under the wider Special Collections and Archives collections development policy. We can also help staff looking for a home for materials which are outside the scope of our collection development policies.

We do not accept publications not published by the University, unless they are directly linked to materials which are being transferred. Rare books may be considered for Rare Book Collection if they support a current teaching area. Some books may be suitable for transfer to the main Library collections, but these would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Contact library@lancaster.ac.uk for more information.

We do not collect artworks and objects which are not directly related to the history of the University. If you have artworks or other objects of historic interest, contact the Curator of the Peter Scott Gallery, the university's gallery and repository of the

University's art collection, for advice. Please see the Lancaster Arts website for more information.

1.4 How do I access records after they have been transferred?

Once records have been transferred, their ongoing management will be the responsibility of the SCA. You will be able to view materials in the University Archive in the Archive Research Centre by appointment. We will also answer questions on the contents of the collection and provide information from records on request. We may be able to supply **digital surrogates** of records on request if there is no other legal basis for restricting access to the copies.

We are also working towards developing a collection management system through which we can provide access to digital surrogates of records within our collections.

Access restrictions will be applied to any records containing information which is classified as exempt data under the Freedom of Information Act. This would apply to

- **Personal Data**: Under UK legislation, personal data can be retained for archiving purposes if processing is in the public interest and appropriate safeguards are in place which consider the rights and freedoms of the data subjects. It is also compatible to process personal data for scientific or historical research purposes, or statistical purposes. Most records with personal data will be closed for 80 years after the creation of the record, and this can be extended to 100 years if the data falls within Special Category Data or is data related to children.
- **Legal professional privilege:** This exemption protects information shared between a client and their professional legal advisor (solicitor or barrister, including in-house lawyers) for the purposes of obtaining legal advice or for ongoing or proposed legal action. Closure period must be discussed before the records are transferred.
- **Trade secrets and prejudice to commercial interests**: Closure periods will only be applied to this type of data if there is a reasonable need to do so. This must be discussed at the point of transfer and closure dates applied at that time. Normally this data would be considered active or semi-active and should not be transferred to the University Archive until it can be opened.

Staff can access restricted records if this access does not contravene UK legislation or there is a legitimate business need to access the data.

2 Transfer Process

This section outlines the key steps involved in transferring new accessions to the University Archive.

2.1 Identify records for transfer

Following the retention schedule and with guidance from the Records Management team, you should first identify which records should be transferred to the University Archives. More information can be found on the Records Management webpage or contact records-management@lancaster.ac.uk for assistance.

Where possible, you should try to keep these records in the same order that they were originally filed. They shouldn't be edited or manipulated in any way. Digital records can be moved, but they must be moved either using File Explorer or within the folders in which they are stored. Do not move individual files in SharePoint. Staff will be responsible for the disposal of any records considered not suitable for transfer to the University Archive.

2.2 Contact Us

You should always contact us first before transferring materials. If the accession is a regular transfer, you can complete a transfer agreement and send it with your email.

If this is the first time you have transferred records to the University Archive, then it is best to contact us by email archives@lancaster.libanswers.com with the following information:

- Division of the University which created the records
- A brief description of the materials due to be transferred (including cover dates).
- Relevant reference code in the Retention Schedule.
- Content type of the accession, e.g. physical records, digital records, or both.

This information is required to ensure that we can give appropriate advice on our procedures. In some cases, such as records from distinct research projects, we may advise that the accession would be better placed as a distinct collection within our Special Collections.

2.3 Complete Transfer Agreement

We cannot accept accession without a transfer agreement. The transfer agreement is used to record core information about the accession and act as your receipt when the materials have been transferred. The form records key information which is required to catalogue the materials once they have been integrated into the University Archive Collection.

2.4 Transfer the accession

Transferring the accession is dependent on the format of the records and where they are currently stored:

2.4.1 Physical Records

If the accession contains **physical records**, we will ask you to create a brief list of the contents of the accession. This can just be a list of folder titles or a brief description of the contents of each box for larger accessions include the cover dates of the materials. If the folders or materials are not dated, you should add dates to the materials if you are able to.

You should then contact us to arrange a time for the materials to be transferred. If the accession is only a few items, you can send these through the internal post. If the accession is one or more boxes of materials, you should contact us to make sure a member of staff is available to accept the materials.

