

# Special Collections & Archives Collections Management Policy

Information Services  
University of Kent  
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This Collections Management Policy sets out the principles and provisions for the management of Special Collections & Archives at the University of Kent.

The purpose of this policy to ensure that development activity and access provision to collections is aligned to the University of Kent's strategic objectives of advancing research, education, and engagement. In doing this, the policy intends to support and reflect the diverse requirements and interests of our users. Information Services is committed to developing, sustaining and making accessible Special Collections & Archive materials. Implementation of this policy will be underpinned by effective academic liaison.

The policy also covers the vital activity involved in the selection and development of active collecting areas, and how Special Collections & Archives preserves and protects these collections for future posterity. Our Collections Management Policy is standard for both analogue and digital formats, and we will make clear where we have extra provisions based on the requirements of these formats.

## 1.2 Mission

The Information Services mission is to provide leadership and expertise that empowers the University community to exploit technology and information in support of its research, teaching, learning, enterprise and business processes. Special Collections & Archives manages the University's unique and distinctive collections so that they are preserved and accessible for the benefit of teaching, scholarship and society. Informed by the Institutional and Information Services Strategic Plans, Special Collections & Archives provides strategic direction to maximise the use, value and legacy of these collections.

## 2. Access

### 2.1 Access context

We aim to provide as wide an access to Special Collections & Archives as possible, to inspire and enable people to use our resources effectively and creatively.

The users of Special Collections & Archives are:

- University of Kent undergraduate and taught postgraduate students
- University of Kent academic staff, research postgraduate students
- University management, administrative and support staff
- Alumni and governors
- Local, national and international communities and people who use the web pages and online catalogues
- Staff and students of other universities and colleges
- Schools, community groups and the wider public
- Publishers and media
- Creative practitioners including cartoonists and stand-up comedians.

Special Collections & Archives consults with stakeholders through the Information Services Library User Panel, which includes representation from University staff and students. Staff also engage with the University's relevant centres and forums, such as the Popular and Comic Performance research centre, and the Digital Humanities Forum.

Users can also provide feedback through web pages and a comments box outside the reading room.

### 2.2 Access priorities

People and communities access our collections in many different ways, and Special Collections & Archives are committed to understanding the needs of our users and developing a variety of services to meet their requirements. This includes services for people who visit collections in the Special Collections & Archives Reading Room, and people who engage with content online locally, nationally and internationally.

We provide a secure Reading Room for people accessing resources, to ensure that collections are both available to current researchers and preserved for future users.

We maintain a strong web presence that engages with a significant international audience. Special Collections & Archives endeavour to digitise relevant and high-demand content to encourage on-going engagement with our collections. Special Collections & Archives provide extensive digital collections interpretation, including a blog and social media presence to ensure that digital users have a means of on-going engagement with our collections.

The Templeman Library offers an access for all guide for library and IT services for people with disabilities. Within this, Special Collections & Archives are committed to supporting users with disabilities, to ensure inclusive access to our collections and to learning. The reading room has adjustable lighting levels, and is a quiet study environment. We endeavour to provide inclusive access to our collections and may be able to provide high quality TIFF or JPEG digital images, audio descriptions and large format copies.

We actively review services for those with disabilities, and to improve these by engaging with the Student Support & Wellbeing team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Group, and through responding to user feedback.

We aim to treat all users equally, recognising that first-time users of our services may need more assistance initially and that depositors of records have certain rights regarding those collections. We recognise the value of the many differing types of user activity and research, regardless of the nature of the research conducted. Information Services are committed to examining barriers to access to our facilities and whether any of our potential stakeholders are not benefitting fully from our services.

### 2.3 Using the Reading Room

The Special Collections & Archives Reading Room is based in the Templeman Library on the University of Kent's Canterbury Campus. The Templeman Library is open to staff and students of the University of Kent, and public visitors. University of Kent staff and students are asked to show their Kent One card upon arrival. External users are asked to complete a short, free registration form at the library welcome desk.

Anyone is welcome to visit the Special Collections & Archives Reading Room, but an appointment is necessary to view material. Appointments can be made by ordering material on the catalogue or by email. The Reading Room is staffed during open hours to answer queries. Staff are trained to show users how to book material through the catalogue, and there is a paper guide that can be taken away.

### 2.4 Enquiries

The Special Collections & Archives inbox and telephone are staffed during regular working week hours; staff aim to respond to email queries with 3 working days, and postal enquiries within 10 working days. More complex enquiries which require staff research may take longer depending on the nature of the enquiry, but users will be kept informed regularly of progress.

