



Archives and Special Collections Collection Management Policy

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Introduction

Mission Statement

To preserve and make accessible the records of the institutional and social history of the College and its archival special collections and through the records and collections to support research, teaching and learning, within the College and the wider community.

Scope

This policy covers collections kept by Royal Holloway, University of London Archives and Special Collections. It does not cover the Library's rare book collection or collections held in the academic departments of the College.

Definitions

Archive – a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people.

Special Collection – a collection of documents or publications which have enduring historical value but were not created by Royal Holloway, University of London or its predecessor bodies.

Preservation – the use of passive or non-interventionist measures to slow down the deterioration of material. This includes repackaging, environmental controls and safe handling practices.

Conservation – the use of active measures to prevent further deterioration of material. An example of this could be flattening a map or repairing torn paper.

Collections Development

The Archives are keen to accept new archival collections which align with our mission statement and collection management policy, but also have an obligation to balance the desirability of acquiring collections against the cost of storing and processing them, and making them available. The Archives also have a responsibility to ensure that collections which would be more appropriately kept by another archive repository are not accepted.

Collection Strengths

The collections currently fall into three sections:

- the institutional records of Royal Holloway College, Bedford College and the merged Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (Royal Holloway, University of London) with a particular strength in the history of women's education. These can be loosely defined as records created or received by the Colleges in the course of their history and development. This includes records of College committees, internal and external communications, photographs of College life, records of the Student Union, records of clubs and societies, records of special events, broadcasts relating to the College etc.
- personal papers of individuals with a connection to the Colleges. This may include oral histories, reminiscences, photographs of College life and correspondence etc.
- special collections which support research strengths within the curriculum, in particular women's history, history of higher education and theatre history.

Please see the guidance notes below for specific information on material the Archives are able to accept. In cases where the Archives are unable to accept material offered, the Archivist will advise on the most suitable repository.

Guidance Notes

- Material relating directly to the history of the institution will usually be accepted, assuming that it is unique and does not duplicate anything already held in the archive.
- Material will be accepted in either hard copy or digital format. A Digital Preservation Strategy for the Archives does not yet exist but there are procedures in place for the storage of and access to digital records.
- In most cases, the papers of an individual will only be accepted if a significant part of the collection relates to the life of the College. In the case of large collections, the resource implications of cataloguing, storage and conservation will be weighed against the research benefits of accepting the material. In such cases, advice will be sought from subject specialists in our academic departments.
- Where material does not relate to the history of the College, it will usually only be accepted if it relates directly to a curriculum strength or to a research area already represented by archive sources, such as women's history or theatre history. Again, in the case of large collections, the resource implications of accepting the material will be carefully considered.
- Material which would be better suited to deposit in a repository approved by The National Archives which already holds material associated by provenance to that

subject area will not be accepted. An example of this is documents relating to the local area, which would be better offered to Surrey History Centre.

- Archival collections are most valuable for research if the evidential links between documents have not been destroyed by the collection being split. Therefore in most cases the Archives will accept a collection in its entirety or not at all.
- See the Library Collection Policy for details of our collection policy for printed, electronic and other materials.
- The above information is to be used only as a guide. Archive collections are unique, and there may well be exceptions.

Funding

The Archives and Special Collections do not have their own budget for purchasing material. Funding for purchases is sought from appropriate Library budgets or external funding sources on a case by case basis.

Deaccessioning

Following acquisition and during the cataloguing process the Archivist will evaluate the collection and identify any material not required for permanent preservation. Any decision made regarding disposal will reflect the above policy and will be executed in line with the transfer of ownership agreement.

The Archives reserve the right to conduct a periodic review of the records held, in light of research use of the records, and where necessary, to recommend their disposal, destruction or transfer to a more appropriate repository.

Collections Information

Maintaining accurate information about the collections the archive holds is vital to the smooth running of the service. The information ensures that our collections are discoverable for users and trackable for security and in the event of a disaster.

This information falls into two main categories: accession information and catalogue information, both of which are stored in the Calm cataloguing database.

Accession Information

The Archives record accession information for every donation and bequest in order to ensure that accurate provenance records are kept.

The accession record gives details of the scope and content of the material, its extent, any restrictions on access, its legal status including any copyright information, the date of accession and details of the donor or source. The accession record is created electronically in Calm.

