

PACSCL Consortial Survey Initiative Ratings

Physical Condition Rating:

A collection whose contents are in large part too fragile to handle is not really accessible.

This rating applies to the paper, photographs, and other types of materials found in individual collections. The ratings are intended to describe the overall condition of the materials in a collection; items or groups of materials of particular concern will be indicated in the conservation note.

5. Excellent: little damage with no further deterioration expected, based on the high quality of the material.
4. Very good: little damage with some further deterioration possible, due to the mixed quality of the material.
3. Good: expected deterioration with some further deterioration possible.
2. Fair: somewhat worse than expected deterioration with some further deterioration possible.
1. Poor: significant damage/ deterioration that makes collection difficult to use.

Physical Access Rating:

This rating applies to a collection's physical arrangement. In considering the level of the physical access, the surveyors will take into account the complexity and size of collection. For example, a small, relatively homogenous collection in rough order is generally more physically accessible than a large, heterogeneous collection in rough order, and the ratings will reflect that fact. (Note that arrangement to the item level may not be desirable for many collections; a rating of 4 may be the top rating that is desirable for a collection.)

5. Full arrangement to item level in series and, as appropriate, subseries. Single volumes are orderly and indexed (i.e. chronological accounts with a name index).
4. Arrangement in series to file level. There is generally good order within the files. Single volumes are orderly (i.e. an account book in alphabetical order or a neat scrapbook in thematic order).
3. Rough arrangement by date, document type, function, source, or other characteristic; papers not thoroughly screened, but have been unfolded and flattened; series not fully established; files not fully established; researchers often must work through voluminous extraneous material to locate pertinent items. Single volumes might have had more than one use, or have items pasted in or otherwise be somewhat disorganized.
2. Partial or superficial arrangement and/or non-standard housing and labeling discourage use except with special staff assistance.
1. Totally unarranged; many, sometimes most, documents not yet removed from envelopes, unfolded, and flattened. Completely inaccessible to researcher.

Quality of Housing Rating:

The ratings are intended to describe the overall quality of housing of the materials in a collection; items or groups of materials within a collection may be in better or poor housing than what the overall rating indicates.

5. Collection housed completely in acid-free boxes and folders in good condition. Boxes and folders have reasonable amount of material in them. Boxes and folders are correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in excellent condition.
4. Collection housed partially in acid-free boxes and folders in good condition. Most boxes and folders have reasonable amount of material in them. Most boxes and folders are correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in very good condition (expected wear).
3. Collection housed in non-archival boxes and folders but they are in good condition. Most boxes and folders have reasonable amount of material in them. Most boxes and folders are correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in good condition (somewhat the worse for wear yet intact).
2. Collection housed in non-archival boxes and folders. Significant number of boxes and folders might have unreasonable amount of material in them or are not the correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in fair condition (boards might be detached).
1. Collection housed in non-archival boxes, might have items loose on the shelf. Majority of material is not in folders and/or boxes are overstuffed or understuffed. For bound volumes, binding is in poor condition, lacking boards or otherwise compromising the text block.

Physical Condition and Access questions:

- *Given the research value of a collection, what needs to be done to make the collection physically accessible at the appropriate level?*
- *What needs to be done to make the collection intellectually accessible at the appropriate level?*
- *How does the physical condition of the collection affect access?*
- *When do the degree of damage or deterioration and the value of the collection justify copying, filming or treatment?*

Intellectual Access Rating:

Finding aids typically provide the best intellectual access to archival collections. A good finding aid includes some overall description of the collection and an appropriate level of inventory (box, folder or item-level) for the contents.

While a catalog record or a simple inventory might provide adequate access to a small or simple collection, it may not be sufficient for a larger or more complex collection; the ratings are designed to take that into account.

The ratings reflect the growing expectation that a collection is only truly accessible when a researcher can find information about it online. The highest ratings are reserved for collections with multiple online access points.

Notes on terminology:

- A substandard finding aid may be a preliminary inventory created for all or part of a collection at the time of donation or accession. It may also be a more conventional finding aid that is done to an earlier standard that is now considered insufficient for the materials being described.
- A collection-level description may be a MARC record, a set of catalog cards, or an online or offline document that describes the physical and intellectual characteristics of a collection. In some cases, an accession record can be considered a collection-level description, if it is sufficiently detailed and would be made available to a researcher.

5. Researcher has excellent access to collection:
There is a good online finding aid (EAD, HTML, PDF, or other format). There is a collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution's OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC.

The collection may also be described in other online or offline sources that are available to researchers (such as a printed or online guide to collections).

4. Researcher has good access to collection:
There is a good finding aid, but it is not available online. There is a collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution's OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC.

OR

There is a good finding aid, online or offline, but there is no collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution's OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC. Given the quality of the finding aid, the finding aid alone provides good access.

In both cases, the collection may also be described in other online or offline sources that are available to researchers.

3. Researcher has fair access to collection:
The finding aid is substandard or there is no finding aid. There is a collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution's OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC. In the absence of a full MARC record, there is another type of online collection-level description. The collection-level description in online or offline sources available to researchers provides sufficient access because it is a small or straightforward collection.

2. Researcher has poor access to collection:
Collection has no finding aid or a substandard finding aid. The collection has printed catalog cards or another type of offline collection-level description, but no collection-level MARC record in the OPAC or a national bibliographic utility.

OR

Collection has no finding aid or a substandard finding aid. The collection has a MARC record in the OPAC or national bibliographic utility, but that does not provide sufficient access because it is a large or complex collection.

In either case, the collection may be described in other online or offline sources available to researchers, but because of the complexity of the collection or the inadequacy of the sources, this provides insufficient access.

1. Researcher has no access to collection:
Internal documentation such as a donor/control file or brief or inaccessible accession record serves as the only description of the collection. While such internal documentation may vary in quantity and quality, by its nature it is inaccessible to researchers.

Research Value questions:

- *How frequently over the past five years have researchers sought materials on topics substantially documented in a particular collection?*
- *To what extent do emerging research agendas address other topics documented in a collection?*
- *How rare is a collection's documentation of a particular topic?*
- *How extensive is that documentation?*
- *How deep or detailed is it? What is missing, if anything?*

Research Value Rating

A collection is considered valuable to researchers to the extent that it includes relatively rare, extensive, or detailed information on topics that have received considerable prior attention, are gaining currency, or have apparent potential to attract significant researcher interest. A topic may be of very high, high, moderate, slight, or negligible interest. *The intrinsic interest of the collection itself may also count as a topic.*

Depending on the rarity, extensiveness, and detail of a body of material, the documentation on a topic may be very rich, rich, moderately rich, incidentally valuable, or slight. The Research Value Rating is determined by adding the ratings of the topics best or most substantially represented in each collection to the ratings of the quality of documentation on those topics in the collection.

<u>Interest Ranking</u>	<u>Value Scale</u>	<u>Quality of Documentation Ranking</u>
very high	5	very rich
high	4	rich
moderate	3	moderately rich
slight	2	incidentally valuable
negligible	1	slight

The sum of the Interest Ranking and the Quality of Documentation Ranking can range from a high of "10" to a low of "2" on the Research Value Rating (RVR) scale.