
Archives Collections Management Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the University of Leicester's policy framework for the archive collections managed by the Archives and Special Collections team within the University Library. The policy covers collections development, collections information, care and conservation and access impacts. The team is based in the University Library, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK.

The Archives and Special Collections team oversees the stewardship, management and access arrangements for the university's collections of archives, manuscripts and rare books. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland College¹ was established in 1921 and has a strong tradition of collecting unique and distinctive collections of books and manuscripts.

1.2 This policy covers the team's archive collections and complements the following documents:

- Library Collection Policy
- Special Collections Strategy
- University Archives Selection Policy
- Archives / Special Collections Access Policy
- Records Management Policy

"The service" is used throughout this document to refer to the archive functions carried out within the Archive and Special Collections team.

1.3 Legal and statutory basis for the service

The service has developed from two distinct strands of activity:

- a) the acquisition of rare and unique material in support of the University's function as an academic institution, including historic manuscripts and private archives.
- b) the management of the institutional archives of the University of Leicester.

The first of these activities has, since the College's foundation, been based in the University Library. Between 1983 and 1986 an attempt was made to establish a 'Central Archives and Records Service' to arrange and catalogue the institutional records. In 1995 the first professional archivist was appointed, based in the Registrar's Office, principally to manage the institutional archives. Since 2007 the management of both the Library's archive collections and the institutional archives has been based in the University Library.

The service abides by the University Ordinances and all relevant legislation concerning archives or which impacts on archives.

1.4 The scope of the holdings of Archives and Special Collections

¹ Later University College, Leicester (1927-1957 and University of Leicester (1957 to date)

Items bequeathed or donated at or shortly after the foundation of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland College in 1921 form the core of the Special Collections. These include materials given by Thomas Hatton, Harry H. Peach and Caleb Robjohns. Although these early acquisitions comprised books for the most part, the MS catalogue prefix was used for more unusual items such as individual manuscripts and artificial antiquarian collections. Some of the material catalogued in this series is now considered archival in nature and has been supplemented by more recent collecting. Formalising the acquisition and management of archives in the form of this collection management policy is a recent development.

1.5 The overall objectives of the Archives and Special Collections team are as follows:

Our vision

We preserve and curate the University's memory and heritage collections, connecting them digitally to the wider world and locally through active partnerships.

We will develop and curate our unique and distinctive collections to enrich the curriculum, to enable research and to enhance the civic life of the region.

2. Scope of policy

2.1 Archives are defined in this policy as:

Records created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs which have been selected for permanent preservation because of the enduring value of the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator.

The University of Leicester recognises that many of its archive collections meet the criteria for "unique and distinctive collections" as defined by Research Libraries UK. The service's archive collections divide into two broad categories:

- Institutional archive and complementary *fonds*
- Private collections

2.2 The University Library also assumes responsibility for the Leicester Research Archive which comprises the University's repository of research publications, theses and unpublished research data. This service and its collections fall outside the scope of this policy.

2.3 Other departments within the University hold archive collections, some of which are recorded on The National Archives' "Find an Archive" portal. The collections are typically those for which a specific member of academic staff has taken responsibility due to his/her specialist area of interest or research and which may transfer to another institution once that individual's work is complete or when s/he moves to another institution. These collections are not managed by Archives and Special Collections and are therefore outside the scope of this policy.

2.4 This policy covers the following key archive collection management activities:

- Collecting and acquisition
- Disposals and deaccessioning
- Appraisal
- Collection development
- Collections information
- Collections care and conservation
- Digital preservation

