

Special Collections and Archives Collections Management Policy

Information Services

University of Kent

20th October 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Collections Management Policy Framework sets out the principles and provisions for the management of Special Collections and Archives at the University of Kent. These are organised in the four areas defined by PAS197:2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management. These areas are Collections Development, Collections Information, Collections Access and Collections Care.

The purpose of this policy is 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 and 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 and 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 and 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. Collections Development

2.1 Collections 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 and 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 and 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 philanthropy and fundraising [UK Philanthropy 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, literature, and ephemera
- Personal library collections [politician David Lloyd George, scientist Dr R.E.W. Maddison]

2.2 Collections Development Priorities

Collection development over 2023-2027 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.

Active collecting will continue in the following areas:

- British political cartoons and caricature [British Cartoon Archive]
- Collections that document comic and popular live performance, including the collections of theatre and The British Stand-Up Comedy Archive

- The history of the University of Kent [University Archive]
- The history of philanthropy and fundraising [UK Philanthropy 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.

Special Collections and Archives acknowledge that our collections include omissions and gaps and are not fully reflective of the diversity of the University body or the wider community. Our active collecting over the period 2023 to 2027 will seek to identify and address these gaps with a focus on material from under-represented communities alongside our business as usual collecting.

2.3 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 2.2, 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 Special Collections and Archives Manager 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.

2.4 Methods of acquisition

Material is acquired through the following methods:

- Active approaches from Special Collections and 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 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 2.2 (collection development priorities) and section 2.3 (criteria for acquiring new collections).

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. All reappraisal and deaccessioning will be done in consultation with relevant academic faculty representative groups.

The terms of deposit for each collection will be honoured. Material which is not deemed to be suitable for Special Collections and 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.

3. Collections Information

3.1 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 (LibrarySearch) as well as the source catalogues using Calmview.

The management of collections information is led by staff within the Special Collections and Archives and within the Curation and Discovery team. Special Collections and Archives staff focus on collections information at appraisal, accessioning, conservation and preservation, and access. Curation and Discovery staff focus on collections information via cataloguing and describing to provide discovery and access; Special Collections and Archives manage digital curation, including digital preservation, in collaboration with our Collections Management and IT colleagues in Information Services.

Special Collections and 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.

3.2 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.

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

3.3 Interoperable Collections Information

In addition to discovery and access through the University of Kent's resource discovery system LibrarySearch and distinct Special Collections and Archives catalogues, we also provide collection-level descriptions to the Archives Hub, and contribute new accessions to The National Archives Discovery catalogue. Special Collections and Archives have a distinct profile of LibrarySearch where users can search all of our collections (both bibliographic and collections in Calm) in isolation from the main library collections and digital resources. 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 SCONUL Annual Library Statistics.

4. Collections Access

4.1 Access and Engagement Context

Special Collections and Archives aim to encourage access to our collections from a wide range of communities and stakeholders , to inspire and enable people to engage with and use our resources effectively and creatively.

The user communities and stakeholders of Special Collections and Archives are:

Communities

- University of Kent students - undergraduate and taught postgraduate students
- University of Kent academic staff- academic staff research postgraduate students
- University of Kent alumni – former students and staff
- Other academic researchers – academic staff and students at other universities and colleges
- Historians – local historians and subject historians and researchers, particularly theatre and cartoon specialists
- Online users - Local, national and international communities and people who use the web pages and online catalogues
- Schools – local and national schools and teachers
- Local community and the wider public – people local to the University geographically and the wider public
- Creative practitioners - including cartoonists, artists, stand-up comedians and theatre performers, writers, directors and producers
- Publishers and media – those who reproduce our images in publications and the press

Stakeholders

- University management, administrative and support staff
- Newspapers and Publishers – those who own copyright in our collections
- Local archives, museums, libraries, galleries and arts/heritage organisations including Canterbury Cathedral, the Beaney, the Gulbenkian Theatre
- Subject specialist archive networks of relevance to our collections including APAC (Association of Performing Arts Collections) and CHARM (Charity Archives and Records Managers Group)
- Donors, funders and benefactors

Special Collections and Archives adopt a pro-active approach to engagement, ensuring that new internal and external audiences can research, learn from, and enjoy the unique and distinctive collections which we hold. We map our collection themes regularly to subjects taught at the University of Kent and collaborate with the Divisional Subject Librarians, in order to advocate and better engage the wider University to use our collections as widely as possible.

