

Access Policy for Brandeis University Archives

Brandeis University is a private institution of higher education, but the staff of the Robert D. Farber University Archives and Special Collections are guided by the principle that archival materials should be publicly available to the fullest extent possible. Restrictions on access should be appropriate, documented, and equitably enforced. This policy has been developed in accordance with best practices in the field and adheres to the Society of American Archivists' Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics.

This policy applies only to the University Archives and not to Special Collections material. The University Archives contains Brandeis University records; faculty, student, and alumni papers; and other materials by and about Brandeis University. Access to Special Collections material is in accordance with the relevant Deed of Gift. Please direct questions about the Access Policy for Brandeis University Archives to the University Archivist.

Restrictions on Access to University Archives

Access to materials in the University Archives may be restricted or limited based on their physical condition or informational content. Fragile and/or damaged records may not be accessible if handling would cause further damage. Some audiovisual and electronic media may not be accessible if appropriate playback equipment is not available. Restrictions based on informational content or office of origin are typically lifted after a certain period of time has passed. Restrictions may be applied to groups of records (e.g., a full box, or a series of folders) when only a portion of the records would trigger a restriction. Records may also be restricted temporarily after they are received and before they have been processed, screened, and prepared for research use. Staff will make every reasonable effort to open records for research.

Yearbooks and University publications intended for public consumption are open for research use. These include campus newspapers, informational brochures, periodicals, and newsletters.

Administrative and operating records of academic units and functional departments are open for research use 40 years after their creation. This category includes the Office of the President, Board of Trustees, Provost, Registrar, Financial Affairs, and Admissions offices, with exceptions for particular types of content noted below.

Some information is restricted for 80 years regardless of the type of record in which it appears. This includes but may not be limited to:

- personally identifiable information (PII)*, including Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, and home addresses
- student academic and discipline information protected by FERPA*
- staff and faculty personnel information*, including: salary, tenure and promotion review, disciplinary and grievance procedures, performance evaluations, etc.
- privileged legal communications and legal advice*
- personal medical information*
- records about financial donors (or prospective donors) to the University

*Please note that the University Archives does not actively collect PII, student academic and discipline information, staff and faculty personnel information, privileged communications, and personal medical information. When the information listed above occurs in University records that otherwise qualify for inclusion in the archives, the records are restricted for 80 years.

Donated faculty, student, and alumni papers are typically open for research, but may be restricted for a period of time by the terms of the Deed of Gift. University records found within collections of faculty, student, and alumni papers are restricted as described above.

Access Procedures

Access to the University Archives is contingent on completion of the Use of Materials Policy and Release, and compliance with its regulations.

Brandeis staff may access the restricted records originating from their own department, if needed for a business purpose. A department's restricted records may also be accessed with the written permission of the department head.