



**ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION POLICY**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**
- 2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE**
- 3.0 APPLICATION**
- 4.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES**
- 5.0 POLICY GUIDELINES**
- 6.0 ACCOUNTABILITY**
- 7.0 REFERENCES**
- 8.0 APPENDIX (Glossary)**

## **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

Archival fonds shall be described in compliance with *Rules for Archival Description (RAD)*.

## **2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this policy is to provide a framework for implementing *RAD*.

## **3.0 APPLICATION**

This policy applies to Manager, Archival Holdings Management, and all archivists and archival assistants in the Archival Holdings Management Division.

## **4.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES**

- 4.1 Description shall follow and be based on arrangement.
- 4.2 The minimum acceptable description shall be at the fonds level.
- 4.3 There shall be no description below the series level.
- 4.4 Fonds-level descriptive records shall be linked to the NSARM Archival Name Authority via access points.
- 4.5 Name authority records for access points shall be created according to NSARM Archival Name Authority Policy.
- 4.6 Only access points provided for in *RAD* shall be chosen to provide access to descriptive records.
- 4.7 Retrieval information shall be attached to the descriptive record at the lowest level of description.

## **5.0 POLICY GUIDELINES**

- 5.1 File or item lists and indexes may be compiled and attached to the descriptive record at the lowest level of description.

## 6.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1 **Archivists** are responsible for creating descriptive and name authority records according to institutionally recognized standards and for submitting the completed records to the Manager, Archival Holdings Management, for authorization.
- 6.3 The **Manager, Archival Holdings Management**, is responsible for the authorization of all descriptions and name authorities.
- 6.4 Under the supervision of archivists, **archival assistants** create archival descriptive records and prepare and maintain lists and finding aids.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

NSARM Archival Arrangement Policy

NSARM Archival Name Authority Policy

*Rules for Archival Description* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, c. 1990)

## 8.0 APPENDIX (Glossary)

**Access point.** A name, term, etc., by which a descriptive record may be searched and identified.

**Arrangement.** The processes involved in the intellectual organization of records based upon the principle of respect des fonds. Arrangement may be carried out at any or all of the following levels: fonds, series, file, item, or subdivision thereof.

**Description.** The recording in a standardized form of information about the structure, function and content of records.

**Descriptive record.** A representation of a unit being described.

**File.** An organized unit of documents, usually within a series, brought together because they relate to the same subject, activity, or transaction.

**Fonds.** The whole of the documents, regardless of form or medium, automatically and organically created and/or accumulated and used by a particular individual, family or corporate body in the course of that creator's activities or functions.

**Item.** The lowest level of arrangement and the smallest intellectual entity within a fonds useful for descriptive purposes.

**Level of description.** The level of arrangement of the unit being described.

**Series.** File units or records within a fonds arranged systematically or maintained as a unit because they relate to a particular function or subject, result from the same activity, have a particular form, or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation or, arising out of their receipt and use.