- Access: collection impacts

3. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

- 3.1 Operational management of Archives and Special Collections is the responsibility of the Archives and Special Collections Manager (1.0fte), who is a member of the Library Management Team. S/he plans, prioritises, and manages the work of the team and contributes to the delivery of the Library's strategic aims through input into the Library delivery plan.
- 3.2 The Archivist (0.6fte) is responsible for ensuring that archive collections are managed and developed in accordance with professional standards and legal and institutional requirements. S/he is supported by the Assistant Archivist (0.5fte). The Archivist has considerable autonomy and organises, prioritises, and manages his/her own work and line manages the Assistant Archivist. Both of these posts have a post-graduate qualification in Archive Administration as an essential requirement.
- 3.3 Reading room supervision, document production, copying and enquiry handling is carried out by two Library Assistants (2 x 0.5fte). The team also aims to secure an annual 6-month internship (1.0 fte).
- 3.4 Archives and Special Collections is part of the Academic Liaison Team. The Library's Head of Public Services, a member of the Senior Management Team, has line management responsibility for the team and budgetary responsibility for the area.
- 3.5 Facilities management for the University Library, including Archives and Special Collections, is the responsibility of the Head of Library Administration.
- 3.6 Overall accountability for archives lies with the University Librarian, who reports to the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer

4. Scope of existing archive collections

- 4.1 The University Archives date from the 20th and 21st centuries. The private archives range from late medieval to the present day, and are predominantly 20th and 21st century.
- 4.2 The majority of the archive collections comprise paper records. A significant proportion of the earlier acquisitions comprise artificial or antiquarian collections rather than true *fonds* originating from a specific organisation or individual in the course of their activities. The single biggest collection or *fonds* is that of the local newspaper, the *Leicester Mercury*, and comprises extensive series of photographic prints, negatives and newspaper cuttings. There is a very small proportion of parchment and audio-visual material and few maps and /or plans. The service does not yet accept digital records for permanent preservation and access as part of its archival holdings although it does deliver content in the form of digital surrogates via a digital asset management system (CONTENTdm).
- 4.3 The service has hitherto focused on the archives of its own institution plus a combination of subject based collecting mainly but not exclusively within the geographical area of Leicester and its broader county and regional context. Current collection strengths are as follows:
 - **The institutional archive and complementary *fonds*** such as the archives of the Students' Union and the personal papers of former students and staff
 - **Modern literary Leicester** – major collections include the papers of Joe Orton, Sue Townsend, David Campton, Chris Challis and Reg and Ann Cartwright

- **History of Leicester and Leicestershire** – including the Gorrie Collection, Joan Skinner Archive, the Leicester Mercury Archive, and Leicester Medical Society
- **English local history** – including the Hoskins collection, the Finberg Collection, the Thirsk Collection and the Chapronière Collection

5 Collection and Acquisition Policy: general principles

- 5.1 Terms and Conditions: Archives are acquired through gifts, bequests and internal transfer from within the University. Archives may be accepted on long-term loan although the preference is for outright gift. The Library does not have a specific fund for the purchase of archival material; any such exceptional purchases would normally be dependent on external funding. The terms and conditions, including Intellectual Property Rights, must be articulated at the point of transfer and recorded both on the receipt form and in the Accessions Register.
- 5.2 Internal transfers to the institutional archive: The service works collaboratively with staff responsible for records management to ensure an effective and timely transfer of records to the institutional archive in accordance with the University's Data and Records Retention Schedule, and works towards extending arrangements to include born-digital records
- 5.3 Relevant legislation: The University seeks clarity about intellectual property rights and access arrangements with regards to its archive collections and will capture information about the copyright, data protection and freedom of information implications of potential deposits at the point of accession. Archives and Special Collections reserves the right to reject collections where there is a lack of clarity over ownership and rights issues.

Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act: Where archives contain or may contain personal data, the role of the University as either Data Controller or Data Processor is determined at the point of accession and a statement to this effect is included in the gift or deposit agreement. The University is typically the Data Controller with respect to the University of Leicester Institutional Archive and material that it acquires by donation, with Archives and Special Collections acting as Local Data Manager unless there are specific written instructions to the contrary. Where archives are acquired on loan, arrangements for each deposit are confirmed in writing at the point of transfer. Any legacy collections which are ambiguous on this point will be clarified retrospectively. The receipt form captures this information in all cases.

