



Special Collections Research Center Restrictions Policy

The Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) at George Mason University Libraries values and promotes open access to all of its archival collections. The SCRC also reserves the right to apply access or use restrictions on collections, parts of collections, or individual items based on a variety of factors. These include, but are not limited to: compliance with federal, state, and university regulations, deed of gift restrictions, as well as archival and preservation best practices.

Restrictions are separated by the two types of archival material SCRC holds - **Manuscripts Collections** and **University Archives Collections**.

Restrictions Definitions & Explanations

- **Manuscripts Collections:** Collections created by entities other than George Mason University.
- **University Archives Collections:** Collections created by George Mason University, in both its current and previous iterations (e.g. George Mason College).
- **Access Restrictions:** Restrictions placed on collections or records based on access. Materials might be restricted due to the content of materials, physical format/fragility of the materials, or deed of gift stipulations.
 - If a record is restricted due to content, it might be accessed with redactions placed by the archivist where appropriate, but this is not guaranteed.
 - If a collection/record is restricted due to physical format/fragility, every effort will be made to create a physical or digital use copy, though this is not guaranteed.
 - Access restrictions might be placed as a result of stipulations from the collection's deed of gift. Every effort will be made to have these stated clearly

in the collection's finding aid.

- **Use Restrictions:** Restrictions placed on collections or records based on use. The term **Use** can refer to copyright of the materials, intellectual property rights, ability to publish the materials, or any activity which requires the use of the materials outside of personal/scholarly research or educational pursuits. SCRC does not hold the copyright or intellectual property rights to the majority of its archival collections - rather, we hold the ownership of the physical and/or digital materials as stipulated by deed of gift or University Archives transfer form. It is therefore incumbent on the researcher to determine the copyright/intellectual property rights status of any materials they wish to use/publish.
 - SCRC archivists will make every effort to note when materials are in the Public Domain, and therefore do not need permission from the creator for use purposes.

Please note - though some researchers might find certain content within our collections objectionable, offensive, or upsetting, these materials are not restricted for the reasons of academic freedom and archival access. Though SCRC archivists make every effort to provide content warnings in finding aids and digital metadata, we cannot guarantee you won't come across this type of content in your research without warning. Please take care.

Manuscripts Collections - Types of Restrictions & Definitions

- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Restriction**
 - PII might include social security numbers, addresses, medical records/information, or other information about an individual that is unethical to share with the public. This information may be redacted at the archivist's discretion, before or after patron use.
- **Financial Information Restriction**
 - May include bank statements, tax information, and other financial information that is unethical to share with the public. This information may be redacted at the archivist's discretion, before or after patron use.
- **Deed of Gift Restriction**
 - A restriction stipulated by the donor/creator in the deed of gift.

- **Physical Condition Restriction**
 - The item is physically fragile and further handling may result in damage.
- **Unprocessed Collection Restriction**
 - The collection is unprocessed and not in a state to be handled by users.
 - Some unprocessed collections may be accessed with permission from the donor/creator, or at the discretion of the Director, SCRC.

University Archives Collections - Types of Restrictions and Definitions

- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII) regarding an employee, student, or agent of George Mason University**
 - PII might include social security numbers, addresses, medical records/information, or other information about an individual that is unethical to share with the public. This information may be redacted at the archivist's discretion, before or after patron use.
- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**
 - Information pertaining to the medical or mental health records of an employee or student associated with George Mason University.
- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**
 - Information pertaining to the educational records of a student of George Mason University, or another U.S. educational institution.
- **Certain employment records, particularly those which deal with EEO-related issues, employee performance records, and HR records that deal with investigations or disciplinary actions regarding a George Mason University employee.**

If you have questions or concerns, please contact us at specoll@gmu.edu.

Thank you for your cooperation!

- The SCRC Team