



The Muslims in Canada Archives (MiCA)
ACQUISITIONS POLICY

1. Purpose and Mandate

The Muslims in Canada Archives (MiCA) acquires, organizes, preserves, and makes accessible records of and about Muslim individuals and organizations in/from Canada, primarily those materials that possess enduring value for the preservation of the history and documentary heritage of Muslims in Canada.

MiCA is a collaborative project involving Canadian individuals, universities, archival institutions and community organizations working in concert to preserve a diverse and wide-ranging history that is currently not reflected in Canada's documentary heritage. MiCA's collaborative model blends academic research with diverse community partnerships out of a belief that "excellence flourishes in an environment that embraces the broadest range of people, that helps them to achieve their full potential, that facilitates the free expression of their diverse perspectives through respectful discourse, and in which high standards" of archival practice and research integrity are maintained.¹

The history of Canada's Muslim communities reflects an important story that has yet to be told. MiCA is designed to provide the next generation of researchers and storytellers primary source materials with which to tell both plural and representative stories of Canada's diverse Muslims and their contributions to Canada's multicultural heritage.

2. Structure & Authority

MiCA is a participatory, community archival initiative of the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) at the University of Toronto. MiCA manifests the University's mission to foster an academic community in which "every member may flourish."² Like the University, MiCA recognizes that the fundamental freedoms of expression, belief, and conscience, as well as the academic freedom that makes university culture possible, are "meaningless unless they entail the right to raise deeply disturbing questions and provocative challenges to the cherished beliefs of society at large and of the university itself."³

2.1. Structure

MiCA is a project of multiple universities, community partners, researchers and students. The project is part of the Study of Islam and Muslims in Canada (SIMiC) research lab hosted by the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) at the University of Toronto. Through a series of consultations between researchers and community leaders, the SIMiC team identified that Canada's archival landscape lacked

¹ Governing Council of the University of Toronto, "Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence," December 14, 2006. Link: <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/equity-diversity-and-excellence-statement-december-14-2006>

² Governing Council of the University of Toronto, "Mission", Oct. 5, 1992, Link: <https://www.utoronto.ca/about-u-of-t/mission>

³ Governing Council of the University of Toronto, "Mission", Oct. 5, 1992, Link: <https://www.utoronto.ca/about-u-of-t/mission>



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a representative picture of Canadian Muslim communities. The poignancy of this lacuna was heightened by the national security and surveillance regimes imposed upon Canadian Muslim communities after the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States, and the subsequent military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. MiCA was developed as an antidote to the narrow representation of Canada's Muslims as foreign, as Other, and as threat. Moreover, an [environmental scan](#) of Canada's archival landscape revealed not only a fundamental absence of records actively recounting the Muslim presence in Canada to counter skewed narratives, but also a profound digital deficit in the metadata used to arrange and describe records related to Muslims and Islam in Canada. MiCA is designed to be a unifying, single platform to represent Muslim experiences in and contributions to Canada.

2.2. Authority

The IIS is an academic research unit within the University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences. At all times, the IIS will serve as the administrative unit responsible for initially receiving any and all archival donations, communication, consultation or monetary contributions related to MiCA.

Authority and responsibility for the day-to-day function of MiCA is vested in the Director of the IIS. The Director exercises authority to make decisions on acquisitions, in consultation with the MiCA Research Fellow (see below). The Director is appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Toronto for a renewable five-year term of service.

At all times, MiCA shall be a participatory, community-engaged archives involving a collaborative working relationship between the IIS and community organizations and individuals who have a vested interest in how their history is represented. While the Director of the IIS is a University of Toronto employee, the Director will at all times owe a fiduciary duty to ensure that MiCA remains a participatory archives with an acquisition policy that upholds the values of both academic excellence and community collaboration in the spirit of the University of Toronto's [2006 Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence](#).