The service will not usually accept material where the content of the collection is unavailable for general access due to the preponderance of information exempt under Freedom of Information legislation.

- 5.5 Appraisal: An Archivist appraises potential records at or prior to the point of accession to assess their long-term value to the archive collections. Records which do not meet the collection development principles (section 5 of this policy) are not accepted. In exceptional circumstances, records may be transferred to Archives and Special Collections as a temporary deposit to enable the appraisal process to take place.
- 5.6 Records which are not selected for permanent preservation will be returned to the depositor, disposed of or offered to another repository following consultation with the depositor.

- 5.7 Formats: Where the University is offered records in an atypical format (e.g. audio-visual) and for which it does not and cannot provide appropriate standards of care and / or access, it works with the potential depositor to identify a more suitable repository. Where the material in question complements existing archival holdings and where it can be demonstrated that local access will significantly enhance the researcher / user experience, Archives and Special Collections seeks to acquire an access copy which can be consulted locally without compromising the long-term preservation and integrity of the original. The Service has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Media Archive for Central England with regards to audio-visual material.
- 5.8 Art works: Archives and Special Collections already holds archival *fonds* for local artists (e.g. Reg Cartwright) or artists with a connection to other *fonds* within the collection (e.g. Caroline Holden). Art works accepted as archival accessions must meet the criteria defined below (6.4), must have a research value beyond the purely aesthetic and are managed in accordance with archival standards. This precludes their being displayed on a permanent basis within the University.
- 5.9 Artefacts: The service does not normally accept three-dimensional artefacts unless they have a special relationship with an archival *fonds* and where separating the artefact from the archive would compromise the integrity of the two for research purposes.
- 5.10 Duplicates: Duplicates are only accepted if they have been annotated by their owner or custodian and those annotations add to the research interest or contextual significance of the item in question, if they are in better condition than the copy already held and therefore replace the existing item, or if there is a demonstrable need to acquire a duplicate as part of a handling collection or similar to facilitate outreach or learning activities. Archives and Special Collections does not acquire copies of documents held by other repositories unless they comprise a genuine “stray” or fill a demonstrable gap in a series of records held by the service.
- 5.11 Physical condition: Archives and Special Collections does not have onsite specialist preservation and conservation expertise. Where the University is offered material in poor condition with significant preservation or conservation challenges, but which otherwise meets the selection criteria, a decision to accession the material should be accompanied by a costed conservation plan and is subject to the availability of sufficient budgetary resources to deliver the plan. Where material cannot be accepted, the service supports the depositor or donor in finding a suitable alternative repository.
- 5.12 Potential collecting conflicts: Archives and Special Collections recognises and values its role as part of a network of archive services across the UK that collectively safeguard the nation’s archival heritage. We aim to avoid collecting conflicts with other repositories and seek to ensure outcomes that best meet the long-term preservation needs of collections and the access requirements of users. When advising potential depositors, the service draws attention to the existence of other repositories to ensure that material is offered to the most appropriate institution.
- 5.13 Disposal / deaccessioning: Accessions of archival material are taken in following an appraisal of their long-term value and significance. Material is accepted on the understanding that it is a permanent addition to the collection; there is a strong presumption against later disposal or deaccessioning. Earlier accessions were not subject to the same appraisal process. Archives and Special Collections reserves the right to review its holdings to assess their ongoing relevance and where appropriate to explore disposal or deaccessioning options in accordance with the principles

set out in section 5 of this policy and in accordance with The National Archives' *Deaccessioning and Disposal: Guidance for archive services*, 2015.

6 Collection development [how collecting will be achieved and developed]

6.1 Current archival holdings have been acquired through a variety of means, but usually in response to offers from donors or depositors. Acquisition has often been through the agency of academic staff responding to opportunities to acquire material relevant to their research interests

6.2 The service is small, with limited professional and para-professional capacity. Routine active record surveys have not been resourced in the past and there is no immediate prospect of sourcing additional skilled capacity to address this in the foreseeable future.