We encourage enquiries by email, and prefer to respond via email where this is possible, as this allows a faster response via shared email accounts.

Our enquiry service offers basic research on behalf of offsite researchers based outside of the University of Kent.

### 2.5 Reprographics & digitisation

Users visiting the Reading Room may use their own cameras to take freely pictures of materials, within the copyright restrictions of content.

Special Collections & Archives offers a digitisation service for users at set charges, and supply these as digital files.

### 2.6 Restrictions on access to Special Collections & Archives materials

It may be necessary to place restrictions on access to some archives and collections to comply with privacy legislation and/or professional codes of ethics, or for the security, preservation or conservation of the material. In this case, where appropriate, we may be able to offer redacted copies of sensitive material. When material is not available for preservation reasons, we may be able to offer enhanced metadata or a digitised surrogate.

## 2.7 Discovery and access

Special Collections & Archives are committed to surfacing our materials through accessible discovery interfaces. This includes maintaining and updating our library and archive catalogues, and offering support to find materials in these catalogues. It also involves ensuring our collections can be accessed through other discovery platforms such as Archives Hub and the National Archives Discovery.

## 3. Outreach and engagement

### 3.1 Outreach and engagement context

Special Collections & Archives are responsive to outreach requests, which leads to engagement with University of Kent staff and students, visiting school groups, further education institutions, community groups, and professional organisations.

We intend to strategically shift this approach to be pro-active and ensure that new internal and external audiences can research, learn from, and enjoy the unique and distinctive collections which we hold. This includes a pro-active approach to mapping collection themes to subjects taught at the University of Kent and support from the Academic Liaison Librarians, in order to advocate and better engage the wider University to use our collections as widely as possible.

### 3.2 Outreach and engagement priorities

Special Collections & Archives underpin knowledge; collections act as evidence, comment and enquiry. Through engagement with our collections, we aim to encourage scholars of all levels to develop primary research and information literacy skills which empower them to be more analytical and critical. We aim to ensure that our collections enhance the impact and society benefits of academic activities, and deliver a positive and unique student learning experience.

Engagement activity leads to the appreciation and understanding of our collections and raises the national, international and public profile of University of Kent.

Outreach and engagement will be prioritised to support academic departments in teaching, research, training, grant applications, for public engagement, and for external impact, with consideration of the University's Research Excellence Framework, Teaching Excellence Framework, Internationalisation agendas and Widening Participation objectives. This commitment includes using the Reading Room, seminar room, online collections and Templeman Gallery to cultivate positive learning opportunities for our collections.

We will endeavour to support the University of Kent's Outreach team, and their work with partner schools, colleges, community and adult learning.

We offer volunteering opportunities for University of Kent students and the wider public, so that they can develop workplace skills whilst altruistically supporting our activities.

Staff managing volunteers are suitably qualified and provided with guidelines. Volunteers are provided with an agreement and role description before they start, and a summary of attainment when they finish volunteering. The University of Kent's insurance covers Special Collections & Archives volunteers, and their contribution is monitored on a timesheet.

### 3.3 Partnerships

As part of the University of Kent, Special Collections & Archives works with internal partners such as academic schools, research centres, colleges, the Gulbenkian Theatre and Studio 3 art gallery.

Externally, we have a close partnership with both Canterbury and Rochester Cathedrals, and surface their collections through the main library catalogue. We work in partnership with both cathedrals to develop access to our collections, and encourage community engagement across these sites. We have a formal partnership agreement with Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library Service.

The Templeman Library also has a special working arrangement with the Drill Hall Library in Medway, which is managed jointly by the University of Kent, the University of Greenwich, and Canterbury Christ Church University. Special Collections & Archives endeavour to display material in the Drill Hall Library to encourage Medway users to access collections, either online or by visiting the Canterbury campus.

Kent's SC&A are active members of several local, national and international archives partnerships including the Kent Special Collections, Local Area Studies and Archives Forum, and the Higher Education Archives Programme run by The National Archives. Our staff are members of the Archives and Records Association, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information professionals, and we actively commit to the sector by serving on specialist committees and presenting research at conferences. Through our partnerships and professional networks, we seek to share and influence best practice in special collections and archives locally, regionally and nationally.

### **3.4 Events**

Special Collections & Archives arrange and contribute to events, such as open lectures and research festivals, usually in collaboration with one of our internal or external partners.

### **3.5 Press, media and social media**

Special Collections & Archives staff respond to press and filming requests on a case-by-case basis, offering expertise on our collections and content for articles which are covering the unique and distinctive materials we hold.

