Finding aid standardized format elements

(Note: any element listed as optional becomes required if it is relevant to the collection.)

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| Element | Formats and Standards | Required/optional status |
| Title Statement | Format: “Guide to the [title]” [date or date span]See below for title and date. | Required |
| Call number | Format: “Call number: HMC-####”. | Required. |
| Creator | Format: “Creator: [name].”For creator name standards, see DACS 12 and 14. If there is an extant LC name authority for the individual, that must be used. Use LC naming conventions to create names where LC authorities do not exist. | Required |
| Title | Format: “Title: [title].”Must follow DACS 2.3 (all) for supplied titles. In the rare cases of a formal title, see 2.3.2. In general, use papers for individuals, records for corporate bodies, and only detail record types within the title when there are two or less. Titles should be as short as possible, summary as possible. If a representation of only a portion of what could be presumed a greater body of papers, a short topical description can be used, (see 2.3.21) but sparingly. For creator name standards, see DACS 12 and 14. If there is an extant LC name authority for the individual, that must be used. Use LC naming conventions to create names where LC authorities do not exist.  | Required.  |
| Dates | Format: “Dates: [date].” or use “Date: [date].” for single year or day entries.See 2.4. Inclusive spans only, may be followed by predominant or bulk dates, see 2.4.10. If a large gap exists, see 2.4.11, but do not use laundry lists of dates. Only use undated in this field if either the whole collection is undated or you are certain that the undated elements of the collection fall outside the inclusive dates of the collection.  | Required. |
| Volume | Format: “Volume of collection: [# cubic feet].” See DACS 2.5. If it is particularly helpful to provide a parallel extent measurement, especially for collections made up solely of a single type of non-textual material, do so in a parenthetical note following the cubic footage as per 2.5.7 e.g. 0.6 cubic feet (24 audiocassettes.) | Required. |
| Language of materials | Format: “Language of materials: [language statement].” The Language Statement should follow one of the following structures: “Collection materials entirely in [language].” “Collection materials predominantly in [language a], some elements in [language b], [language c], and [language d].” See 4.5. In the cases of photographic collections where no text at all exists in captions or signs within the image etc, the languages note should state “Collection materials contain no text.”This entry is required by NWDA standards. | Required.  |
| Summary | Format: “Collection summary: [summary statement].”Clear, concise summary of collection in two short sentences or less. Should include both biographical/historical and scope and content notes. This entry is required by NWDA standards. When searching the NWDA database, this entry is part of the results list, allowing researchers to grasp the collection at a glance. We may, eventually, be able to enable this functionality on our own site. | Required.  |
| Biographical or historical note | Format: “Biographical note: [biographical note].” or “Organizational history: [historical note].” DACS 10. The length of this note should be proportionate to the size and complexity of the collection. Information not relevant to the contents of the collection should not be included in the biographical or historical note (e.g. if the collection represents a professor’s research work, information about marital status or birthplace is unnecessary and should not be included.) Include information that is relevant and which can explain the context in which the materials were created, assembled, accumulated, and/or maintained or used. If a composite collection of more than one creator (families or joint projects), the relationships between the creators should be clearly explained. | Required |
| Scope and content note | Format: “Collection description: [scope and content note].”DACS 3.1 Summary, including documentary forms, function, subjects, dates, geographic areas, significance. Should allow users to judge the collection’s potential relevance for a variety of research purposes and as such, description of the significance of the collection should be very carefully handled if provided: nothing should be written that might preclude a researcher from using materials in a collection for a purpose other than what the archivist has indicated. All description of elements of the collection should be proportionate to the volume and significance of that portion of the collection. This element is an overview of the collection as a whole. Extensive description of individual series within a collection should be relegated to the series description within the container list. | Required |
| Arrangement | Format: “Arrangement: [arrangement note].”DACS 3.2. One to two sentences describing the overall arrangement of the collection. Arrangement within subparts of or series within the collection will be relegated to the appropriate place within the container list. If an order was imposed upon the collection that differs from the original order, it will be noted in this statement.  | Required\*\*This may be omitted only in the case of single item collections. |
| Digital copies | Digital copies of collection material not available online. For information about obtaining digital copies, please contact Archives and Special Collections. | Required |
| Alternative forms available | Format: “Alternative formats: [alternative format notes].”DACS 6.2 Include any different or alternative media formats available for researchers. This may include fiche copies held within the collection, a note regarding digital surrogates available in the Alaska’s Digital Archives (which will include the appropriate link), and copies held by other institutions. For originals held by another institution, use the “Location of Originals” field below. | Optional |
| Restrictions on access | Format: “Access restrictions: [restrictions note].”DACS 4.1 This will clearly spell out any access restrictions to the collection, including classification (e.g. medical records are closed to access) or access to certain formats only and include the nature of the restriction: donor restriction, legal restriction, fragile nature of originals, etc.  | Optional |