6.3 The service aims to focus its available capacity on a more effective and considered approach to collection development and achieves this through the following measures:

- A clear articulation of its priority collecting targets
- Improved awareness and understanding of the priority collecting targets by all stakeholders
- A rigorous approach to implementing the acquisition policy and the associated criteria identified in section 5
- Regular review of its audiences and their needs and the relationship between these and the collection development principles and priority collecting targets

6.4 Priority collecting targets: 2016-2021:

In order to fulfil its objectives to support the aims of the University of Leicester, Archives and Special Collections seeks to acquire new material which falls into one or of the following categories:

- Collections which support the strategic aims of the University of Leicester to deliver and support discovery-led research and discovery-led learning
- Collections which enhance the institutional memory of the University of Leicester
- Collections which strengthen the relationship between the University of Leicester and its city and region

More specific collecting targets are defined in the Archives and Special Collections collections development strategy, 2016-2021.

7 Collections Information

7.1 Accessioning

7.1.1 The service maintains an accessions register for all accessions of private material and all significant internal transfers of institutional archive material. Personal or sensitive information from the accessions register is unavailable for general access but summary information is sent to The National Archives as part of its annual "Accessions to Repositories" exercise. The service issues a receipt for all accessions of private material and significant internal transfers.

7.1.2 Formal archival accessioning was introduced in 2013. The service is compiling retrospective accession records from other sources to improve the accessibility of accession information for earlier deposits, gifts, purchases and transfers.

7.2 Cataloguing

7.2.1 The service aims to produce catalogues of all its archival holdings. The service has substantial cataloguing and retro-conversion backlogs and prioritises in accordance with agreed criteria to ensure that cataloguing capacity is directed to collections identified as a priority. The cataloguing prioritisation process also identifies cataloguing projects which may be suitable for external funding applications.

7.2.2 The service conforms to the mandatory elements of ISAD(G) in all new cataloguing. Where retro-conversion of legacy manual finding aids is undertaken, the service makes reasonable efforts to comply with mandatory elements of ISAD(G).

7.2.3 Adherence to cataloguing standards is overseen by the Archivist, who plans work programmes and allocates cataloguing tasks to professional, para-professional staff and volunteers in accordance with the complexity of the cataloguing task and the skills, experience and knowledge of the potential cataloguer.

7.2.4 Where it is pragmatic to do so, cataloguing to series or sub-series level rather than file or item level is undertaken in order to optimise the impact of the time resources available for cataloguing activity.

7.3 Publishing catalogues

The service aims to improve access to information about its holdings by all relevant and effective means, including identifying pragmatic opportunities to share our catalogue data with other agencies and via relevant discovery platforms.

As a minimum, catalogues are made available in hard copy format in the Reading Room and published online via the following platforms:

- The service's online catalogue (CALMView).
- The Library's Discovery platform (Primo)
- The National Archives' Accessions to Repositories
- The Archives Hub

A printed copy of completed catalogues is supplied to depositors when required, free of charge. Copyright in the service's catalogue data lies with the University of Leicester. Any volunteers who create catalogue data and other finding aids are asked to assign copyright in those to the University of Leicester.

8 Collections Care and Conservation

The service adopts the following policy principles for its archive collections but also follows these principles for the management of its other collections, such as rare books and manuscripts.

8.1 Storage conditions

- 8.1.1 The service recognises and aims to meet the provisions of PD5454:2012, *Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials*.
- 8.1.2 The service currently stores archive collections in the purpose-built strongroom in the University Library and in an outstore. The former provides a stable environment which conforms to PD5454 recommendations with regards to temperature and relative humidity. The outstore has limited environmental controls and is consequently a more challenging environment in which to store archives. Within the capacity constraints of each location, the service undertakes an (informal) assessment of the sensitivities of particular collections / items and frequency of consultation when determining where to store them.
- 8.1.3 Both storage locations are fitted with a Building Management System (BMS), data from which is accessible to the Archivist to support environmental monitoring and management. The service is also registered with the National Conservation Service's Environmental Monitoring Scheme which provides corroborative environmental conditions data.
- 8.2.4 The service actively monitors both storage locations and maintains a log of any perceived incidents or hazards together with actions taken.
- 8.2.5 The service carries out a risk assessment of both storage locations and review these on an annual basis in order to identify and manage risks to collections arising from their storage and consultation environments.
- 8.2.6 The service works with the Head of Library Administration and the University's Estates team to monitor and control the environment in both of its storage areas, and to address other issues which impact on PD 5454 compliance.
- 8.2.7 The service provides expert advice within the University to ensure that development plans include appropriate provision for additional PD5454 compliant storage to meet known and anticipated needs.