The Special Collections & Archives team uses social media to engage with users and stakeholders. This includes regular activities on blogs, Twitter, Instagram and podcasts. Social media activity is undertaken to comply with the University of Kent guidelines, to offer an accessible entry point into understanding and interpreting our collections.

### **3.6 Exhibitions**

Special Collections & Archives have dedicated Gallery Space in the Templeman Library, which is used for regular exhibitions and displays to stimulate interest, inquiry and learning from our collections.

We loan Special Collections & Archives materials to local, national and international museums, galleries, libraries and archives. This is managed through loans procedures, which ensures the preservation and security of our collections on loan and guarantees that they are safely insured, transported, handled and exhibited.

## 4. Collection development

### 4.1 Collection development context

Collections development sets out the criteria for selecting material for long-term preservation, and collecting exclusions.

Special collections and archival material have been collected at the University of Kent since the University's founding in 1965, although a specialist department, Special Collections, was not established until the 1980s. In 1963, during the University's establishment, the first librarian sent out a call for books which would be suitable for a university library; this generated a number of deposits, some of which are now part of Special Collections & Archives. In 1973 the Centre for the Study of Caricature and Cartoons – which founded the British Cartoon Archive - was established, thus predating the Special Collections department. In 2013 these two departments were merged to form Special Collections & Archives. In 2014 the post of University Archivist was established to focus on establishing a formal institutional University Archive, involving identifying, cataloguing, preserving, and giving access to records that have enduring value in recording the history of the University of Kent.

Particular collection strengths include:

- British political cartoons and caricature [British Cartoon Archive]
- Theatre, drama, comedy, and the performing arts in Britain [through various theatre, and popular and comic performance collections]
- Modern poetry and prose
- The history of the University of Kent [University Archive]
- The history of the regions and communities of which the University is a part, especially the local history of Kent
- Windmill and watermill images and ephemera
- Personal library collections [politician David Lloyd George, scientist Dr R.E.W. Maddison]

### 4.2 Collection development priorities

Collection development over 2017-2021 will focus on identified areas of interest which support the University's areas of teaching and research expertise, and also in areas where the University holds a national collection. This enables the significant resources invested in the full costs of curation, storage and access to be allocated strategically.

A particular focus will be given to developing collections that document comic and popular live performance, including the collections of theatre, and The British Stand-Up Comedy Archive.

In addition, active collecting will continue in the following areas:

- British political cartoons and caricature [British Cartoon Archive]
- The history of the University of Kent [University Archive]

Other areas of strength, such as the history of the regions and communities of which the University is a part, especially the local history of Kent, are collected selectively and acquisition will be based on the criteria for acquiring new collections.

### 4.3 Criteria for acquiring new collections

Decisions on acquiring new collections are made within a framework: new acquisitions are assessed against the subject priority areas detailed in section 4.2, and the following criteria outlined below act as guidelines to help with our decisions:

- Whether the records are of clear historical and cultural importance
- Whether the acquisition is supported by representatives from one, or more, Academic School
- The relationship of the collection with existing holdings and areas of collection strength
- Whether we have adequate resources (including storage, staffing numbers) and expertise to properly appraise, catalogue, preserve, and provide access to the records within a reasonable timescale
- Whether the materials conflict, compete or duplicate with collections at other institutions
- Whether the records are in a reasonable condition and do not require active conservation work which is disproportionate to their historical value
- Whether there are prohibitive access restrictions which may close the records for a period of time; the historical value of the material will need to be sufficient to justify the expense of their storage whilst not being made available to the public

We actively consult with colleagues at the University of Kent to assess the extent to which the material will support their teaching and research. The final decision on minor new acquisitions is made by the Head of Special Collections & Archives according to the above criteria. Decisions on major new acquisitions must be approved by the Library Management Group. Minor acquisitions are considered to be anything less than one shelf metre or fifty digital files of less than 100GB, major acquisitions are anything over these figures.

Material will not be excluded because of its format. Records are accepted in a variety of formats, including paper, photographs and other image media, sound and moving image recordings, props and objects, and digital records (deposited on analogue formats and as digital files).

We will not accept material when:

- The acquisition would duplicate material already held at the University of Kent or in other publicly accessible archives/collections
- The records are current or semi-current use

The University of Kent seeks to avoid conflict, competition and duplication of effort with other local and national archival repositories.

### 4.4 Methods of acquisition

Material is required through the following methods:

- Active approaches from Special Collections & Archives staff to possible depositors
- Offers of donations or loans
- Internal transfer from University of Kent to the University Archive

Donations (which transfer the legal ownership of the records) are preferred over deposits made on loan. Our ability to accept loans will be based on whether copyright is owned by the depositor (a condition of the loan is that we have permission to digitise, preserve the digitised images, and provide access to them) and a loan duration of a minimum of ten years.