| Restrictions on use | Format: “Use restrictions: [restrictions note].”DACS 4.4. If materials from the collection cannot be reproduced or cannot be used in publication, this note should detail that status including the source of the restriction. If the restriction is partial, such as a use that must be cited in a proscribed way, note and refer to the required citation note. If use of the collection requires the filing of any forms or statements with the Archives, this should be noted. | Required/ optional\*If this field is not used, the Rights note (see below) is required. |
| Rights status | Format: “Rights note: [rights statement].”DACS 4.4 Clearly state the rights status of this collection: in the public domain, copyright held by donor until specific time, copyright held by Archives, unknown, etc. | Required/optional\*If the contents of this field are included in the Use restrictions note, this field is not required.  |
| Preferred citation | Format: “Preferred citation: [collection name], Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. [additional citation requirements if needed.]\*DACS 7.1.5. If donor agreements require another wording, those have priority. \*If the collection as a whole is a copy of a collection or a part of a collection held by another institution, that institution’s citation requirements apply.  | Required |
| Bibliography | Format: “Works used in preparation of inventory: [list]”DACS 6.4. Must follow Chicago Style Manual format. Should include only those sources outside the collection contents used in preparation of the inventory.  | Optional |
| Additional reference guides | Format: “[Guide type]: [description].”DACS 4.6. If a separate name index to the collection or to elements of the collection exist, this should be noted here. Any other similar guides, indices, finding aids, etc should be included in this field. | Optional |
| Separated materials | Format: “Separated materials: [note].”DACS 6.3. If a collection has been split between repositories, this must include the name of the other institution, the institution’s collection name, as well as a short description of the materials held by that institution. Provide enough information with the institution name for the user to be able to locate contact information for that repository easily.  | Optional |
| Related materials | Format: “Related materials: [note].”DACS 6.3 Use sparingly, such as when two collections are very topical or related materials are held within our own institution. For example, if the ACC commencement programs are not a complete run and some of the documents may be found in the papers of an ACC employee, the reference to the second should be placed in this note in the first. This note may also be used for related collections within other institutions. For example: AkLA-A records are at UAA, AkLA records are at UAF. See note on Separated materials for details. | Optional |
| Custodial history | Format: “Custodial history: [note].”DACS 5.1 Collection history prior to acquisition. | Optional |
| Acquisition information | Format: “Acquisition note: [note].”DACS 5.2 If a donation, be as explicit as the donor agreement allows. If purchased, indicate that the collection was purchased, note seller only when relevant to authenticity, custodial chain, or provenance. (creator, heir of creator, etc)  | Required |
| Processing note | Format: “Processing information: [note].”DACS 8.1 At a minimum will say: “This collection was described by [processor], [month, year].” If rehoused, materials segregated, etc, that level of detail should be noted. If an update occurs, an additional sentence detailing this will also be included.  | Required |
| Location of originals | Format: “Location of originals: [statement].” DACS 6.1. In the case of an artificial collection with originals in a variety of repositories where it is possible within the container list to provide this information, statement should say “Originals of these materials are held by many different repositories [and individuals.] Details noted in container list.” | Optional |
| Container list | Format: “Container list: [table]See attached for a variety of samples. Container lists will be in a table or tabbed format with at least two columns: the first for the container whether box, box/folder, box/folder/item, volume, etc. Photographic albums will follow the box number sequence and will not be assigned another sequence of album numbers. In some cases, especially where item numbers have been applied by the creator and are not 1-N, the item designation may be in a separate column. Boxes will be numbered sequentially throughout the entire collection. Folders will be numbered sequentially within each box, irrespective of series or any other divisions. The column following the container column(s) will be the description column. This can include dates or dates may be listed in another column following. Collection subgroup, series, subseries will be identified immediately preceding the section of the container list pertaining to that subgroup, series, or subseries. These divisions should not be numbered but if the overarching collection description notes series or subgroup divisions, these should be clearly labeled as such. If the subsection has any elements that differ from the collection described as a whole, those fields must be repeated in this section. For example, if a subseries is in chronological order but this is not reflected in the overarching collection arrangement note, arrangement must be stated at this point. Volume and/or extent descriptions may be included if useful.  | Optional |
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Other notes:

Dates should follow ISO 8601 standards. In other words: Years are CCYY. Year and month is CCYY-MM. Complete date is CCYY-MM-DD or CCYY Month DD. Months should be spelled out if used in text form.

Do not abbreviate the following terms: undated (use for no date or nd in all cases), circa, days of week, months, state names, form/genre terms (like b&w for black and white), cubic, feet, inches, and so on. Generally assume that an abbreviation should be spelled out. An exception might be in the case of a corporate collection where the creator organization has a well-known acronym and the name is used repeatedly, but only use the acronym once the full name has been spelled out and is immediately followed by the acronym in a parenthetical note.