UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Libraries

Archives Collection Development Policy

Cambridge University Library

Approved by: Leadership Team

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1. Scope
2. Collections overview
3. Collecting purpose
4. Strategic goals
5. What and how we collect
6. Collecting criteria
7. Disposal
8. Legal status of collections
9. Rights management
10. References
11. Acknowledgements

1. Scope

This policy outlines the current collecting priorities for archives and modern manuscripts within the main University Library. Archives encompass personal and institutional records dating from the medieval period to the present day, including digital records. Modern manuscripts are defined as those dated post-1600.

Archives are held and collected by several sections and departments across the University Library, principally the Department of Archives and Modern Manuscripts but also the Map, Music and World Collections departments and Bible Society collection.

This policy covers the collections of the main University Library but recognises that archives and modern manuscripts are held in other parts of the University and its colleges, the development of which are covered by collection profiles for those institutions.

Collections development for archives and modern manuscripts at the University Library takes place in a collaborative environment, in consultation with stakeholders. The Library also recognises that it operates within a national and regional (East of England) network of archive-holding institutions and aims to work collaboratively with other repositories to ensure the best outcome for collections, donors, depositors, and users.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Cambridge University Libraries Strategy 2024-2034

Cambridge University Library Ethical Acquisitions Policy
(Ethical acquisitions policy.docx)

2. Collections overview

The collections of archives and modern manuscripts form part of Cambridge University's Library's Designated Special Collections (awarded 2020), collected over the course of six centuries, covering a wide range of human endeavour, in numerous formats and languages. Reflecting the administrative functions and research in the University, its role as a national and international research library, and areas of curatorial expertise, the Library has collected archival collections across a wide range of subjects, sectors, and periods. Historical and in some cases continuing collection strengths are identified in the Appendix.

3. Collecting purpose

Archives and modern manuscripts are acquired to:

- Support current University research requirements
- Respond to emerging research requirements and to support new areas of research
- Support the Library's role as a national research library with special collections of national and international importance
- Support the Library's cultural role as a repository of world class documentary heritage

In addition to this, the Library has a responsibility to acquire items for specific institutional collections to fulfil statutory requirements. It acts as a Place of Deposit for public records within various collections including the Royal Greenwich Observatory archive, the Ely Dean and Chapter and Diocesan Records, manorial records in various estate collections and probate records within the University Archives. University Archives are also acquired to enable the University to document its own practices and achievements and to assist University administrators.

These collecting aims may be met by building on existing collection strengths, thus increasing their already rich research potential. However, they may also be met by acquiring material in new or underdeveloped collecting areas.

4. Strategic Goals

Through its collecting activities, the Library supports its mission 'to hold the knowledge of Cambridge and make that learning as widely available as possible to power the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence'.

The Library identifies its collections as an essential component of the success of the University. Its 'Cambridge University Libraries Strategy 2024-2034' has among its strategic priorities to meet the needs of research communities:

- *Create a sustainable capability to collect and preserve born-digital knowledge: we will ensure our ambition for future research harnesses the significance and potential of digital information, archives, and data and we will grow our collecting, infrastructure and services to achieve this.*

- *Diversify our curatorial practices to stimulate new and inclusive approaches and ensure our collections stay relevant for future: we will work in partnership across the collections of Cambridge with academic colleagues, students, and wider communities of origin to diversify collections and collection practices with the goal of deepening our knowledge of their origins and meaning, and creating more equitable access to collections, research and learning.*

5. What and how we collect

Attention is focused on original material; surrogates such as newspaper cuttings and photocopies of printed sources or archival material held elsewhere are not normally accepted unless they form an integral part of a significant archival collection.

Material is acquired in a variety of analogue formats, including manuscript, typescript and printed material, photographic material, and audio-visual material. The Library recognises that it does not currently have the specialist technical expertise or facilities to store and care for audio-visual material. It accepts such material where it forms a part of a broader collection and will endeavour to have preservation copies made on stable media. Where the Library is offered collections which consist wholly or substantially of audio-visual materials, donors or depositors will be directed to more appropriate repositories such as the National Sound Archive, the British Film Institute, and the East Anglian Film Archive. Objects are occasionally acquired, primarily as donations that complement, or are an intrinsic part of, an existing collection.

The Library has developed a Deposit Service for transferring digital files to Cambridge University Libraries safely and securely to enable the acquisition of born digital material and is developing a digital preservation service to preserve and provide access to digital collections. The Library welcomes offers of material that would enhance its collections and will seek to actively build its digital collections.