The exceptions to this general rule are collections on loan to the British Cartoon Archive; in most cases, the copyright of the loaned material is often clearly distinguishable and we are given permission to digitise, preserve, and provide access to the loaned material in agreement with the depositor.

There is limited funding available for the purchase of special collections and archive material. When material comes available which distinctly meets selection criteria, avenues of funding will be considered. We welcome offers of financial support for the processing, cataloguing, preservation, and conservation of the collections.

#### 4.5 Accessioning procedure

Material which is accessioned into the collections, either as a donation or loan, is recorded on an accessions database. Deposit records are kept for each collection, which clarifies the status of the collection (in terms of a loan or donation), whether any intellectual property rights are transferred to the University, whether there are any access restrictions, and whether any records can be disposed of or deaccessioned in the future. New material will be catalogued to at least collection-level at the earliest opportunity. Data about depositors is not made available to the public, and is stored securely.

We expect to appraise, weed, and dispose of material as part of the arrangement and description procedure. These practices are often not possible as part of the collection acquisition process, and so will be clearly noted in deposit agreements.

#### 4.6 Reappraisal and deaccessioning

Archival and special collections which we accession are intended to be preserved permanently. However, we reserve the right to retrospectively review our collections, particularly those legacy collections accessioned prior to any formal collecting policy. Records will be reappraised based on the criteria set out in section 3 (collection development) and section 6 (criteria for selection).

A collection may be deemed to no longer be appropriate for us to keep due to the following reasons:

- The material may be more appropriately held in another repository which has a specialist interest
- The material is on loan and is requested by the depositor
- Material is duplicated
- The material does not support the University directly in areas of teaching or research expertise

All deaccessions and disposals will be fully documented.

The terms of deposit for each collection will be honoured. Material which is not deemed to be suitable for Special Collections & Archives will either be returned to the depositor or their heirs, transferred to a different institution, or appropriately destroyed.

We adhere to the principle that there should be a strong presumption against the disposal by sale of any documents in our ownership.

The Special Collections & Archives team have not actively deaccessioned material in several years, however are required to audit their collections over 2017-2019 to ensure that resources are maximised towards priority areas. All reappraisal and deaccessioning will be done in consultation with relevant academic faculty representative groups.

## 5. Collection information

### 5.1 Collections information context

We recognise the importance of having good documentation about our collections; this underpins every aspect of our service. Good documentation is fundamental to our collection management activities, to the security of our collections, and for the provision of access to our collections.

Discovery and access is provided in the library's resource discovery system (Library Search) as well as the source catalogues using Calmview.

The management of collections information is led by staff within the Special Collections & Archives and within the Digital Curation & Metadata team. Special Collections & Archives staff focus on collections information at appraisal, accessioning, conservation and preservation, and access. Digital Curation & Metadata staff focus on collections information via cataloguing and describing to provide discovery and access; they also manage digital curation, including digital preservation, in conjunction with a Digital Curation Policy.

Special Collections & Archives are currently auditing and reviewing documentation on all of our collections to identify legacy issues, as a means of planning future improvements and enhancements to our collections information.

### 5.2 Collections information priorities

The minimum documentation held for each collection includes the terms of deposit, an accessions record and a collection level entry. Cataloguing is prioritised through a framework that assesses stakeholder requirements, resources, significance of the content, and the existing discoverability of the collection.

Archives are organised and described according to the International Council on Archives, General International Standard of Archival Description [ISAD (G)], ISAAR(CPF), and RDA.

The main collections management system for archives is CALM. There is a current project led by the Digital Curator to export any data still held in historic collections management systems, to clean and enhance the data so that it meets current archival cataloguing standards and import it into CALM.

Special collections of books and other formats suitable for bibliographic cataloguing are described following International standards (e.g. RDA, DCRM(B), Library of Congress Authorities) in the library management system. University of Kent cataloguing guidelines describe the RDA and DCRM(B) hybrid adopted in 2015. The records are published in the resource discovery system- Library Search.

Special Collections & Archives, as part of the University of Kent, adheres to the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.

### 5.3 Interoperable collections information

In addition to discovery and access through the University of Kent's resource discovery system LibrarySearch and distinct Special Collections & Archives catalogues, we also provide collection-level descriptions to the Archives Hub. The University of Kent is a member of a consortium with a joint resource discovery system. Currently library collections from Canterbury and Rochester Cathedrals can be searched alongside University of Kent collections to ensure that researchers can make connections between collections. Additions to the collections are included in the return to SCOUNL Annual Library Statistics.

