



Guidelines on developing an acquisition policy

What is an acquisition policy?

As defined by the Canadian Council of Archives' "Guidelines for developing an acquisition policy" (March 1990), an acquisition policy is the instrument which provides the archival institution with the direction for making appraisal and acquisition decisions and allocating resources. It is the backbone around which the archival institution can acquire comprehensive holdings in a planned, coordinated, and systematic manner. It delineates the parameters of what archival records the institution is permitted to acquire or required to preserve and becomes the foundation for the development of more detailed acquisition plans and strategies, appraisal criteria, and related procedures. The acquisition policy becomes a reference for staff when assessing potential acquisitions and for donors looking for a suitable repository for their records.

On local, regional, provincial, and national levels acquisition policies can be used as the basis for cooperative acquisition strategies and as an important tool in planning for the systematic identification and preservation of our national archival heritage.

How do I develop an acquisition policy?

There are many resources available to assist you with developing an acquisition policy. In addition to the Canadian Council of Archives' "Guidelines for developing an acquisition policy" (March 1990), institutions may also wish to consult *The Manual for Small Archives* or even contact the AAO's [Archives Advisor](#) for assistance.

Where should I post my acquisition policy?

For the benefit of the [Provincial Acquisition Strategy](#), institutions should clearly state their acquisition policy in their institutional profile in [Archeion](#).



647.343.3334



aao@aao-archivists.ca



www.aao-archivists.ca



720 Spadina Avenue,

Suite 202, Toronto,

Ontario M5S 2T9

Institutions should review or create an institutional profile ensuring that the following fields have been completed: Geographical and cultural context, Mandates/Sources of authority, Records management and collecting policies. You may also wish to link to your acquisition policy, if it is posted on your institution's website. Contact the AAO's [Archeion Coordinator](#) for any additional questions you may have.