

Collections Care Policy

Scope

This policy refers to materials held at DMU Special Collections, which includes archives, books, journals and artefacts

Core Principles

- Archives, books and artefacts are all subject to numerous threats to their long term security and preservation
- Preservation activities are defined as those which prolong the life of a collection; by contrast conservation is the process of treatment and repair of an object
- Preservation procedures relate to the environment, storage, packaging, and handling of a collection

Standards

- PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials, London: British Standards Institution, 2012
- PAS 198: 2012 Specifications for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections, London: British Standards Institution, 2012

Existing Storage

- The main Archive Collection, along with the majority of artefacts, is kept in a climate-controlled strong-room in the Kimberlin Library, kept at an even temperature and humidity according to the recommendations of PD 5454. The room is secure and accessible by a limited number of key holders. Items are kept on metal rolling stack
- Further archive collections are situated in a store room to the rear of the main store. This room is not climate controlled. There is no natural light. A large set of doors leads out into the car-park
- Special Collections are kept on metal rolling stack situated in the Archives reading room in Kimberlin Library. There is little natural light and windows are shaded. There

are no radiators and heaters are situated well away from the collections, allowing a stable temperature to be maintained

- The storage areas shall be subject to an annual review. Desired improvements shall be noted as part of business planning and carried out when feasible

Management and Maintenance of Storage Areas

- All storage areas are to be kept secure at all times
- Storage areas are to be kept in a neat and tidy condition which allows for ease of access under health and safety provisions
- Material is not to be stored on the floor or in aisles unless as an unavoidable temporary measure
- Food and drink is not to be consumed in the storage areas
- Pest activity is monitored using sticky traps placed in strategic locations in the storage areas
- Bristle strips have been fitted across doors leading into the archive strong-room to discourage pest ingress
- New accessions that are suspected of harbouring pests or mould can be isolated in the loading bay area until they can be cleaned. A small fridge is available to keep items at low temperature if necessary to prevent the spread of pests or mould
- A vacuum cleaner is available and the archives and special collections rolling stack are to be vacuumed every two months to remove dust and other debris which might attract pests
- Environmental data loggers have been fitted in the storage rooms to monitor fluctuations in temperature and humidity

Management and Care of Collections

Packaging and Storage

- New collections are to be repackaged on arrival if necessary, for example if the existing packaging is dirty, broken or unsuitable
- Repackaging will otherwise take place during cataloguing, according to the packaging manual
- Packaging materials are to be sourced from specialist companies to ensure they are suitable and made from acid-free, inert materials which will not affect the collections
- Care is to be taken when shelving items to ensure they fit securely on shelving and are not at risk of damage by rolling or knocking against other items. If necessary the height of shelving can be adjusted to better accommodate items

Handling and Reprographics

- Handling guidelines are to be followed at all times

- New staff and volunteers are to be trained in appropriate handling methods as part of their induction
- Researchers are to be reminded of handling guidelines and provided with suitable equipment as needed, including book rests, lead weights and gloves
- When handling heavy or large items, health and safety precautions are to be followed at all times
- Items that are to be moved by staff external to Special Collections (for example Porterage) are to be suitably packaged to prevent damage in transit. Instructions are to be issued to prevent damage to delicate objects and staff will supervise if necessary
- Handling guidelines are to be followed at all times during reprographics work
- If a particular method of reproduction might damage an item, alternative methods must be sought
- Where possible, the preferred method of reproduction for volumes is overhead photography and for photographs digital scanning
- Surrogate copies of highly popular items will be created to avoid damage through over-handling

Conservation

- Archives and artefacts with conservation needs are identified during accession or cataloguing.
- Minor cleaning can be carried out in house using document cleaning pads and other suitable equipment
- If an item is identified as needing repair work, the item is to be flagged as requiring special handling (by a note on the packaging, for example)
- If the damage is severe, access to the item should be closed until such time as repairs can take place
- Conservation activities are to be undertaken by an ICON approved professional. Intervention is to be minimal and reversible, according to existing ethical guidelines
- Books and journals in need of repair are passed to the Library Binding Team or Repair Team

Exhibition and Loan

- Items for display are to be assessed for condition before exhibition
- The display of original archival material is to be kept to a minimum and surrogates used where possible
- A loan information and agreement form will be used whenever an item from Special Collections is sent off-site for exhibition. Please see the Collections Access policy for more detailed information on outward loans

Emergency Preparedness

- The Special Collections are included within the wider Kimberlin Library Business Continuity Plan (BCP) which outlines procedures in case of disaster
- A specific disaster plan will be created for the Archive, using relevant elements of the wider university BCP but ensuring that Special Collections staff are aware of procedures for recovery in case of disaster affecting the stores
- A disaster preparedness kit will be purchased for the archive store room

Policy prepared by Katharine Short, Archivist, April 2016

Approved by Alan Brine, Head of Archives and Resource Management, and Interim Director of Library and Learning Services, April 2016

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