2.2.1. Policy Committee. Any and all policy decisions related to MiCA shall be subjected to the Policy Committee. Such matters include but are not limited to the following: the acquisitions policy; description and metadata standards employed; outreach initiatives; expanding membership in the Policy Committee; and collection and digitization priorities. The Director of the IIS shall serve as chair of the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee consists of each University Participant and Community Organization Participant, as well as a representative from the University of Toronto Libraries and Library and Archives Canada.

2.2.2. MiCA Research Fellow. MiCA is managed by a recent graduate of an American Library Association (ALA) accredited program in information studies, specifically in the archival stream. MiCA Research Fellows serve a three-year term, during which they evaluate any and all



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donations to MiCA and submit recommendations to the Director with respect to acquisition determinations. The Director of the IIS has responsibility for hiring the MiCA Research Fellow for MiCA.

3. Scope & Definitions

3.1. Scope. MiCA is a project that leverages the respective resources and capacities of its various partner organizations and national archival institution. Library and Archives Canada (LAC) collects, arranges, describes, and preserves records of 'national Canadian significance'. It also sits on MiCA's Policy Committee advising on MiCA's development. MiCA prioritizes materials that document the history and lived experiences of localized Muslim communities in Canada. While MiCA's geographic focus spans all of Canada, its acquisition priorities emphasize records that reflect the realities of Muslims at both the regional level and in self-identified, local communities in Canada. This means that MiCA prioritizes materials of Muslim individuals or organizations that have significantly impacted their local communities and not necessarily all of Canada or all Canadians, though we do not exclude materials of national significance in light of donor preference and/or partner resources and capacity. The history of Muslims in Canada can be reflected in the records acquired, or the donor's identity as a Canadian Muslim whose contributions, though not in the study of Islam or the welfare of Muslims in Canada, is nonetheless deemed to pose enduring value pursuant to the process outlined in Section 4.

3.2. Definitions

3.2.1. 'Canadian Muslim', 'Muslim Canadian', and 'Muslim in Canada'. MiCA considers a 'Canadian Muslim', 'Muslim Canadian', and 'Muslim in Canada' to be any person(s), alive or deceased, who self-identifies as a Muslim (regardless of sect or religiosity) and currently lives/had lived in Canada or contributed significantly to Canadian heritage. Canadian citizenship has no bearing on whether someone is a 'Canadian Muslim', 'Muslim Canadian' or a 'Muslim in Canada'. At any and all times, the core consideration for including materials in MiCA is whether they contribute to the documentary heritage of Muslims in Canada.

3.2.2. Canadian Muslim (or Muslim Canadian) Organization. We define a Canadian Muslim (or Muslim Canadian) organization as an organization whose mandate prioritizes the needs and interests of Muslims in Canada, and whose services or activities were conducted for or on behalf of Muslim communities in Canada.

3.2.3. Intersectionality. MiCA stresses the importance of representing all facets of Canada's diverse Muslim communities, especially traditionally marginalized identities within Muslim communities. These include (but are not limited to): minority sects, women, refugees, Indigenous, Black, queer, non-binary, youth, and gender non-conforming Muslims in Canada.