Once transferred, the accession will be allocated an accession number, and you will be sent a copy of the transfer agreement.

2.4.2 Born-Digital Records on physical media

Records which are held on physical media, (CDs, memory sticks etc), must be transferred in a similar method to physical records. There is no need to create a list as this will be created during the accessioning process.

Once they arrive, an accession number will be allocated and the files transferred to a secure storage area. A copy of the transfer agreement will be returned to you with any other documentation created during the accessioning process.

2.4.3 Born-Digital Records on SharePoint

If the accession is stored on SharePoint, we will ask you to give a member of our Team permission to edit files in the location where the files due to be transferred are stored. The team member will temporarily sync their OneDrive to the folder and will use a file identification application to create a list of the records in their original location before they are transferred. The accession will then be transferred to a secure storage area, and we will check that everything has been transferred correctly.

Once transfer has been completed, the team will unsync their OneDrive from the folder and inform you that the records have been transferred. An accession number will be applied to the materials, and this will be share with you with a copy of the transfer agreement and any other documentation created during the accessioning process. After transfer, you should remove any permissions which have been granted to the staff member.

2.4.4 Born-Digital Records on other storage

If the accession comprises born-digital content on other storage at Lancaster, then a member of staff who can access the storage will need to come to the Archives Research Centre in the Library and login to our Digital Preservation Workstation. With SCA staff assistance, we will ask you to create a report on the records in their original location, transfer them to a temporary location on the Workstation, and check that they have transferred correctly. The accession will then be moved to the secure storage area.

Once the transfer is complete, an accession number will be applied to the materials, and this will be share with you with a copy of the transfer agreement and any other documentation created during the accessioning process.

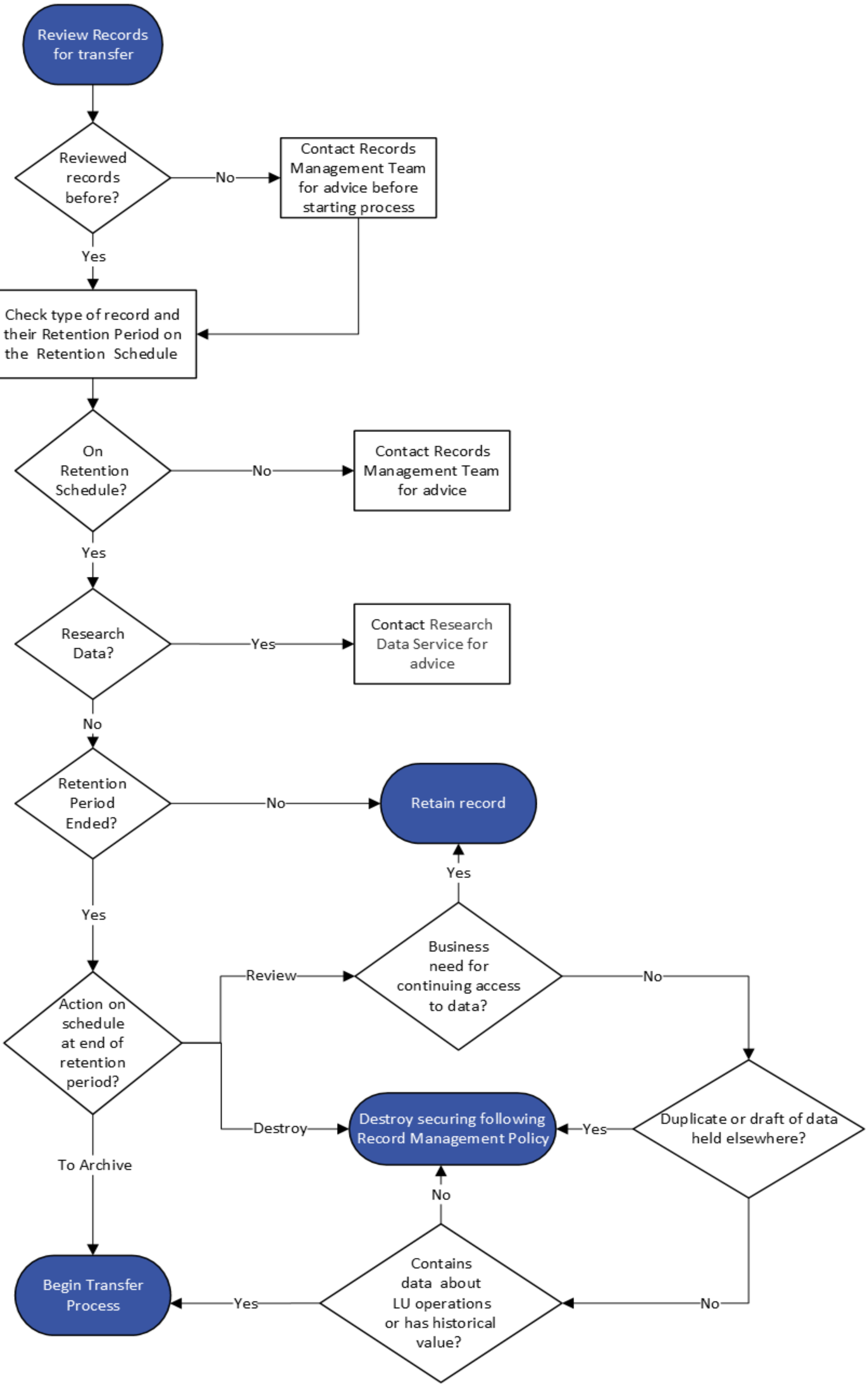
3 What happens after transfer?