Material is acquired through purchase (where funds allow), bequest, donation, transfer from University offices and through the government's Acceptance in Lieu and Cultural Gifts schemes. Collections deposited on loan are accepted only in exceptional circumstances. Where collections are on deposit, the Library seeks to collaborate actively with depositors in managing the development of collections appropriately.

Material is appraised and selected using a mix of approaches for acquisition by specialist staff in the Library considering collecting criteria,[i] often in consultation with subject experts and academic colleagues in the University and beyond. The Library seeks to achieve value for money. When purchasing archives from an individual or institution, it will seek an independent valuation where appropriate.

The appraisal of potential acquisitions also considers the amount of space they will take up and what resources they require to make the material accessible to readers, including cataloguing, conservation, and administration. An assessment of the physical

condition of archives will be made prior to their acquisition/ acceptance. If they are found to be in poor condition, such that the costs of stabilising them outweighs their perceived value, or if they present a risk to other items in the Library's collections or the safety of staff and users, they will not be accepted. The University Library will not acquire items that it cannot look after nor those for which it cannot provide sufficient access. It will not accept items with unreasonable or overly onerous conditions attached. It will examine carefully, and record in writing, the implications of accepting items that will not be immediately accessioned into the permanent collection.

Where donations of material are declined, a more appropriate home may be suggested.

6. Collecting criteria

Appraisal of archives should address one or more of the following criteria. It should also consider issues of equality, diversity, and inclusivity. While our collecting is not primarily format based and we will continue to acquire important archives and manuscripts in traditional formats, we expect to increase the proportion of born-digital archives that we acquire. Collections in digital format will need to also meet at least one of these criteria to be considered for acquisition.

6.1 Research

Archives and manuscripts that support the research needs of the University and the Library's communities.

6.2 Cultural Heritage

Archives and manuscripts the acquisition of which contribute positively to the preservation of important cultural heritage.

6.3 Collection Strengths

Archives and manuscripts that build on or fill gaps in existing collection strengths, especially where curatorial expertise and resources are available to support selection and stewardship.

6.4 Document contemporary society

The Library aims to document aspects of contemporary society to preserve a historical record for the future, especially with respect to the University and its communities, but also to contribute to the documentation of UK society in the context of regional and national networks of archive repositories.

6.5 Diversity and representation

The Library will support the acquisition of archives and manuscripts that contribute toward the promotion of and advancement in the understanding, teaching, and research of topics such as social justice, decolonisation, representation of Global Ethnic Majority, equality, diversity, and inclusivity.

7. Disposal

The Library reserves the right to weed, return, transfer or dispose of any unwanted material that is beyond the scope of what we collect, for example duplicates or copies of items available in the Library's or other collections. Such material is normally identified in the process of accessioning and cataloguing. In line with National Archives guidance on deaccessioning and disposal, the Library may also retrospectively appraise or reappraise archival collections it already holds, but recognises that any deaccessioning must be handled sensitively, and that any depositors or their heirs must be informed and offered back deaccessioned material wherever possible. This is balanced with preserving the overall historical integrity of the collection, including collections and items acquired in reference to past criteria different from those applied today. The Library is committed to transparency around the histories of the collections, and will consider requests to restitute and repatriate material on a case-by-case basis.

8. Legal status of collections

Provenance and title are considered for all acquisitions and due diligence is undertaken in line with the Library's Ethical Acquisitions Policy to avoid the acquisition of material which might have been illegally offered for sale or imported. The Library reserves the right to reject collections where there is a lack of clarity over ownership and rights issues.

9. Rights management

The Library seeks to clearly establish the intellectual property rights and access restrictions associated with a potential acquisition and will capture information about the copyright, data protection and freedom of information implications at or before the point of accession. Where archives are accepted on deposit, arrangements for each collection are confirmed in writing at the point of transfer and reviewed periodically.

10. References

The National Archives, Writing a Collections Development Policy and Plan (2018), https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/writing-a-collections-development-policy-and-plan.pdf

11. Acknowledgements

The National Archives, Collection development guidance https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/advice-and-guidance/managing-your-collection/developing-collections/collection-development/

The National Archives, Deaccessioning and disposal, Guidance for archive services https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/Deaccessioning-and-disposal-guide.pdf

Bodleian Libraries, Collection development policy: Special Collections http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/about/policies/sc-collection-development

Churchill Archives Centre, Collecting policy https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/about/policies/collections-policy/

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1.0	Jill Whitelock, Suzanne Paul	October 2017	October 2017	October 2019
2.0	Katrina Dean	January 2024	January 2024	January 2026

Appendix - Major collecting strengths

The Library collects archival collections across a wide range of subjects, sectors and periods but has identified the following collection strengths.