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3.2.4. Archival Definitions

- 3.2.4.1. Archives: “- 1. Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control;” ([SAA Glossary of Terms](#)). – 2. A repository for the records of an individual, family or organization that the repository deems are of enduring value according to its mandate
- 3.2.4.2. Creator: the individual, family or organization that is responsible for the creation, formation or production of a record or records. For example: the Abdul Hashimi fonds, the Association of Quranic Illuminators in Canada fonds, etc. See “Provenance”.
- 3.2.4.3. Deed of Gift: a formal, legal agreement between MiCA and a donor (or donors) transferring title to property to MiCA without monetary compensation. In the case of MiCA, a deed of gift establishes the records Deeds of Gifts typically outline access and restrictions of access to the records being transferred to the archive.
- 3.2.4.4. Donor: an individual, family, estate or organization that has donated or is/are donating their records to MiCA through a formal Deed of Gift. A Donor must have legal title and ownership to the records they are donating before transferring these rights to MiCA.
- 3.2.4.5. Fonds: the whole of a single creator’s (individual, family, organization) records created and accumulated organically. In other words, a single creator’s collection of records.
- 3.2.4.6. Original Order: a principle of archival theory and practice, original order is “the organization and sequence of records established by the creator of the records” ([SAA Glossary of Terms](#)).
- 3.2.4.7. Provenance: the origin or source of something, in this case the individual, family or organization that created a record or records. This is the Creator of the records and not the Donor. A single donor could potentially donate archival materials that they legally own but were *created* by multiple different individuals/organizations. Sometimes, both the Creator and the Donor could be the same person (i.e. when the creator of the records donates *their own* records) but the provenance is *always* the Creator.
- 3.2.4.8. Record: “data or information that has been fixed on some medium; that has content, context, and structure; and that is used as an extension of human memory or to demonstrate accountability” ([SAA Glossary of Terms](#)). Often synonymous with “document” or “archival material”, in the case of MiCA, a record can be in any medium (including digital) and does not need to be a physical, paper document. This includes (but is not limited to): photographs (digital or otherwise), architectural drawings, CDs/DVDs, oral histories, audiovisual material, hard drives, VHS or cassette tapes, art, artifacts, and so on.
- 3.2.4.9. Respect des fonds: also known as the principle of provenance, *respect des fonds* “dictates that records of different origins (provenance) be kept separate to preserve their context” ([SAA Glossary of Terms](#)).



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3.3. User Community

The Muslims in Canada Archives is designed for use by academic researchers, policy makers, journalists, and members of the general public.

3.4. Boundaries

As MiCA grows, it also abides by certain boundaries. In particular, MiCA is not:

- a. An archives of the University of Toronto or any university partner in the project
- b. An archives of any community organization, whether a partner to MiCA or not.

4. Acquisition Criteria & Collecting Priorities

MiCA acquires materials that are created by or about self-identifying Muslim individuals and organizations in or related to Canada. At any and all times, the core consideration for including materials in MiCA is whether they contribute to the documentary heritage of Muslims in Canada.

4.1. Priorities

MiCA prioritizes records of enduring value that contribute to the history and documentary heritage of Muslims in Canada.

- 4.1.1. Determining Enduring Value. The following methods will be employed to determine whether a record poses sufficient value to be included in MiCA:

4.1.1.a. Academic Consultation: In consultation with scholars and historians, MiCA will prioritize records that contribute to the history and documentary heritage of Muslims in Canada;

4.1.1.b. Community Partner Consultation. In consultation with participating organizations and individuals, MiCA will prioritize records that reflects gaps in the historical record of Muslims in Canada;

4.1.1.c. Annual Consultations and Workshops. Using active outreach, MiCA will consult with members of Muslim communities across the country once a year to gauge their opinions and feedback in order to identify records of enduring value that also align with the priorities, mandate and policies of MiCA. Additionally, MiCA's research workshops will feature scholars in the fields of Canadian Muslim history and Islamic studies as well as artists and storytellers, all of whom will identify gaps in the historical record and new directions for MiCA's acquisition priorities.



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4.2. Considerations for Acquisition

When selecting materials for acquisition, the following are the non-exclusive criteria for consideration when assessing a donation (from individuals or organizations) for enduring value:

- Has the individual or organization significantly contributed to the cultural, political, social, demographic, scientific, economic or religious life of Muslims in Canada?
- Has the individual or organization had a significant impact on the development or evolution of Muslim communities in Canada?
- Has the individual or organization operated locally, provincially, or nationally?
- Are the records representative of an important, unique, or unusual feature of Muslim life in Canada or the history of Muslims in Canada?
- Has the individual or organization played a pioneering or leadership role in its field?
- Are the records associated with a noteworthy individual or other organization?
- Do the records document significant events and trends in the history of Muslims in Canada (e.g., cultural, political, economic, social, demographic, scientific, and religious)?