The resource discovery module of the new Unified Library Management System, Enterprise: Portfolio, will enable us to create collections of digital assets such and photographs, PDFs and other digital content, and display assets to the public using 'rooms' functionality.

## 6. Collection care

### 6.1 Collections care context

We undertake action to preserve the collections in our care, and to extend the life of collection materials to ensure their continued availability. Archives and special collections are held in locked strong rooms, for reasons of security and preservation. They are not available for loan to students or staff, and so must be requested for reference in the Special Collections & Archives Reading Room.

Special Collections & Archives storage facilities are being transformed by a £27million investment in the Templeman Library to develop a large PD 5454-compliant archive store to permit future growth. In spring 2017, Special Collections & Archives materials are held in several different on-site and off-site storage facilities, whilst this library development work is underway. These storage facilities are environmentally monitored, with varying levels of environmental control and cannot guarantee PD 5454 compliance. Occupancy of the new basement is expected to commence in summer 2017.

We recognise that digital collections have different preservation requirements, and take a standards based approach to managing these.

### 6.2 Collections care priorities

The new PD 5454-compliant archive storage facility within the Templeman Library will be handed over to the University of Kent in summer 2017. This will enable which will ensure a rationalised and unified set of Special Collections & Archives strong rooms. This transformation has presented a major opportunity to generate more pro-active collections care practices. It will give Special Collections and Archives more workspace to undertake regular cleaning of collections.

We monitor the environmental conditions of our collections to ensure suitable temperature, humidity and light levels. We have a quarantine area to undertake preservation assessments, and for collections to be cleaned.

Paper based archival collections are boxed to enable efficient storage, handling, and fetching. In the case of single items, boxing protects and facilitates access and security. Other forms of archival packaging such as folders, and wrapping or boxing for books are determined on a case by case basis. The materials used for packaging are of archival quality.

Special Collections & Archive undertake action to preserve unique and distinctive book collections through providing ties and support-boards, where required. Book cleaning is usually undertaken by volunteers, supervised by a staff member.

Digital curation is managed by the Digital Curation and Metadata Team under the Digital Curation Policy, formed on the Open Archival Information System model [OAIS] and ISO 16363 principles. We have established workflows and guidelines for the curation lifecycle of born digital and digitised content which cover formats, processes and embedded metadata, and storage for preservation. Digital assets are recorded annually on an Information Asset Register. The University of Kent is an approved Associate Member of the Digital Preservation Coalition.

An assessment of newly acquired archives and special collections is carried out by appropriately trained staff, using national models such as, the National Preservation Office Preservation Assessment Survey, and considering the Information Asset Register for digital materials. This informs the ongoing care and management of each collection, and ensures that priorities and risks are transparent.

### 6.3 Conservation

Conservation work is outsourced, usually to Canterbury Cathedral which has a specialist book and paper conservation studio. Conservation requirements and risks which have been observed by staff are recorded within a database.

### 6.4 Exhibition loans

Special Collections & Archives welcomes enquiries and requests for the loan of material from our collections for the purpose of public display and exhibition both in the UK and internationally. Organisations which loan material must sign a loan agreement, which details conditions of the loan, and ensures the safety, security and preservation of the loaned items.

### 6.5 Disaster recovery

Disaster recovery and emergency response procedures for Information Services, including Special Collections & Archives, are detailed in a Disaster Recovery Plan, which is tested annually as part of auditing. We are part of a collaborative disaster planning and salvage group with partners in Canterbury and Kent.

## 7. Supporting documents

### Strategic enablers

[University of Kent Plan 2015-2020](#)

[Information Services Operational Plan 2017](#)

[Information Services Equality Diversity Strategy](#)

### Access

[Finding material in Special Collections & Archives guide](#)

[Library and IT services for people with disabilities webpage](#)

[Reading room access and opening hours webpage](#)

### Outreach and engagement

[A History of Comedy in Several Objects podcast](#)

[British Stand-Up Comedy Archive twitter](#)

[British Cartoon Archive twitter](#)

[Special Collections & Archives blog](#)

[Special Collections & Archives twitter](#)

[Teaching with Special Collections & Archives webpage](#)

[Templeman Exhibitions blog](#)

### Collection Information

[Accessions checklist](#)

[Archive Cataloguing Guidelines](#)

[Book Cataloguing checklist](#)

[Collections Information Prioritisation](#)

### Collection Development

[Collection Development Policy British Stand-Up Comedy Archive](#)

[Collection Development Policy University of Kent Archive](#)

### Collection Care and Conservation

[Information Services Library Collections Digital Curation Policy](#)