

Collection Management Policy of The Cooper Union Archives and Special Collections

Summary Statement

This document sets forth **The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science & Art** collection management policy for the Archives & Special Collections (hereafter referred to as “Archives”).

The Cooper Union is committed to sustaining an archival collection that supports teaching, research, administration, and service through the management of information resources created by, for, or about The Cooper Union. While the methodologies and guidelines established in the policy apply primarily to the work of the Archives Librarian, Digital Collections and Services Librarian, and Library Director, all academic and administrative departments and offices of The Cooper Union are affected by this policy as regards the archival material available to them and/or provided by them.

Policy Metadata

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Policy Number	6.5
Responsible Officer	Archives Librarian
Impacted Office(s)	The Cooper Union Archives and Special Collections
Date Issued	12/15/2025
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Contact	Mary Mann, Archives Librarian (mary.mann@cooper.edu)
Recent Changes to this Policy	N/A

I. PURPOSE

The Archives curates a publicly accessible collection to serve the students, staff and faculty of the college; academic researchers; the surrounding community; and the broader public. To focus the scope of the Archives and use resources most effectively, this policy outlines a methodology for the selection and appraisal of materials for the Archives and establishes guidelines for the maintenance and use of acquired materials.

II. STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The following principles serve as a guide to this policy's interpretation and application. This section will explain how this policy supports the overarching mission and vision of The Cooper Union.

1. **Institutional Memory:** Institutional memory is the total collected knowledge possessed by a group of people, in this case the students, faculty, and staff of The Cooper Union from the day of its founding through the present moment; an institution's archive is the repository for its institutional memory. This policy recognizes the role of institutional memory in (1) shaping the identity of an institution; (2) allowing newcomers the opportunity to place themselves within its context; and (3) facilitating growth by creating opportunity to look back at who we used to be, and how we got to where we are today.
2. **Intellectual Discovery:** As an institution that has been radically open to and involved with the public since its inception, the memory of The Cooper Union is much larger than its immediate community. The Archives hold the records of public events and involvement, as well as documentation of the accomplishments of alumni, faculty, staff and founders. The Archives are committed to making these materials accessible in perpetuity, which is why researchers are welcome to look at, but not "check out," material. By preserving this history and making it accessible, the Archives create many avenues for intellectual discovery on the part of Cooper Union community members and outside researchers.
3. **Accountability & Transparency:** The Cooper Union is committed to maintaining an honest relationship with its past, present and future students, as well as faculty, staff, and other community members. To this end, the Archives maintain records that document institutional decisions and reactions. Those records that are not restricted in accordance with institutional policy or federal law are then made accessible to researchers. This policy recognizes the vital role that archival record-keeping plays in maintaining institutional transparency and accountability.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all materials collected, created, or acquired by the Archives, including born-digital and digitized content. Digital materials are governed in tandem with the Digital Preservation

Policy which functions as an extension of this Collection Management Policy by outlining specific considerations for the long-term stewardship of digital assets.

The Archives collects, preserves and makes accessible records with long-term administrative, legal, fiscal or historical value relating to the history and culture of The Cooper Union. Records of historical value are those which document or contain evidence of the history, organization, policies, and activities of the College, along with records pertaining to organizations or individuals which contribute uniquely to the understanding of the college's history.

IV. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- Acquisition, transfer and processing
 - o Materials are acquired through record transfers from Cooper Union schools, offices, and departments. Records are also acquired through donations from individuals. All forms of accessioning involve documentation, rehousing, indexing, and describing as detailed in the CUASC Accession and Processing Procedures (see Section VII).
- Community
 - o The Archives are open to the public and prioritize increasing accessibility (excluding those records that are restricted in accordance with institutional policies and/or federal law).
- Continuous improvement
 - o Preservation strategies are reviewed and updated regularly to incorporate best practices and evolving technologies.
- Discovery and access
 - o Archival materials are described in collection guides, publicly accessible through the Cooper Union Archives and Special Collections website. Access is granted to the Cooper community and unaffiliated researchers unless restrictions apply.
- Legal and ethical
 - o The Archives ensure legal ownership or donor agreement before preservation. Materials may be subject to copyright, access restrictions, and data protection obligations. Additionally, to ensure the security of potentially private information, materials will be processed at secure workstations, both digitally and physically.
- Policy and strategy
 - o Management of materials in the Cooper Union Archives aligns with institutional policies for collection management, records retention, and access. Archival practices are governed by this document and evaluated periodically.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

