

# WHAT ARE ARCHIVES?

The term archives can be defined in many different ways. However, for the purpose of this particular advice sheet 'archives' is a collection of historical documents or records that provide information about a place, institution, and/or group of people.

In particular for Curtin, archives are the small subset of the records (*we create*) that are selected for permanent preservation from the larger group of University records which are created throughout the business.

## Why do we need to keep archives?

Records are selected as archives for a variety of reasons, but especially if they:

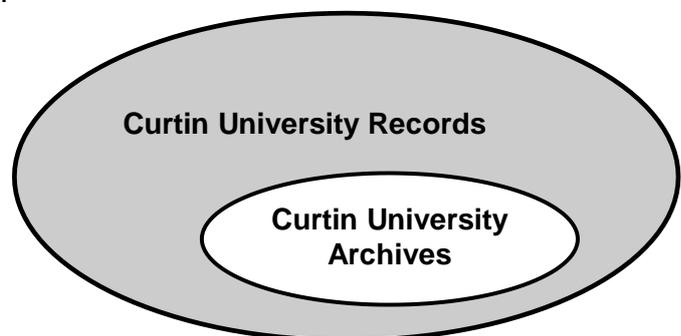
- Hold essential information for the continuation of business activities.
- Represent significant decisions made in the course of University business.
- Contain legal information that proves entitlements.
- Document the culture and achievements of University staff and students.

In general, records are selected as archives because of their continuing value to the University, as well as to society as a whole. Archives provide the means by which the University can provide for continuity and accountability for its actions, support better planning and decision making, facilitate access to the expertise and knowledge of past actions and activities, and provide, over time, a historical perspective of the University and its achievements.

## Types of archival records.

Archival records can be in any format, including (*but not limited to*):

- Audio recordings - cassettes, vinyl records, gramophone discs.
- Typed and handwritten letters and documents.
- Photographs, negatives and transparencies.
- Maps and architectural plans.
- Prints and posters.
- Certificates and awards.
- Motion picture film and video.
- Digital images and video.
- Spreadsheets and databases.
- Electronic word documents and presentations.
- Common seals, plaques, regalia etc.



This list is by no means exhaustive. As the format of information changes over time more types of archives will emerge.



However, it is important to identify archival records early in their life-cycle, while they are still active, so that care can be taken to ensure they are preserved during their active life and safely transferred to the archives once they are no longer needed. Electronic information may need to be migrated to different formats over time to ensure that it is still able to be read or viewed after the software is no longer available.

When determining whether you are creating and keeping archival records it is also advisable to consult the [Disposal Authorities](#) and/or to contact the [University Archivist](#), who can assist with the identification and preservation of your archival records.

## Additional information and useful links.

- [Managing Information at Curtin.](#)
- [Care and Preservation of Paper Records.](#)
- [What are Disposal Authorities?](#)
- [Keeping the Right Information.](#)

## Need further assistance?

Please do not hesitate to contact us via phone on 9266 7050, or by email at: [rim@curtin.edu.au](mailto:rim@curtin.edu.au), should you require additional assistance.

For information management advice of a general nature, you may wish to visit our website at: [rim.curtin.edu.au](http://rim.curtin.edu.au).

This advice sheet is made under and supports the [Information Management Policy](#) and associated [Procedures](#).