

ual:

University Archives and Special Collections Centre

Documentation Policy



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1. Introduction

This policy lays out the commitment and core factors of the University Archives and Special Collections Centre for ensuring all its collections are adequately documented. The Policy has been formally adopted by the Centre and will be reviewed every three years.

2. The Role of Documentation

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre recognises that it has ethical, legal and operational responsibilities for the expert care of all its collections. It is committed to ensuring these collections are effectively documented to current professional standards to enable their security, management and access. The University Archives and Special Collections Centre is committed to ensuring that collection documentation enables access to information for a wide range of audiences including students, researchers, staff, partner organisations and the general public.

3. Approach

Documentation practice will be proactive to ensure it applies up-to-date standards and procedures and identifies and incorporates opportunities that broaden access e.g. ensuring software systems and documentation content can participate in linked data projects or scenarios.

4. Documentation Practice

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre will ensure that:

- Appropriate training and technology is in place for staff and volunteers, to enable high quality, efficient documentation processes.
- As a minimum all collections will have sufficient documentation to identify and locate all items for which the University Archives and Special Collections Centre is responsible, including loans.
- All collections are appropriately accessioned on the point of their entry into the collections and within 7 working days of entering the University Archives and Special Collections Centre.

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- All ethical codes comply with the Museum Association Code of Ethics, the Code of Conduct of the Archives and Records Association, and CILIP's Code of Professional Conduct.
- All legal requirements are complied with, notably those relating to Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Environmental Information and intellectual property rights.
- Current professional documentation standards will be observed at all times and in a way appropriate to the nature of the collection. Museum collections will be documented in accordance with SPECTRUM requirements. Archive collections will be catalogued with appropriate regard for a range of standards such as ISAD(G), NCA Rules for Name Construction and ISAAR (CPF).
- For Museum collections, there will be a minimum documentation as required, but must meet the minimum standards for SPECTRUM primary procedures: Object Entry, Acquisition, Loan in, Loan out, Location and movement control, Cataloguing, Object exit
- Archive collections will be catalogued to at least the minimum ISAD(G) requirements: Reference code, Title, Creator(s), Abstract, Creation dates, Extent and form, Access conditions, Level of description
- Where collections are not yet accessible due to lack of documentation the University Archives and Special Collections Centre will develop and implement appropriate plans for reducing cataloguing backlogs. This will include identifying and obtaining suitable financial resources either from internal budgets or through funding applications.

5. Staffing

Documentation will be undertaken by staff with the appropriate level of skill and experience. In certain cases, where documentation procedures are very straightforward, documentation may be undertaken by volunteers specifically trained for documentation work and under the close supervision of the relevant curator, archivist or librarian.

6. Security and Digital Continuity

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre recognises the importance of keeping documentation secure and accessible. It will institute good practice around data security with measures such as password access, multiple and regular backups and audit trails of alterations to content. Like all digital records, the Service's own documentation records in digital form will be appropriately managed to ensure their long-term accessibility, adjusting as technology develops.

7. Access to Documentation

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All finished catalogues will be made publicly available to both onsite visitors and through the website of the University Archives and Special Collections Centre. Certain elements of the catalogue will not be available to ensure legal requirements are complied with (e.g. GDPR) and collection security is maintained. Where this is the case a note will be added to the catalogue to inform researchers of restrictions on access.

8. Approval

Approval date: This policy was approved by the Archives, Museum and Special Collections Board on [18th May 2021]

Review date: 3 years

9. Version Control