4.3. Standard Appraisal Criteria

Once enduring value is determined, the donation will be assessed against the following non-exclusive, standard appraisal criteria:

- Is MiCA the appropriate repository for the materials? Do the materials fit another archives' mandate better? Are records of the organization or individual already held elsewhere?
- Is the provenance (creator or creators) of the materials known?
- Are the materials in good condition? Does the donation have special conservation and preservation requirements beyond the means of MiCA archives?
- Are the materials damaged or hazardous (i.e. remains of mold, pests, water damage, and so on)?
- Do the donated materials complement the current holdings of MiCA?
- Are the records originals?
- Will the creator(s) transfer full and complete title to MiCA?
- Are there any digitization restrictions?
- Are there any access restrictions on the potential donation?

5. Access & Copyright

5.1. Access



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Aside from materials that fall under copyright and privacy legislation, MiCA aims for its holdings to be largely open and accessible to the public. Nevertheless, MiCA will work with donors to ensure their access and restriction wishes and needs are met as much as is possible. Moreover, as Muslim communities in Canada are subject to systemic forms of Islamophobia and discrimination from and within various sectors, MiCA will exercise, in consultation with its Policy Committee, its corporate social responsibility toward this community by implementing additional restrictions on materials to avoid exacerbating the proliferation of Islamophobia and discrimination in its various manifestations.

Digitized materials will be available to users through an online platform. The criteria for determining materials for digitization will be discussed in Section 6 and is further detailed in MiCA's Digitization Policy. Analogue materials will be held in secure storage.

5.2. Title and Copyright

In order to accomplish preservation activities, provide access to materials, and otherwise make its holdings available, MiCA seeks to have complete ownership of physical property and associated intellectual property rights, particularly copyright.

MiCA prioritizes donations of records into its analogue and digital archives under the following conditions:

- 5.2.1. Full title: The donor transfers full and complete title to MiCA in perpetuity;
- 5.2.2. Digitization and copyright: The donor transfers full rights to digitize the record, and provides MiCA and its users a non-exclusive right to use, cite, quote from, or otherwise incorporate the donated records for research and educational purposes without copyright limitations.
- 5.2.3. MiCA will not accept donations of analogue records into the archives if, for example,
 - 5.2.3.1. The donation requires that MiCA provide restricted access to all or large parts of the donation for an unreasonable amount of time or no reason at all.

5.3. Lending of records

MiCA shall facilitate the lending of its holdings for exhibition, public curation or educational purposes only subject to the discretion of the MiCA Research Fellow and/or the IIS Director as well as the state of preservation of the records in question.

6. Description, Digitization and Born-Digital

6.1. Description



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All records shall be arranged and described in MiCA's online descriptive database and website. The database shall be hosted on an online portal. Description of records will follow archival principles for description in consultation and collaboration with community partners and archival partners for faithful and representative description according to both community needs and professional due diligence.

6.2. Digitization

MiCA does not adopt a total digitization policy. Not all records can be digitized due to their format and the limited resources of MiCA. Additionally, MiCA's digitization capacity is dependent upon the available digitization technology at the University of Toronto Libraries, external vendors, human resources, the format of the records, and available metadata.

6.2.1. Digitization Priorities

6.2.1.1. Digitization of Analogue Records. Analogue records that can be digitized shall be assessed for digitization priority according to

- 6.2.1.1.a. Condition or Format of Materials. Records that are too fragile will not be digitized. Additionally, where digitizing certain formats requires resources exceeding MiCA's capacity, such records will not be digitized. The condition of materials will be determined by the MiCA Research Fellow in consultation with specialists at the University of Toronto Libraries.
- 6.2.1.1.b. Legal requirements under prevailing privacy and copyright law.
- 6.2.1.1.c. Ethical requirements and considerations.
- 6.2.1.1.d. Enduring Value: Community and/or Research Value.
- 6.2.1.1.e. Uniqueness or rarity of the record.
- 6.2.1.1.f. Relevance and topicality. MiCA will digitize materials relevant to current Canadian and/or world affairs and discourse, as necessary.

6.3. Born-digital. All donated records that are born-digital shall be subject to the acquisition guidelines in Section 4.