

Unprocessed Collections Access Guidelines

Special Collections & University Archives goal is to ensure that all collections in our custody are, at a minimum, searchable and discoverable by users through finding aids in SKCA, catalog records in WorldCat and Primo, and/or digital content in LibSafe. While it is our goal to make this happen, there may be some collections for which there is no description beyond an accession record available at this time.

In following the [ACRL-RBMS/SAA Guidelines on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries](#), access to unprocessed collections is allowed. However, these collections do not have a detailed finding aid available, as well as may not be fully accessible for researchers due to potential privacy and preservation reasons. Additionally, collections may still be inaccessible and require additional processing due to obstacles such as preservation concerns, donor-imposed or legal restrictions, as well as lack of specific hardware/software for born-digital and audiovisual materials.

Guidelines:

SCUA staff can work with researchers to identify materials of interest within an unprocessed collection. Before access is provided to an unprocessed collection, Public Services will forward the request to the Archivist who manages the collection.

Once notified, the Archivist will review the donor agreement for any donor-imposed restrictions or legal/administrative obligations, such as outlined by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other applicable laws and obligations.

Upon receipt of a request, this review will be completed as quickly as staffing allows. In some instances, screening collections for compliance with restrictions requires a closer review of materials and may take longer.

Once the collection or identified materials have been reviewed, the Archivist will notify the researcher and Public Services that the researcher can review those items in the reading room. The researcher must sign a confidentiality form in which they acknowledge that 1) they understand arrangement and even contents might change with processing and 2) they acknowledge their responsibility for protecting personal privacy.

Citation Format for Unprocessed Collections:

Citations will include:

- Document title or a description

- Document Date
- Folder Title (if available)
- Collection Name or Main Record Group
- Location Information
 - Series and subseries (if available)
 - Box number
 - Folder number (folder title is important since folder number may change)
- Unprocessed
- Repository Name and City

“Fighting Police Abuse: Coalition Plans Citizen Hearings and Organizing Workshops.” 1992. **American Civil Liberties Union**, *Citizens Alert records*, Series 2, Subseries 2, Box 22, Folder 377. **Unprocessed**. University of Illinois Chicago Special Collections and University Archives, Chicago, IL

Reminder: Collections that have been accessioned are placed in a processing queue where they are prioritized based on criteria related to user interest, instruction and programming alignment, preservation needs, and operational and resource needs. Additionally, SCUA takes researcher interest into account and welcomes suggestions about which unprocessed collections should be prioritized for processing. Expressions of interest should be sent to lib-spec@uic.libanswers.com by email.

Definition: Unprocessed collections are:

1. Materials that have not been arranged, described, and housed for storage, long-term preservation, and use by patrons. ([Society of American Archivists](#))
2. Of an archival resource, not prepared for use (Dictionary of Archives Terminology)

10/2021