8.2 Preservation

- 8.2.1 The service supports the implementation of preservation measures designed to promote the long-term stewardship of the collections in its care. We:
- Store all physical archives in a secure and access-controlled environment, with measures in place to protect against risks from fire, flood, pests and unauthorised access
 - Monitor and manage the storage environment in accordance with PD 5454 recommendations
 - Store all physical archives in archival quality packaging materials, seeking expert advice when necessary and ensuring that staff involved in re-packaging activities are trained to minimise risk to collections during the re-packaging process
 - Ensure that all handling and consultation of archives is subject to best practice reading room regulations
 - Liaise with potential depositors of specialist media held in formats for which we do not have suitable storage or access arrangements in order to identify a more suitable repository

- Take expert advice from a qualified conservator as appropriate

8.2.2 The University Library is developing plans for implementing an infrastructure for managing, preserving and providing access to digital archives. The Library will build on work currently underway to safeguard research data, some elements of which will be transferable to the digital archives environment.

As an interim measure, the service places digital material (both born digital archives and digital surrogates of archives held by the service and elsewhere) on the University's Research File Store (RFS). While this is not a digital preservation platform, it does offer a secure, backed-up and managed digital environment.

Staff will improve their knowledge and skills base with an initial commitment to undertake relevant courses offered by the Digital Preservation Training Programme.

The service is committed to exploring opportunities to secure investment to address this area, such as the preliminary expression of interest to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a partnership project to secure appropriate access and preservation measures for the digital archives arising from the Richard III project and subsequent workstreams.

8.3 Conservation

All interventive conservation treatments must be undertaken by a conservator qualified and experienced in the appropriate conservation discipline (e.g. paper conservation).

The service maintains a list of all items which require specialist intervention and will source external expertise to address these as funds allow.

8.4 Insurance

The service is committed to supplying the University's Insurance Officer with up to date information about insured collections and to ensuring that insurance provision meets the needs of the service, its collections and depositors. The insurance policy states that the insurer will settle the costs of restoration in the event of partial loss or damage.

8.5 Disaster prevention and recovery

The Library works with Estates and Security to ensure a rapid and informed response to situations which threaten the integrity of its facilities, collections or service delivery.

The Library has a Business Continuity Plan and a Disaster Recovery Plan for Print Collections

The University maintains a subscription to Harwell's Priority User Service.

9 **Disposals and deaccessioning: principles**

9.1 The service recognises and conforms to The National Archives' *Deaccessioning and disposal: Guidance for archive services*, 2015. Potential disposal decision-making will be undertaken using the Disposal destination decision tree.

- 9.2 There is a strong presumption against later disposal or deaccessioning of material that has been accessioned by the service. However, it is noted that the service holds a number of legacy collections which were not subject to current appraisal principles and processes. The service reserves the right to conduct a retrospective appraisal exercise, including consultation with relevant third parties, to determine whether these collections meet the principles identified in section 5 and the Priority Collection targets listed in section 7.4.
- 9.3 Deaccessioning decisions are made by an archive professional, based on archival principles and professional good practice and are not be driven solely by forces external to the archive service.
- 9.4 Deaccessioning is not considered in response to budgetary or storage constraints.
- 9.5 Any decision to deaccession material is publicised via the service's web pages.
- 9.6 In seeking to identify an alternative repository for a particular item or collection, the service endeavours to match current levels of public access.