Archives Librarian: The Archives Librarian oversees every aspect of the Archives and Special Collections and ensures compliance with this policy. The Archives Librarian manages the accessioning and processing of physical archival materials and hybrid archival collections; supports

the DC&S Librarian in accessioning and processing digital collections; and supports subject librarians in the accessioning and processing of Special Collections. The Archives Librarian is responsible for the proper handling, disclosure, secure storage, retention, and the proper disposal of private and/or restricted information. The Archives Librarian serves researchers both remotely and on-site and performs activities related to fundraising, education, and outreach.

Digital Collections & Services (DC&S) Librarian: The DC&S Librarian manages the accession of digital files, including the inventorying and duplication of digital objects. The DC&S Librarian also performs fixity checks and manages all aspects of the Archives' digital platforms, including but not limited to file uploads; collection organization; metadata entry; linking across platforms; liaising with vendors; and deploying data remediation strategies.

Library Director: Supports the work of the Archives through regular strategy meetings; identifying funding sources; and supplies oversight and advocacy.

Per the Society of American Archivists' College and University Archives Guidelines, **The Cooper Union administration** is expected to provide support for the following to ensure the ongoing function and success of the archives program:

- Professional staff to implement and manage the program
- Facilities to house staff and collections in a stable and secure environment
- Equipment and supplies that meet the needs of the program
- A technologically current environment

VI. STANDARDS AND MODELS

The Archives abides by the following professional standards and models:

- [SAA Guidelines for College and University Archives](#)
- [FERPA](#)
- [Describing Archives: A Content Standard \(DACS\)](#)

See procedural documents (Section VII) for current practice and updates.

VII. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [Digital Preservation Policy of CUASC](#)
- Library Collection Management Policy
- Records Retention Policy
- Records Retention Schedule

VIII. GLOSSARY

1. **College & School Records:** Records with long-term administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value produced by employees of administrative or academic departments while

conducting official business. These records are transferred to the archives in accordance with the Records Retention Schedule, as opposed to donated materials.

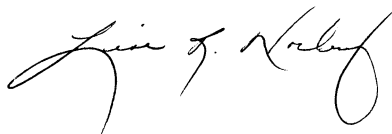
2. **Donated Materials:** Materials received by the Archives from an independent party. Collections of donated materials may sometimes include college record-type materials (example: yearbooks) but are classified by source rather than type. Donated materials are not automatically accepted; materials are assessed for suitability.
3. **Unsolicited Materials:** Materials sent to the Archives without prior authorization by or knowledge of the Archives Librarian, as well as materials that are donated to the Archives without prior archival appraisal and acceptance.
4. **Restricted or Private Information:** Private and Restricted Information is information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity. The college is obligated to keep private and restricted information confidential and secure during collection, processing, maintenance, disclosure, storage, retention and disposal. Private and restricted information may include but is not limited to the following: address, SSN, driver's license, account/financial information, date of birth, phone numbers, email addresses, and personal health information.
5. **Processing:** The multi-stage act of comprehending the contents of a collection, authoring a digital finding aid based on this comprehension, and housing and labeling the collection in accordance with preservation and access best practices.
6. **Disposition:** The disposal of materials not accepted by the Archives. Methods may include returning materials to the donor, forwarding materials to a more appropriate location or repository, shredding, recycling, or discarding in the trash.

IX. CONTACT

Questions can be advanced to archives@cooper.edu

X. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Approved by The Cooper Union Library Director, 12/15/2025



Lisa R. Norberg