The Archives also require a transfer of ownership form to be filled in and signed by the donor and a member of Royal Holloway Archive or Library staff. A hard copy of this is kept in the archive office with any associated paperwork.

Each accession is given a unique number beginning with the year it became part of the archive. This is then also recorded as part of the catalogue record when the material is catalogued. The accessions database is not made available to the public in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Guidance on what to record on accession records and how to record the information forms part of the Cataloguing Guidelines.

An annual report listing new collections is provided to The National Archives.

Cataloguing Information

Archive collections are catalogued using Calm cataloguing software and made visible to the public via a CalmView website.

The archive catalogues follow the International Standard of Archival Description (General) or ISAD(G). The Cataloguing Guidelines contain guidance on what information should be recorded in each record. Some of the legacy data stored in Calm does not meet ISAD(G) and work is ongoing to update these records.

All the major collections held by the Archives are represented on the Calm database but there is a cataloguing backlog for more recent accessions, most notably in the College collections. The Archives have a prioritised plan for this work and volunteers are used to carry out simple listing and cataloguing tasks. The Volunteering Policy outlines the use of volunteers in the Archives. Box

lists exist for much of the material not on Calm and these can be used to answer user enquiries in lieu of a full catalogue.

Preservation

Storage and Security

The majority of the archive and special collections material is held in dedicated stores within the Founder's Library. Some less frequently used collections and material awaiting appraisal are kept in stores elsewhere in the College, including the University of London Depository.

All material held within the Founder's Library stores are in secure rooms which are only accessible by Library staff. Access to the stores (e.g. for maintenance) must be arranged with the Archivist.

All researchers are supervised while consulting original material in the archives reading room.

Original material in exhibitions is not left unattended unless the Archivist is confident that the cases used are secure. Items are not loaned for exhibition unless there are satisfactory security measures in place as well as the appropriate environmental conditions.

Requests for loans are assessed on a case by case basis subject to the physical state of the item, the security and conditions at the host destination and agreement to our loans terms (listed on the loan agreement).

Exhibitions curated by the Archives display either original material or copies of material depending on where the exhibition will take place, which display cases will be used and if the Archivist will be present for the duration of the event.

Exhibitions within the College are provided with original material where appropriate and with duplicates or copies where it is not possible to guarantee the security of the items and appropriate environmental conditions.

Environment

Apart from two, the temperature and relative humidity of the stores in Founder's Library are controlled by air conditioning units set to 18 degrees centigrade and 50% humidity in line with PD5454. Temperature and humidity readings are recorded throughout the year.

The reading room does not have environmental control and neither do the display areas. Original material is only displayed for limited periods of time. If displays are long term copies of original items are used.

Pest management

The archive stores are cleaned regularly and pest traps are laid to enable early detection of an infestation.

New collections are checked for signs of infestation and mould in the reading room before being introduced to the stores. If infestation or mould are found, appropriate measures are taken to eradicate the problem with professional help if necessary.

Emergency response

The archives and special collections kept in the Founder's library stores are covered by the Library's Disaster Management Plan. The University of London's Depository, where some of the lesser used archive collections are kept, has its own emergency plan which covers all the material in its stores.

Conservation

Items requiring conservation work are assessed on a case by case basis. Prioritisation for conservation is based on amount of use, physical condition of the material, historical significance and status of deposit.

Conservation work is always carried out by an external conservation professional. Records are kept of all work carried out.

Funding

The Archives do not have their own budget heading, ongoing costs are taken from appropriate Library budgets and conservation work is scope and then a case made to the Library or other funding sources.

Access

The Archives Service is open to all researchers on completion of a registration form and agreement to abide by the user guidelines. Access to the archives in person is free of charge.

The Archives strive to offer all users excellent customer service and support them in making the best use of the collections we hold.

Enquiry Service

Enquiries can be received via email, telephone, post or in person. All enquiries should receive an initial response within 10 working days. If this is not possible the enquirer will be notified.

All enquiries should be answered in the order they are received but internal enquiries may take precedence over external enquiries at busy times.

Archive staff will spend a maximum of 30 minutes on each enquiry. If the work takes longer than this the enquirer can either come into the archives to conduct the research themselves or pay for more of the Archivist's time.