10 Digital Preservation

- 10.1 The service advocates the acquisition of born-digital records alongside other formats in order to provide a complete picture of the activities of a particular organisation or individual.
- 10.2 The service acquires digital surrogates provided that these complement existing holdings (for example by filling in a gap in an existing series) and provided that the original document is unavailable for acquisition.
- 10.3 Digital records are subject to the same acquisition principles and considered against the same priority collection targets as physical formats.
- 10.4 Digital records are accepted on the understanding that the aim is to make them available for consultation alongside physical records.
- 10.5 Digital records are subject to the same rigour concerning accession information, access restrictions, etc.
- 10.6 The service recognises its lack of experience in managing digital archives and seeks to work collaboratively with partners with similar aims in order to develop an infrastructure, policies and procedures in this area of expertise.

11 Access: collection impacts

- 11.1 Consultation of the service's archive collections must take place in the supervised Archives and Special Collections reading room.
- 11.2 Staff, volunteers and researchers must abide by the reading room regulations, with staff actively and consistently explaining and demonstrating good practice in handling archive material.

- 11.3 Researchers are able to make or request copies of archive material subject to current copyright legislation and provided that the copying process will not, in the judgement of Archives and Special Collections staff, risk damage to the document in question.
- 11.4 Production of archive material for consultation in the reading room is subject to current information legislation provisions. The Archivist will liaise closely with the University's Information Assurance Team to ensure harmonisation of access procedures for archives with the University's compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- 11.5 Archives and Special Collections maintains a regular programme of exhibitions of original archive material and rare books in the showcases outside the Special Collections suite. The Library is a 24/7 environment and exhibitions are designed and managed accordingly. The service also supports occasional exhibitions elsewhere on University premises. The service also loans archive material to third parties for exhibition off campus where appropriate.

Archive material will only be selected for exhibition provided the following criteria are met:

- The duration of the exhibition is no more than 4 months
 - High quality surrogates are used in lieu of particularly light sensitive materials such as photographic prints, newsprint, etc.
 - The lighting in the exhibition area is fitted with UV filters OR the exhibition case is fitted with UV film
 - Exposure to light is minimised by use of protective showcase covers during periods of low footfall, i.e., outside Archives and Special Collections opening hours
 - Archive material is exhibited only in high security showcases of a specification equal to or exceeding the Click Netherfield CLAM-HD cases used by the service
 - A record is kept of how many times specific items are exhibited with the express purpose of preventing over-exposure of individual items to the hostile exhibition environment
 - All bound volumes are supported by appropriate cushions or book cradles
 - Consideration is given to turning the pages in volumes during their exhibition period to minimise strain on the spine and light exposure on specific pages
 - Requests to loan archives for exhibition by a third party are considered on a case by case basis and will only be agreed provided satisfactory arrangements are in place with respect to security, environmental conditions, insurance and transport
- 11.6 Archives and Special Collections regularly hosts or contributes to teaching and learning activities. Archive material may be used to support these sessions provided the following criteria are met.
- Handling of unique archive material in teaching sessions must be subject to reading room regulations
 - If the teaching session is to take place outside Archives and Special Collections, archive material must be accompanied by a member of Archives and Special Collections staff at all times, and suitable protection (boxes, waterproof portfolio case, etc.) must be used while the material is in transit.
 - Where intensive handling is anticipated, consideration must be given to using high quality surrogates in order to minimise risk to irreplaceable archive material
- 11.7 When archive material needs to be transferred between the Library and the outstore the following measures must be observed:

- Archives in transit must be protected by an archive box, waterproof portfolio case or watertight plastic transit crate
- Items in transit must be accompanied by the green document production slip to aid correct identification and replacement of individual documents
- Items to be transferred by the University porters van delivery service must be clearly identified as “Archives and Special Collections” and must be unpacked and shelved as soon as possible by Archives and Special Collections staff.

This policy was written in March 2016 and will be reviewed no later than March 2021.