

Special Collections

Collections Management Policy

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Mission Statement

The Special Collections' mission statement is to curate unique collections for teaching and research. The statement reflects the role of Special Collections in acquiring, preserving, and making accessible specialist collections of published and unpublished material for the purpose of learning, teaching and research.

The Collections Management Policy outlines Oxford Brookes' Special Collections' commitment to appropriate and consistent collections development, to the creation and dissemination of accurate collections information, and to the care and conservation of its collections.

Collections Development

The Special Collections Guidelines for Acquisitions (Appendix I) set out the priorities and considerations for accepting new collections. In summary, new collections will be assessed with regard to: their relevance to the current undergraduate and research programmes of the University; their relation to the five collecting themes represented in Special Collections; funding availability; available space; proposed deposit status; conditions of access; and collection format(s).

The process of acquiring new acquisitions is largely passive. There is no designated budget for purchasing new collections. The majority of the Library's Special Collections have gift or permanent loan status. Offers of new collections are generally made one of two ways: (i) direct from the collecting institution/individual in order to secure a permanent home for the collection; (ii) via academic members of staff who either request or are offered collections from/by relevant contacts within their professional network. These methods of acquisition have proven to be effective and are appropriate for a small-scale repository with space and budget limitations.

Appraisal decisions are made at two stages. Potential new acquisitions are considered by the Special Collections Group, and broad appraisal conditions (e.g. accepted core material, duplication) are specified in the deposit agreements. Further appraisal may take place during accessioning and cataloguing, as the collection is examined in more detail, and additional appraisal decisions may be made in consultation with the depositor. Due its nature as a growing institutional archive, the Oxford Brookes University has its own collection guidelines (Appendix II).

The deaccessioning of collections may be considered under one or more of the following conditions: (i) the University ceases to offer programmes of study in the collection's subject area, (ii) lack of use, (iii) the identification of a more appropriate archive repository, (iv) a reduction in storage facilities or service provision. Candidate material for deaccessioning will generally be offered to the original depositor in the first instance, but the University may also seek/suggest an alternative repository to which the collection may be transferred.

Collections Information

Deposit agreements should be completed for all new accessions. A Gift Deposit Form (Appendix III) may be used for small donations. Large gifts, and all collections deposited on permanent loan require an agreement drawn up by Legal Services. Copies of accession paperwork and related correspondence is to be kept permanently in institutional archive (staff access only). A summary of the accession information should be entered into Calm accession record and linked to collection-level description (see Cataloguing Guidelines, Appendix IV). Individual depositor and intermediate records can be created on Calm and linked to the accession records.

The Special Collections consist of either published material (i.e. books, journals) and/or archival material. The published material is catalogued by the Library's metadata team on Talis Alto (Library Catalogue). The archival material is catalogued by the Archivist on Calm (Archive Catalogue). Items on the Library Catalogue are catalogued using the Dewey Decimal system in accordance with MARC standards. Collections on the Archive Catalogue are catalogued in accordance with ISAD(G). Collection-level descriptions of all published and archival collections exist on the Archive Catalogue. Information pertaining to the Library's principal collections is also present on the Special Collections web pages. Where a collection is unlikely to be catalogued (to ISAD(G) or Dewey/MARC standards) for some time, an interim finding aid may be produced in order to make the collection more accessible. If appropriate, these interim finding aids will be made available on the web page for the relevant collection. Cataloguing and processing guidelines may be produced for individual collections of published material depending on the nature of the material (e.g. personal library vs publisher's imprint). Cataloguing Guidelines (Appendix IV) exist for archival material - the guidelines cover Special Collections' accessioning, cataloguing, and storage procedures.

Short video tutorials on using the Library Catalogue and Archive Catalogue are available on the Library's web pages. Both the Library and Archive Catalogues also have help pages to assist new users.

Externally, information relating to new accessions is submitted annually to The National Archives, and collection-level records are published on The Archives Hub and The Archives Portal Europe.

Collections Care and Conservation

The Special Collections Preservation Policy and Digital Preservation Policy are available in Appendices V and VI.

The Preservation Policy makes provision for a preservation survey to be carried out periodically, using the MLA's *Benchmarks in Collection Care*, to assess the existing provisions for preservation and identify potential areas of improvement. A summary of the latest survey (2017) is provided in Appendix VII.

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