After transfer, accessions will be integrated into the University Archive. The **physical** materials will be transferred to preservation grade packaging and stored within our secure storage areas in the Library.

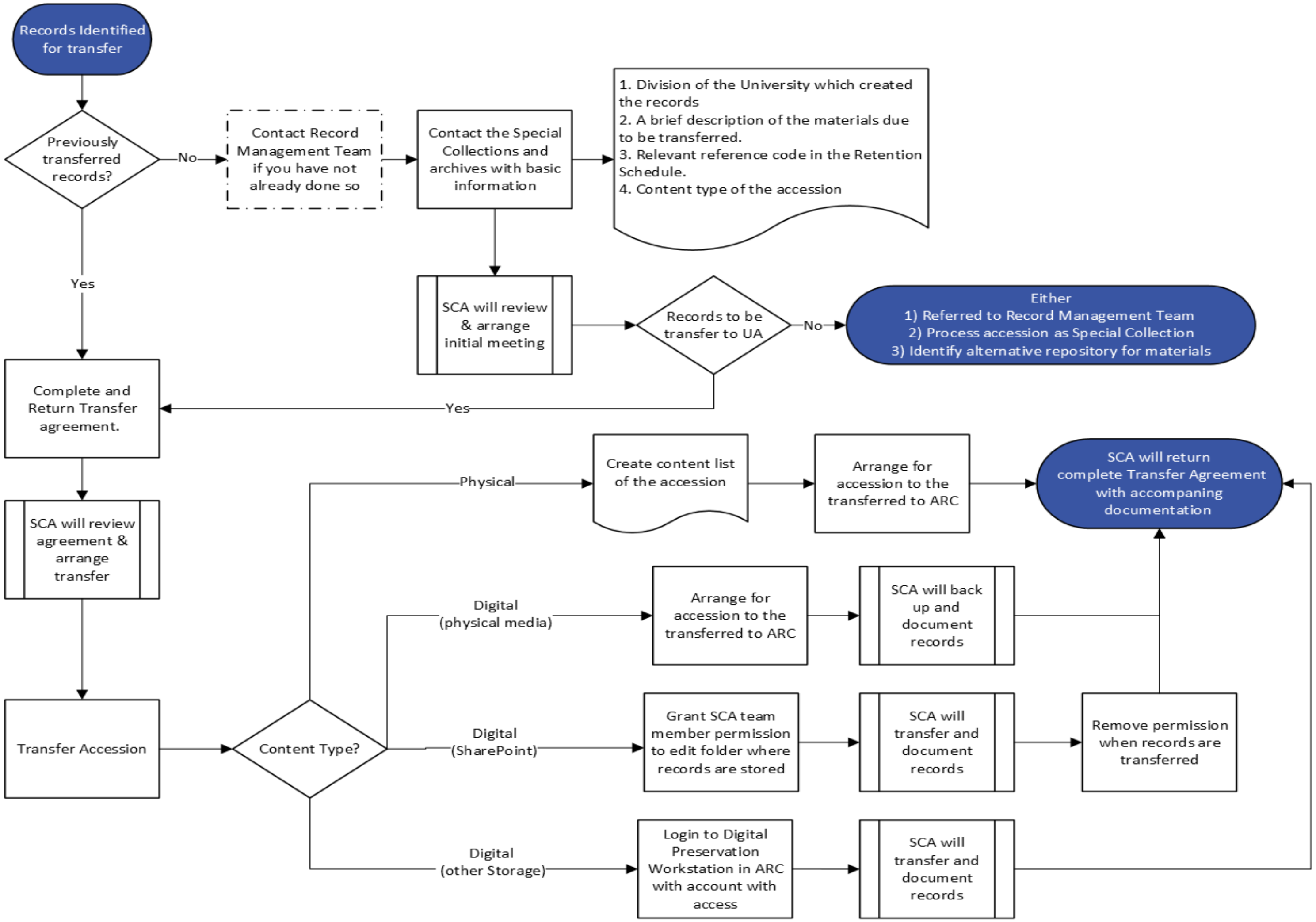
Due to the fragile nature of **born-digital records**, access to the original files will be limited to staff in the Library and the Records Management Team. They will be stored on secure on-premises storage which is managed by ISS. Born-digital records will be added to our Digital Asset register and regularly checked to ensure that they have not degraded over time. As soon as possible after transfer, we will create digital surrogates of these records in a format suitable for long term preservation and access.