Reading room access

The Archives Reading room is situated in the Founder's Library and is made available for researchers to consult collections in person either as a research visit or as part of a group visit. Reading room use is supervised at all times and handling aids, secondary sources and duplicates of key items are provided for researchers' use.

All researchers must abide by the Guidelines for Users and follow any handling advice they are given by Archive staff.

Access to the reading room is by prior appointment Wednesday to Friday 9.30-1 and 2-4.30. Group visits may be arranged outside these times to avoid disruption to the reading room. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to arrange access for individual researchers outside the published opening times, for example if the researcher is only in the country for a limited amount of time.

Due to the small size of the service, researchers must provide the Archivist with a list of material they wish to consult before they arrive for their appointment.

The reading room is located on the third floor of the Founder's Library and has lift access. In the event of a fire the lift cannot be used, therefore any users who cannot walk down three flights of stairs unaided must notify the Archivist when making an appointment so that an alternative room can be arranged for their visit.

Specialist sessions

The Archives can provide group sessions for students or external visitors. These can be designed to match the interests of the group.

Online access

Archives website

The Archives website: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/archives/home.aspx> provides access to the online archive catalogue for researchers anywhere in the world. The catalogue contains descriptions of the collections but is not intended as a replacement for consulting the original documents.

The Bedford College Nursing Papers are the only part of the archive collections which have been fully digitised and made available online via the Equella digital repository. The catalogue descriptions in the online catalogue contain links to the corresponding digital objects in Equella.

The Archives website contains information for researchers about the scope and content of the collections, onsite access, reprographics and contact details to make an enquiry.

See section on Outreach and Promotion for details of online exhibitions.

Other websites

Catalogue descriptions for the archive collections are available on the AIM25, Archives Hub and Discovery websites which allow users to search across multiple repositories.

A selection of images are available to view via the Archives' Flickr photo stream:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/rhularchives/>

Outreach and promotion

Physical Exhibitions and Events

The Archives runs its own events and exhibitions throughout the year to showcase its collections. The Archives can also offer exhibitions or visits to the archives for other events on campus.

Requests for archive exhibitions should be directed to the Archivist.

Online Exhibitions

If copyright of the material allows, physical exhibitions are recreated on the archives website. This allows visitors to gain a greater understanding of the collections without the restrictions of opening hours.

In addition to online exhibitions, the archives website hosts the Item of the Month feature which highlights items from the archives, rare books and art collections.

Loans

Items from the archives can be loaned externally on request. Applications to borrow items from the collections should be directed to the Archivist. Requests will be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account security, environment and insurance coverage at the loan location,

agreement to our loan terms (listed in the Loan Agreement) and the physical condition of the item to be loaned.

Reprographics

The Archives offer a range of reprographics options for users. Researchers visiting the reading room can use their own camera to take copies of documents free of charge provided they abide by the Digital Camera Policy and Safe Handling Guide.

Users are also able to request photocopies or scans of documents for which there is a charge (details of which can be found on the Archives website). Unbound items up to A3 size can be photocopied or unbound items up to A4 size can be scanned. The Digitisation Guidelines set out the recommended scanning resolutions and file naming conventions for digitised material.

The Archives reserve the right to refuse copying of documents if they are fragile or if doing so could cause damage to the item. Bound items cannot be copied on a flatbed scanner or photocopier but can be photographed.

All users (whether requesting copies to be made or taking their own copies with a camera) must fill out a Copyright Declaration Form.

Remote users can request copies to be made in consultation with the Archivist.

If users wish to publish copies of archival documents they must complete a Publication Declaration form. The Archivist can provide advice on copyright restrictions and clearance.

Funding

Marketing of the Archives is paid for through the Library budget. The Archives has a separate Digitisation budget which is used to cover the ongoing costs of student record digitization as well as other digitisation projects.

Access Restrictions

It is necessary to restrict access to some collections for a number of reasons including:

Legislation

Access to the records held by the Archives must comply with relevant legislation including:

Data Protection Act

Freedom of Information Act

Copyright legislation

Preservation

Some items are too fragile to consult in the reading room. If this is the case, surrogate copies of the material will be provided when possible.

Uncatalogued material

It may be necessary to restrict access to material which is uncatalogued if the material has not been fully checked for data protection issues.

Annabel Valentine, August 2015