

Archives Collection Development Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to establish a framework for how the Library acquires archival material across all formats. The document also sets out the collecting priorities for the Archives.

The policy is a public facing statement intended to inform stakeholders and users of Senate House Library of the purpose set out above and also an internal document to guide collection development across the Archives.

Governance

This document should be read in conjunction with Senate House Library Collection Development Policy and the Collection Strengths of Senate House Library document.

Key Decision Criteria

There are three fundamental criteria driving acquisition of archives:

- Do they fall under the subject areas outlined in this policy?
- Are they of sufficient research interest?
- Does another repository have a better claim to them?

Description of the Collections

The Library's Archives and Manuscript collections fall into three management areas:

- The University of London Archive
- The Library's deposited archives and manuscript collections

University of London Archive

The Library holds the institutional archive of the University of London, the central University as defined by the [University of London Statutes](#). The University of London Archive includes the records of central administrative bodies and their constituent and predecessor bodies, central academic departments and their constituent and predecessor bodies, and staff and student groups that are and have been affiliated with the central University of London. Records are transferred to the archive from semi-current and current records storage in line with institutional agreements and guidance including records retention schedules.

The records of University of London Federal Member Institutions are not included in the Library's holdings; they are the responsibility of the Member Institutions.

Deposited collections: general selection criteria

This section of the policy sets out the general criteria against which new material from sources external to the University of London will be considered for selection into the archive collections. Acquisitions outside these criteria (and the subject strengths in the section below) will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Selection decisions will also take into account the limitations which may need to be imposed as a result of staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements.

Ownership and transfer of title

The Library acquires material for the archives through donations, bequests and purchases. It does not accept loans or any material of which the ownership is uncertain or for which a valid title cannot be acquired.

Accruals to existing archives and manuscripts

Accruals of records from organisations and individuals who have already deposited archives will normally be accepted.

Intellectual property rights (in the case of donations)

The Library prefers that donors assign any intellectual property rights they own in material gifted to the University of London. This is to facilitate use of the material by researchers and to avoid the need for donors and their heirs to deal with publication requests up to 70 years after the death of the material's creator. However, this is a recommendation rather than a requirement and is subject to negotiation with potential donors.

Co-operation with other archives

The Library will seek to avoid competition, conflict and duplication of effort. In particular, it will seek to avoid collecting archives of individuals or corporate bodies if another public archives repository has an established collecting interest in these archives and therefore a more legitimate claim to them. In the event of a dispute between the Library and another repository as to the proper custodian of a group of records, the advice of a neutral arbiter such as the National Archives will be taken.

Provenance

Records will not be accepted for the archive if there is reason to believe have been created, acquired or processed through illegal or unethical means. The Library will not actively encourage the deposit of records whose provenance is outside the UK, unless these records are already held in the UK, or unless their permanent preservation is threatened in their current location. The Library will work towards finding mutually satisfactory solutions to questions concerning displaced archives and records with a shared archival heritage, recognising legal and ethical considerations.

Primary and second source material

The Library will generally only accept primary source material into the archives. Published material will not normally be acquired as part of the archives and individual publications embedded within archival collection may be rejected or offered to the Library's Modern Collections Librarians for consideration. In addition, notes and drafts of published works will usually only be retained if they contain unique data of historical interest.

Format

Material is accepted in the following formats: manuscript and printed records, photographs, pictures, video and film, although collections consisting wholly of film or video recordings will not normally be accepted. Born-digital records will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in the context of the development of a digital preservation policy by the University of London. Three-dimensional objects and artefacts will only be selected in exceptional circumstances.

Copies

The Library will not normally accept photocopies of records held elsewhere. Possible exceptions include copies of archives where the originals are unlikely to have survived. The details of the provenance of collections comprising entirely such material should be recorded, if possible, and, if appropriate, assurances given by the depositor that no copyright laws have been broken. The Library may acquire microfilms of other archives to complement its holdings, but these would normally be considered additions to library collections (rather than archive) holdings.

Subject areas: the Library's deposited archive and manuscript collections

The Library will collect in the subject areas set out below to build on existing strengths and also to complement the Library's collecting focus in published works. These areas are likely to evolve over time to take into account new and emerging areas of research interest. Collecting will also be driven by the Library's commitment to maximising the diversity of voices in the collections and collecting practices will be reviewed periodically to ensure that inclusivity is at the heart of decisions made about archival acquisition.

- Social, economic and cultural history of the University of London, including the records of the many diverse communities associated with the University. Archives will not usually be considered for inclusion in the Library's collections solely on the basis that an individual was employed by the central University. In the case of academics' research papers, the subject matter must fall under at least one other subject criterion (e.g. physical research).
- Historians, particularly those associated with the Institute of Historical Research
- Literary figures, publishing firms and archives related to the history of the book, particularly from 1850 onwards
- Individuals who have donated their book collections to the Library
- Physical investigations, magic and the paranormal
- Francis Bacon scholarship
- Temperance movements, particularly in the 19th century
- Victorian schooling and education policy
- Industrial, commercial, monetary and financial history of the United Kingdom, and general economic science, particularly archives that complement the Goldsmiths' Library
- British plantations and the exploitation of enslaved peoples in the West Indies
- Trotskyist and far left archives, particularly relating to organisations and individuals in London
- Theatre and drama
- Palaeography
- Pacifism, particularly in relation to the First and Second World War

- Music, particularly medieval music transcriptions and 18th-20th scores
- Germanic Studies, including cultural and intellectual relations between the UK and German-speaking countries, and exile studies, particularly the papers of scholarly, literary and cultural figures who came to the UK in the 1930s and 1940s
- Latin American Studies, including the social, political and economic history of Latin American countries; cultural, social and intellectual relations between the UK and Latin America; Latin American Studies in the UK and the Latin American diaspora communities in the UK
- Commonwealth Studies, including the social, political and economic history of Commonwealth nations and dependent territories, particularly of the Caribbean (18th - 20th centuries), southern Africa (20th century) and Sri Lanka (late 19th - 20th centuries) and political parties, trade unions, pressure groups and non-governmental organisations across the Commonwealth

July 2024