

Massachusetts College of Art and Design  
Policy for Managing Records and Archives, and Special Collections  
Revised July 2021

### **Purpose**

Massachusetts College of Art and Design needs structure and commitment to effectively manage its records, archives, and special collections. Such management would enable the College to:

- support its operations by providing timely access to information
- comply with state and federal laws and regulations
- ensure that its own history is effectively documented and well understood
- support its curriculum by making rare materials available for teaching and learning
- advance scholarly research
- conserve space through systematic disposal of obsolete records.

The College requires a comprehensive policy that:

- defines the terms *records*, *archives*, and *special collections*
- clarifies that every employee is responsible for the appropriate treatment of any records, archives, or special collections that he or she creates, handles, or oversees
- establishes the roles of the Archivist & Records Manager (henceforth “Archivist”) to inform all staff of their obligations as above and to create and oversee systems that enable the appropriate management of records, archives and special collections
- establishes that the College’s senior staff authorize and participate in this management.

### **Summary**

Massachusetts College of Art and Design carefully monitors the creation, retention, and disposal of its own records, archives, and special collections, curating them and making them publicly accessible as required by law, the needs of the college, and professional standards.

All employees have a role in ensuring that the stipulations of this policy are followed. The Archivist informs employees of their obligations and supports their fulfillment by creating and overseeing systems to appropriately manage records, archives, and special collections.

The terms *records*, *archives*, and *special collections* are defined in the section immediately below. Key responsibilities of particular staff are explained in the section “Responsibilities.”

### **Definitions**

- Records are items in any format, digital or physical, whether produced as multiples or unique items, that the college, through its trustees or one or several of its officers, departments, or employees, has purposely created to convey or retain information in the course of the College’s day-to-day operation and/or in fulfillment of its mission and goals. These can include, but are not limited to, manuscripts, typescripts, digital files, reports, catalogs, photographs, drawings, and audio and moving-picture recordings, emails, and web pages. For the purposes of this policy, records do *not* include:
  - drafts or duplicates of items of which one copy has already been designated and maintained as the official “record copy”

- content produced by faculty (whether full or part-time, tenured or adjunct) in the course of their research, artmaking, or teaching or in preparation for their teaching as governed by the agreement with the MSCA.
- Archives are items that meet the description of “records” above and also meet state or college criteria for *permanent* retention. Criteria are described in records retention schedules approved by the Massachusetts Records Conservation Board and in local records retention schedules approved by the College. Local retention schedules and their interpretation will reflect professional archival standards of legal, informational, academic, and historical value, as determined by the College Archivist in consultation with College staff who create and use such records.
- Special Collections are items in any format, like records described above, which are not produced by the college, but are obtained by the college for *permanent* retention, because
  - they have enduring value to enhance understanding of the College’s history
  - they have enduring value to support teaching and learning in the College’s curricular domains, and their particular format, condition, and/or relative irreplaceability calls for special measures to preserve and make them accessible.

### **Responsibilities**

- The Archivist & Records Manager (elsewhere herein referred to as “Archivist”) oversees the implementation of all aspects of this policy. The Archivist will also serve as the College’s primary liaison to the State’s Records Conservation Board, the State Records Center, and the State Archives. If the College’s position of Archivist should be vacant, the Library Chair will oversee the implementation of the policy or will appoint library staff members to fulfill those duties.
- The Vice President for Administration and Finance, in consultation with the Archivist, allocates and maintains appropriate storage space on or off campus for all items described in the policy whose format is *physical*.
- The Chief Information Officer, in consultation with the Archivist, oversees technical aspects of maintaining all digitally-formatted content described in this policy:
  - ensure preservation by backing up data stored locally and vetting sources where digital content is stored or hosted off-site.
  - provide regular maintenance to refresh obsolete file formats ensuring assets scheduled for long-term or permanent retention will be usable in perpetuity
  - appropriately destroy records in accordance with relevant retention schedules.
- The Library’s Collection Development Committee, in consultation with the Archivist, makes determinations about those special collection materials which are and will be retained to support the curriculum.
- The Archivist and the Library’s Collection Development Committee makes determinations about those special collection materials which are and will be retained to ensure that the College’s history is effectively documented and well understood. When context regarding disciplines or pedagogy is required, faculty in relevant disciplines will be consulted.
- All Administrators in the College (directly or through a Departmental Designee) participate with the Archivist in:
  - identifying records series currently or previously created by departments and sub-departments which they oversee

- drafting descriptions and retention schedules for those record series, as above, which will correspond wherever possible with the statewide records retention schedules published by the department of the Massachusetts Secretary of State
  - ensuring the appropriate labeling, handling, and preservation of records archives, and/or special collections maintained by their departments, monitoring the retention schedules of their records series, and participating with the Archivist to prepare records for temporary or permanent remote storage and/or for scheduled destruction.
- Executive Staff approve the descriptions and retention schedules of records series currently or previously created by the departments they oversee.
- The Director of Facilities, in consultation with the Archivist, oversees the safe transportation of physical records to temporary or permanent storage locations and makes and oversees arrangements for the appropriate destruction of records as scheduled.
- Every Employee is responsible for the appropriate treatment of any records, archives, or special collections that he or she creates, handles, or oversees. When in doubt, an employee must seek clarification from the Archivist & Records Manager.