



## School of Advanced Study Libraries and Senate House Library

### Preservation Policy

[The School of Advanced Study \(SAS\)](#) at the University of London unites eight internationally renowned institutes in the humanities, along with several centres of research excellence and expertise. [Senate House Library \(SHL\)](#) serves as the central library for the University of London and the School of Advance Studies. Together, their libraries house one of the UK's largest academic collections in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, providing an unparalleled resource for researchers both in the UK and internationally.

The SAS and the SHL Libraries, University of London (UoL), are committed to preserving and safeguarding the collections with the purpose of supporting and promoting academic research and teaching to the highest standards and enabling long-term access for both present and future users in line with the collection management policies (CMP).

The SAS/SHL Libraries, diverse and housed in different sites and locations, create a wide range of different preservation needs. This policy sets out the unifying principles according to which SAS/SHL will preserve these collections, taking into account relevant national and international standards and frameworks as well as the requirements for Archive Service Accreditation (see Appendix A). By adhering to these principles and standards, SAS/SHL ensures that its preservation efforts are effective, sustainable, and aligned with best practices in the field. While this Preservation Policy focuses primarily on the care of physical collections, it acknowledges that digital preservation is also essential for supporting current and future researchers.

This policy applies to every library activity and aspect of collection management that may impact the material integrity of the collections. A preservation-focused approach is embedded in all activities, from acquisition to access. All SAS/SHL staff, within their roles and responsibilities, operate in accordance with the principles and standards set by this policy. The SAS and SHL Senior Conservators lead in collection care activities and provide guidance and advice in consultation with their line managers and senior management teams.

SAS/SHL recognises that the preservation needs of the collection must be balanced with several other factors, such as the UoL's commitment to environmental sustainability, cost efficiency and the UK Government's targets for reducing carbon emissions. SAS/SHL works towards achieving a low-energy, sustainable environmental control to ensure the long-term preservation of its collections.

To ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of its collections in accordance with the mentioned policies, standards, and strategies, it is the policy of the SAS/SHL to:

1. Generate and cultivate a culture of care for the library's collections and facilities, raise awareness of the risks and agents of deterioration (see Appendix B) that threaten our assets and the ways to counter them, and provide guidance and training in good practice regarding handling, storage, display and transport of collections for all staff and collection users.
2. Optimise storage arrangements to prevent overcrowding and physical strain on items, ensuring the use of appropriate, quality conservation-grade shelving and protective



packaging, especially for fragile items. Adapt storage and retrieval procedures to the specific needs of various materials and locations.

3. Monitor and adjust environmental conditions using advanced monitoring equipment and sustainable environmental controls to maintain stable temperature and humidity levels within storage and display areas, using low-energy solutions where possible, in order to minimise the risk of deterioration. Implement measures to control natural and artificial light exposure and diverse forms of pollution to reduce the risk of damage to collections.
4. Develop and maintain a comprehensive disaster plan for all sites to enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities and to mitigate the risk of damage and loss in the event of an emergency. Maintain subscriptions with external specialist service providers, supporting resources and staff training to be enacted, in coordination with the departmental business continuity plans (BCP), to ensure that such situations are managed appropriately, and collections efficiently protected, recovered and restored.
5. Consolidate an integrated pest management programme (IPM) across all institutions.
6. Protect collections against theft and vandalism. On every site, active and passive security measures and protocols, together with the broader institutional ones and the staff's awareness and watch, are in place and are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, enhanced for items of outstanding value.
7. Where remedial conservation work is needed, this is to be performed by professionally trained/qualified conservators or supervised trainees, following national and internationally established principles, standards and ethical codes of practice, and using only quality conservation-grade materials and techniques in accordance with health and safety regulations. All conservation treatments should be sufficiently documented in clear and accessible records.
8. Ensure that collection care policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in line with the latest research, technological advances and current standards. Engage with relevant national and international professional bodies to stay informed of best practices and innovations in the field.

This policy has been approved by the SAS/SHL Library Directors' board and has been written in consultation with the SAS/SHL Senior Conservators. It will be reviewed annually and/or whenever a modification should be introduced to keep it in tune with related organisational documents. This responsibility sits with the SAS and SHL Senior Conservators.



## **Appendices**

### *Appendix A – Standards and frameworks*

The following is a list of current standards and frameworks to which SAS/SHL seeks to align its preservation practices, procedures and guidance. This list will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

- BSI PAS 197:2009 – Code of practice for cultural collections management
- BSI PAS 198:2012 – Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections
- BS 4971:2017 – Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- BS EN 16790:2016 - Conservation of cultural heritage. Integrated pest management (IPM) for protection of cultural heritage
- BS EN 16853:2017 - Conservation of cultural heritage. Conservation process. Decision making, planning and implementation
- BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage – Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
- BS ISO 11799:2015 – Information and documentation – Document storage requirements for archive and library materials
- ISO/TR 19814:2017 – Information and documentation – Collections management for archives and libraries
- Benchmarks 3.0 in Conservation Planning for Archives, Libraries and Museums
- Archive Service Accreditation Standard, The National Archives
- The Institute of Conservation’s Professional Standards and Ethical Guidance
- European Confederation of Conservators-Restorers Organisations (E.C.C.O.) Professional Guidelines

### *Appendix B – Other references*

- *Agents of deterioration*, Canadian Conservation Institute