

# BOOTH FAMILY CENTER *for* SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

## **Access Policy for the Georgetown University Archives**

The Georgetown University Library (“Library”) is committed to making the Georgetown University Archives (“Archives”), held in the Booth Family Center for Special Collections (“Special Collections”), open and accessible to Georgetown University faculty, students, and visiting researchers, subject to the policy guidelines and restrictions noted below.<sup>1</sup> Special Collections facilitates access to collections by promoting their availability via online finding aids, subject guides, digital portals and other descriptive means; by fielding inquiries from and consulting with users; by making collections available for research use on campus in the Special Collections Reading Room and for educational use in the Special Collections classroom and exhibition galleries; and by participating in the Library’s digitization program through its repository, [DigitalGeorgetown](#).

### **I. Intellectual Accessibility**

In accordance with the ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries, the Library makes available original research materials in its possession on equal terms of access. The Library does not deny any researcher access to materials, nor grant privileged or exclusive use of materials to any researcher, nor conceal the existence of any body of materials from any researcher, unless required to do so by law, donor or purchase stipulation, institutional policy and guidelines, or other considerations specified in this access policy.

### **II. Access Guidelines for the University Archives**

The following guidelines govern access to materials held in the Archives:

- A. All published material housed in the Archives is open for research use.
- B. Unpublished material dating from 1971 and later may be consulted only with the permission of the University office which created it.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy governs access to material housed in the Georgetown University Archives. Separate policies govern access to material housed in the Georgetown University Manuscripts Collections, including the Maryland Province Archives which is owned by the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus and is on deposit at Georgetown University Library. The Archives does not undertake Records Management for the University; Records Management matters are governed by Georgetown University Financial Affairs [Policy 100: Record Retention and Destruction](#).

- C. Unpublished and processed material dating from 1970 and earlier is open for research use with the permission of the University Archivist or the University creating office, unless restrictions are noted in the finding aid.<sup>2</sup>
- D. Unpublished and unprocessed material dating from 1970 and earlier is generally open for research use with the permission of the Archivist or the creating office, unless restrictions are noted in the Archives accession record, on the box(es) in which it is housed, or are restricted by University policy or local or federal regulation. In these instances, however, the Archives may need to delay access to these materials for a reasonable period of time in order to review them, inventory them, or conduct conservation on such items. As a result, patrons must request access to unpublished and unprocessed materials from 1970 and earlier at least seven (7) business days in advance of intended use.

### III. Limitations to Access

The Library is committed to the long-term preservation of research materials and to making them available for research as quickly as practicable following their acquisition and processing. Access to these materials may be limited by several factors, including legal or institutional obligations, preservation requirements, or resources needed to arrange and describe the materials.

- A. **Preservation and Security.** The Library may limit the use of collections, or materials within certain collections, for preservation or security reasons. In these situations, and where unlimited by other policy or resources considerations, the Library may provide suitable reproductions to researchers in lieu of original documents.
- B. **Donor Restrictions.** In cases in which donors wish to impose restrictions upon their papers to protect privacy or confidentiality, the Library seeks to ensure that those restrictions are reasonable, that they are limited to a defined period of time, and that the period of time is as short as possible. The Library's policy is to inform researchers of restrictions that apply to collections, to inform researchers of the duration of the restrictions, and to make this information generally available.

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<sup>2</sup> The University Archives came under the management of a professional archivist in 1971. Prior to 1971, the nature of the arrangement of Archives' records does not always enable records to be traced definitively to their creating office. In such instances, the Archivist makes any access determinations.



- C. **Patron Responsibilities.** The Library requires all patrons to use all research materials in accordance with its published institutional use and access policies. The Library applies and enforces these policies equally. To protect its collections, the Library requires valid, government-issued identification or valid university identification from any individual using or wishing to use its materials, as well as a signature verifying the individual has agreed to abide by the Library's policies and regulations. The Library reserves the right to revoke the privilege of access from an individual researcher who has violated its published policies and regulations.
- D. **Confidential Information and Privacy Considerations.**<sup>3</sup> The Library's Archives collections may include material that is sensitive or confidential and which is protected under federal privacy statutes, including, but not limited to, personally identifiable information (such as Social Security numbers, University identification numbers, and addresses); privileged information (such as attorney-client communications or priest-parishioner communications); government classified information; and certain other educational, medical, financial, criminal, human resources, or personnel information or documentation. While Library staff make every effort to identify restricted material within a collection, researchers agree to alert staff if they encounter such material. Researchers also agree not to record, reproduce, or disclose restricted information that may be included in requested materials. Violation of this agreement may result in the loss of research or access privileges in the Georgetown University Library.
- E. **Unprocessed Materials.** Access to unprocessed materials in the Archives is open within the limitations noted in the Access Guidelines above. When a request for access to unpublished and unprocessed material dating from 1970 and earlier for research use is received by Archives staff, the staff will review the requested material before access is permitted. Records that fall into the following categories will be removed prior to access:
- Information governed by FERPA
  - Information governed by HIPAA
  - Donor files
  - Confidential employment or personnel information, such as information relating to an appointment, performance evaluation, disciplinary action, salary, etc.
  - Personally identifiable information such as Social Security number, home address, date and place of birth
  - Board of Directors material, as access to this must be granted by the Secretary of the University

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<sup>3</sup> The Library complies with Georgetown University [Human Resources Policy 403, Confidential Information](#).



Archives staff will consult with the Registrar's Office, the Office of Advancement, Human Resources, the Faculty Affairs unit of the Provost's Office, or University Counsel as needed during their review, if questions arise as to whether access should be allowed to specific types of records or to specific items.

Researchers will always be informed, in general terms, if material has been removed and the reasons for the removal.

- F. **Equality of Access.** The Library applies and enforces consistently and equally to all users any limitations that it may impose on access to its holdings, including unprocessed materials, subject to the legal and institutional obligations as noted above.

*Definitions for the purposes of this policy:*

*Published material is material that has been prepared and issued at the time of its creation for public sale, distribution, or readership. Published material includes but is not limited to public announcements, official University publications, calendars, brochures, and public reports.*

*Unpublished material is material that is not issued in print for public sale or distribution.*

*Processed material is material that has been arranged, described, and housed for storage and use by patrons. Material shall be considered as described if a finding aid or other access tools have been created that allow individuals to browse a surrogate of the collection to facilitate access and that improve security by creating a record of the collection and by minimizing the amount of handling of the original materials. (See definitions of [processing](#) and [description](#) in the Society of American Archivists' Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology.)*

*Unprocessed material is material that has not been arranged, described, and housed for storage, long-term preservation, and use by patrons.*

**Last Updated:** October 31, 2017

