

LET'S PLAY: ARCHIVAL OR NOT

and
sometimes
maybe

ARCHIVAL OR NOT?

You found a **departmental budget from 1954**. Is this archival or not?

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1954 was an important year for the University - the Bicentennial! - but department budgets, like most financial records, are **not archival**.

Budget planning records, such as supporting schedules and planning assumptions for the annual budget, must be kept for FY + 2 years

P-Card receipts and Sponsored Research Project documentation must be kept for FY + 11 years

ARCHIVAL OR NOT?

You found copies of an **undergraduate student newsletter from the 1990s**. Is this archival or not?

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Absolutely **archival**! Publications document the life of the University and student publications offer us valuable insights into the student experience. It doesn't matter if the newsletters are old or new, the University Archives collects materials which document student life.

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You found copies of the **University Senate minutes from 1970s**. Is this archival or not?

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You found copies of the **University Senate minutes from 1970s**. Is this archival or not?

Yes and no. The University Senate records are definitely **archival**, and the 1970s means that these are very early minutes (the Senate started in 1968) but . . . the University Senate is responsible for transferring these materials to the University Archives. Your minutes are most likely duplicate copies and copies are **not archival**. Be sure to contact the University Archives to share your find so we can make sure we have these in our collections but *you are only responsible for the records of your own department or unit*.

ARCHIVAL OR NOT?

You found **department chair correspondence from 1930s**. Is this archival or not?

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Absolutely **archival**! Whether from the 1930, 1980s, or the 2010s, correspondence has historical value. Records of the department's activities, changes in curriculum, new policies and procedures, etc. provide the best evidence of the work of an office or department. Help the researchers of the future by preserving the documents of how decisions were made.

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You found **graduate student conference planning papers from 1966**. Is this archival or not?

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We like records of student life, and graduate student life is often under-documented ... 1966 is interesting but ... **not archival**. Planning papers, logistics, notes and the like are not archival records. They help you organize your event, but they have no long-term value. If you find a conference brochure, program, agenda and maybe even papers presented at the conference, we would be interested in those.

ARCHIVAL OR NOT?

Your **department website**: Is this archival or not?

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Your **department website**: Is this archival or not?

Absolutely **archival**! Websites are digital publications and sometimes the only place where certain information is published. The University Archives has crawled and preserved copies of columbia.edu domain web pages since 2010. You can access older copies of your website by visiting our [Web Archives](#).

If your department is redesigning or relaunching your site, be sure to contact the [University Archives](#) so we can capture the “old” site one last time before the new site goes live.

ARCHIVAL OR NOT?

Thanks for playing “Archival or Not”!

If you have any questions about records management and / or the Columbia University Archives, please contact us.

Jocelyn Wilk, University Archivist

uarchives@columbia.edu

Joanna Rios, Records Manager

records@columbia.edu