Once processed and listed, the physical records and digital surrogates will be made available for appropriate access in the Archives Research Centre by appointment with the University Archivist. Closure periods will be applied following agreement made during the transfer process.

4 Workflow: Identifying Records for Transfer



5 Workflow: Transferring Records to the University Archive



6 Glossary of Terms

Accession: A term we use to refer to a group of materials coming into our holdings at a certain point in time. Each group of materials are allocated a reference known as an accession number. This reference will remain linked to records throughout their life in the University Archive and acts as a tracking number. It is important to keep track of materials coming into our holdings so we can demonstrate and preserve the content, context and structure of every record in the University Archive. This information is vital to ensure that the University and future researchers can demonstrate that the record is what is claims to be by preserving information on its authenticity, reliability, and integrity.

Active Records: Active records are records which are still actively being used for business purposes. Active records should be maintained by the division who created or use them.

Archive Research Centre: The Archive Research Centre (ARC) is a space on the lower ground floor Library where we provide access to the collections managed by the SCA. It can be accessed from the Library or we have an accessible entrance just off the South Spine. SCA staff are usually based in the ARC, but it’s best to contact us first to make sure we are available.

Born-Digital Records: Born-digital records are records that have been natively created in digital format (rather than digitised from paper records). Ideally born-digital records should be transferred to use in the format they were originally created. We need to retain these records in their original format to maintain their integrity and reliability. However, to preserve the original object, we will create a surrogate of the record in a long-term accessible format for future access purposes.

Digital Surrogates: This term is used for electronic copies of records from our collections which are created to prevent damage to the original record or to increase access. We will routinely create digital surrogates of our born-digital records but we only create surrogates of our physical records if there is a research need.

Distinct Collection: This is a term we use to refer to collections held by the Special Collections and Archives which are treated as a collection in its own right and are managed separately from the University Archive. A full list can be found on the SCA webpages.

Physical Records: These are records which are only available in an analogue format. This can be any media including paper, audio tapes, video cassettes etc.

Records: A record can be defined as "information created, received, and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business"[1]. This can be in any media or format. A record typically comprises:

- **Content**: information contained in the record
- **Context**: Who created the record, when it was created, why it was created and how it relates to other information.
- **Structure**: how the record was created, its original format, and how it was presented to users of the record.
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The aim of the SCA is to ensure that this information is maintained permanently in the matter it was transferred to our holdings. Our procedures and processes are designed to ensure that we maintain the following 5 qualities of records:

- **Authenticity**: we can prove that the record is genuine and is what it says it is. AI
- **Reliability:** the record is accurate as the creator intended it to be. It has not been altered after its transfer.
- **Integrity:** the record is complete and provides a coherent picture.
- **Usability:** the record remains accessible in both terms of condition and storage location.

Semi Active Records: Semi-Active records are records which are used infrequently but are retained for business or legislative purposes. Semi Active records should be

[1] (**ISO 15489-1:2016**)

maintained by the division who created or uses them until their retention period has expire or they are no longer needed for business use.