1 University of Cambridge

The University Archives comprise the internal administrative records of the University of Cambridge, dating from 1266 to the present. There is a specific Cambridge University Archives Collection Policy (approved 2018, reviewed 2023), which details the collecting scope of the University Archives. In addition, the Library collects archives about the University of Cambridge reflecting the University's research and impact activities as well as staff and student experience, including the archives of student clubs and societies. The Library has in the past collected papers of Cambridge academic staff and alumni who have made major contributions to their academic discipline or field of endeavour. We will continue to consider offers on a case-by-case basis, aligned with collecting strengths and supported by collecting criteria. However, we do not comprehensively collect the research papers of Cambridge academic staff and other options remain available to researchers including college archives and repositories with a relevant subject or disciplinary collecting remit.

2 Scientific archives and manuscripts

Scientific archives and manuscripts comprise major holdings of outstanding international significance including the scientific and mathematical papers of natural philosopher Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the papers of naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the papers of Stephen Hawking (1942-2018), the extensive archive of the Royal Greenwich Observatory (1675-2019) containing public records including the papers of the Astronomers Royal and the Board of Longitude, and the archive of the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company. In addition, there are collections from more than 200 contributors to modern science, many with connections to Cambridge. Women scientists have been poorly represented in the collection. This is an active area of collecting for the Library, and our focus is to document contemporary science, reflecting the role of the University in key scientific developments since World War Two. We will also seek to diversify the science collections including collecting the papers of women scientists.

3 Literary and cultural archives

Priority is given to authors with a connection to the University and city of Cambridge, and to a lesser degree with the East Anglian region. Particular interest is taken in modern and contemporary collections, and attempts are made to create ongoing relationships with living authors, and whereas relevant with the representatives of recently deceased authors, to promote continuity of accessions and to preserve the integrity of fonds. This is an active area of collecting for the Library and we seek to

extend the scope of our collecting to embrace a wider range of literary and cultural forms and diversity of expression and experience.

4 Music archives and manuscripts

Responsibility for collecting music archives and manuscripts is shared between the Department of Archives and Modern Manuscripts and the Music Department. The Library's collecting interests focus primarily on British composers and musicologists, especially those with a connection to Cambridge. Donations of archival collections are actively considered, particularly where there is a relationship to existing holdings.

5 Antiquarian, religious and ecclesiastical archives

The Library holds several antiquarian collections with Cambridge connections, including papers of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Strong theological themes are evident in the Ely Dean and Chapter archives and Ely Diocesan Records, held on deposit. It has particularly strong holdings in material relating to missionary work, including the archives of the Bible Society (on deposit), the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Africa Inland Mission, complemented by material held within the Royal Commonwealth Society collection. We sometimes add to these collections and are most likely to consider religious collections of national or international significance.

6 Topographical, landholding and local administration records

The Library holds four large estate collections that include title deeds and manorial records relating to Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire dating back to the late 12th century. The deposited archives of two major ecclesiastical bodies – the Diocese of Ely and the Dean and Chapter of Ely – also include several centuries of manorial records and related land surveys for these areas. There are large numbers of title deeds and manorial court rolls in the Doc series. Taken together with the University Archives these records provide an incredibly rich vein of research for 800 years' worth of community, economic and agrarian history and local justice in East Anglia. While it might not be appropriate to collect new estate collections since these come within the collecting policy of local archive services, the Library would seek to acquire records to fill in gaps, especially in long series of manorial court records. The Library also holds archives in the Map Department including the Charles Close Society Archives, a collection of documentary and printed material dealing with cartographic matters with relevance to Ordnance Survey.

7 Commonwealth archives and manuscripts

Focused around the archives of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), founded in 1868 as the Colonial Society, the Library's Commonwealth collections encompass a wide geographical and thematic range documenting Britain's former colonial territories. To complement existing collection strengths, we occasionally add archival

and photographic material relating to individuals with a connection to the RCS or who lived or worked in colonial or Commonwealth countries. Institutional records are held in the Commonwealth Library and Archives at Marlborough House in London; material relating to the contemporary Commonwealth is actively collected by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London.

8 Social, political and military history

Social, political and military material is collected where there is a connection to the University and city of Cambridge, and to a lesser degree with the East Anglian region, or where the material in question complements existing holdings or supports current and emerging research requirements. In accordance with provisions in sections 1 and 4 of this policy, particular regard is paid in the case of accessions of political papers to the collection strengths of the Churchill Archives Centre. We occasionally add to these collections.

[i] While most selection occurs using traditional appraisal approaches, additional methodologies are applied in some areas. For example, functional analysis is applied to the University Archives. Documentation strategies and related methodologies inform aspects of literary and scientific collecting.