Special Collections and Archives consults with stakeholders through official governance routes (Information Services Committee) and via an embedded approach supported by the Divisional Library Services Team.

Staff also engage with relevant research centres and forums, such as the Performance and Theatre Research Group in the School of Arts, The Centre for Philanthropy, and the Eastern Academic Research Forum (Eastern ARC).

Users can also provide feedback through our web pages, our departmental email address, and our social media accounts.

4.2 Access Priorities

People and communities access our collections in many different ways, and Special Collections and 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 and 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 and Archives endeavour to digitise relevant and high-demand content to encourage on-going engagement with our collections. Special Collections and 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 and 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 are also able to add alt text descriptions to our images to aid

inclusive access.

We actively review services for those with disabilities, and to improve these by engaging with the Student Support and Wellbeing team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Team, 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 our facilities and whether any of our potential stakeholders are not benefitting fully from our services.

4.3 Engagement Priorities

Special Collections and 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.

Engagement is 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 and Widening Participation team, and their work with partner schools, colleges, community and adult learning.

We offer volunteering and internship opportunities for University of Kent students and the wider public, so that they can develop workplace and employability 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

and Archives volunteers, and their contribution is monitored and recorded.

4.4 Using the Reading Room

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

4.5 Enquiries

The Special Collections and Archives inbox and telephone are staffed during regular working week hours; staff aim to respond to email and postal queries with 3 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, to enable a faster response via shared emails accounts.

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

4.6 Reprographics and Digitisation

Users visiting the Reading Room may use their own cameras to take freely pictures of materials, within the copyright restrictions of content. Users are asked to complete a photography copyright form to record the images taken and confirm their agreement to copyright regulations.

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

4.7 Restrictions on access to Special Collections and Archives material

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.

4.8 Discovery and Access

Special Collections and 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, The National Archives Discovery, and JISC's Library Hub Discover.

4.9 Partnerships and Collaborations

As part of the University of Kent, Special Collections and Archives works with internal partners such as academic schools, research centres, 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 and 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 Special Collections and Archives are active members of several local, national and international archives partnerships including the , APAC (Association of Performing Arts Collections), CHARM (Charity Archives and Records Managers Group), the Higher Education Archives Programme, and the Charity Archives Development Group 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.

4.10 Marketing, Press and Social Media

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

The Special Collections and Archives team uses social media to engage with users and stakeholders. This includes regular activities on blogs, Twitter/X, 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.

4.11 Events, Exhibitions and Loans

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

Special Collections and 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 often collaborate with academic colleagues on our exhibitions using guest curators, and also co-curate exhibitions with our communities of users such as project-based volunteers. Our exhibitions are often associated with an additional programme of events such as expert-led tours, workshops, readings and seminars that relate to the exhibition theme.

We loan Special Collections and 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.

5. Collections Care

5.1 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 and Archives Reading Room.

Special Collections and Archives storage facilities were transformed by a £27million investment in the Templeman Library to develop a large archive store to permit future growth. This store complies with the recommendations of standard 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*).

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

5.2 Collections Care Priorities

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 and 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 the responsibility of the Digital Archivist, in collaboration with the IS Collections Management team, using an Open Archival Information System model [OAIS] and ISO 16363 principles. We have both a digital preservation policy and strategy, and we have established workflows and guidelines for the curation lifecycle of born digital and digitised content which cover formats, processes and embedded metadata, cataloguing and storage for preservation. We have a “forensic” workstation set up for ingesting digital material stored on external hardware.

Digital objects are held on the University’s storage area network (SAN) in an isolated location, with fixity, backups, security and access being managed by IT colleagues.

Digital assets are recorded on a Digital Asset Register. We review our digital preservation maturity annually using both the DPC RAM and NDSA levels of preservation frameworks.

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.

5.3 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

5.4 Exhibition Loans

Special Collections and 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.

5.5 Disaster Recovery

Disaster recovery and emergency response procedures for Information Services, including Special Collections and 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.

6. Supporting Documentation

6.1 Governance and Strategic Enablers

University of Kent Strategy 2025

Information Services Strategy 2016-2020

University of Kent Equality Diversity Inclusion webpages

6.2 Collections Access

Special Collections and Archives webpage

Special Collections and Archives Blog

Special Collections and Archives Exhibitions webpage

