

SOP Title Reference: **Archives & Special Collections
Collections Development Policy**

Author: **Information Services**



Information Services Policies and Procedures

ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Scope of Policy	3
3. Responsibility, and Criteria Governing Future Collecting	3
4. Format	4
5. Methods of Acquisition	4
6. Loans Criteria	6
7. Accessioning and Public Availability	6
8. Deaccessioning, Disposal and Transfer	6
9. Policy Review Procedure	8
Document Information	8
Document History	8

1. Introduction

St George's Archives and Special Collections (hereafter the "Archive") collects, preserves and makes accessible unique materials documenting the history, functions and development of St George's, University of London (hereafter "SGUL" or the "University"). The Archive also aims to make accessible the history of St George's Hospital which has a closely shared history with SGUL. Although the majority of Hospital records have been deposited at the London Metropolitan Archives, an important series of records remain at SGUL.

1.1 Mission Statement

The Archive collection supports the teaching and research activities of SGUL, and enables research and learning by individuals external to the University. The Archive's activities are informed by the University's strategy, focusing on providing excellent information and learning resources that enhance knowledge, inspire education, and promote the work and achievements of the University.

2. Scope of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define how archive material is selected for acquisition into the collection.

3. Responsibility, and Criteria Governing Future Collecting

Materials deemed suitable for the Archive is decided by the Archivist, who has final say on what is collected.

It is intended that the collections held by the Archives will cover the following subjects:-

- SGUL research carried out in the field of medicine
- SGUL teaching priorities
- Material reflecting the history of SGUL and its connection with St George's Hospital
- Activities of former students and key members of staff
- Buildings occupied by the Hospital and Medical School
- Other suitable related material as identified by the Archivist

There are no date restrictions, providing the material directly relates to SGUL activities and is deemed suitable for the Archive.

Materials **not** collected by the Archive include, but are not limited to:

- Material relating to local history
- Material that might be more appropriately deposited elsewhere (see section 5.1 Other Institutions)

- Duplicates of current holdings, or which are so similar as to not justify their inclusion
- Copies of archives held elsewhere – unless, there is an exceptional reason for keeping them (for instance, in support of an existing collection)

Note: The Archive is not a recognised ‘Place of Deposit’ and therefore does not accept materials subject to the Public Records Act (eg. NHS Hospital Records).

4. Format

The Archive will accept material in the following formats:

- Paper: manuscript and typescript
- Video, film, digital and various photographic formats
- Drawings and illustrations
- Posters
- Maps and Plans
- Other formats as deemed appropriate

Material will not, however, be acquired where adequate storage, preservation, cataloguing and access cannot be achieved within the Archives’ existing or foreseeable resources.

5. Methods of Acquisition

5.1 Other Institutions

SGUL will take account of the collecting policies of other archives, museums, libraries and organisations collecting in the same or related areas. SGUL will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of special interest, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. Specific reference will be made to the following:

Wellcome Trust
 Royal College of Surgeons
 Other medical royal colleges
 Thackray Medical Museum
 London Museums of Health and Medicine collections
 London Metropolitan Archives (hospital records)

5.2 Donation or Bequest (Gifts)

SGUL accepts collections as gifts, or as long-term loans in some exceptional cases (see section 6. Loans Criteria).

Only documents which, in the judgement of an Archivist employed by SGUL, are of sufficient quality for permanent preservation will be accepted.

The Archive will reserve the right to decline material which is deemed to be unsuitable, and either return it to its owner or suggest a more appropriate archive repository as stated in section 5.1 above.

Once the material has been deposited in the Archive, it becomes the property of SGUL and cannot be retrieved either permanently or temporarily by the donor. The donor however, will be able to book an appointment to consult the deposited material in the Archive. Furthermore, the Archive will only accept material when satisfied that the depositor has proper authority or title of ownership to transfer it. The depositor will also be asked to sign a Gift Agreement form, transferring ownership of the material to SGUL. This can be done anonymously if the donor so wishes.

It is a condition of acceptance that materials will be made available for access either immediately or at the expiry of a specified and agreed period.

5.3 Purchase of Documents

Purchases will only be made of documents of outstanding importance to the collection or University. The Archivist will need to see either the original material or a good photograph of the item(s). The Principal will make the ultimate decision whether the material on offer is worth purchasing. Acquisitions purchased with the assistance of grant funding will be held subject to the terms and conditions of those supplying the funds.

5.4 Internal Transfer of Material

A records management programme is currently being developed by the Records Manager in the Governance, Legal & Assurance Services team. This will ensure the activities of SGUL are documented and will enforce a systematic transfer of specific records to the custody of the Archive once reviewed and selected for permanent preservation. SGUL retention schedules have been developed and identify records which are to be preserved in the Archives. These can be viewed via the records management section of the SGUL website.

The Archive will seek to actively transfer material from current, retiring or retired key members of staff. Of particular importance are medical private and working papers of senior academic staff, project papers and other related material.

Other papers of value for transfer to the Archives:

- Material which must be kept for legal reasons
- Material containing useful administrative information or which relate to any agreement or contract of long-term effect
- Documents relating to important new medical/scientific discoveries
- Documents providing important information on the collections, buildings, and other work of SGUL

- Material containing important unpublished medical data
- Material with potential for public exhibition or education
- Strengthening areas of the collections that have little or no representation (filling gaps)

Some of the categories mentioned above will also apply to 5.2 Donation or Bequest (Gifts).

6. Loans Criteria

6.1 Incoming loans

Offers of long-term loans (as opposed to outright gifts) of archival collections will be considered only under exceptional circumstances and under terms formally agreed with the owner prior to transfer. The Archives reserve the right on occasion and if deemed necessary, to weed out unsuitable material from a collection, for either transfer to another repository or destruction.

6.2 Outgoing loans

External loans offer the opportunity to expand access to items and facilitate research which would not otherwise be carried out. The Archives will therefore lend accessioned items to other appropriately sanctioned heritage, educational or research institutions, within available resources and subject to loan conditions.

7. Accessioning and Public Availability

Collections and single documents transferred to the Archives will be given a unique Accession number and registered in the Accessions spreadsheet. A note will also be made of the provenance and previous custody of the records.

The Archives will make every effort to publicise details of its finding aids electronically.

8. Deaccessioning, Disposal and Transfer

All future deposits will be appraised, during which the Archivist will evaluate a deposit and identify any material unsuitable for permanent retention. Such material will be returned to the depositor and if appropriate, advice will be given on more suitable repositories. Alternatively, with the depositor's permission the material will be securely disposed of.

8.1 Disposal principles and procedures relating to unpublished materials

8.1.1 By definition, the Archive has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to the collecting criteria (see section 3. Responsibility, and Criteria Governing Future Collecting).

8.1.2 The Archive accepts the principle that, except for reasonable curatorial purposes, there is a firm presumption against the disposal of any accessioned items in the collections.

8.1.3 The Archive will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.

8.1.4 Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.

8.1.5 Any funds received by SGUL from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the conservation and preservation of the existing collections, and in some cases the purchase of new acquisitions.

8.1.6 A decision to dispose of an item, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the Principal acting on the advice of professional Archive staff, and not of any individual staff member acting alone.

8.1.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to accredited museums or established archives likely to be interested in its acquisition.

8.2 Disposal principles and procedures relating to published materials

SGUL cannot guarantee to keep gifts of published materials in perpetuity and reserves the right to dispose of unwanted material which forms part of a donation or bequest. Published materials which meet one or more of the criteria below will normally be removed from the collections:

8.2.1 Duplication: duplicate items, unless they are of particular monetary value or significant provenance, or if they fall into the category of heavily-used material or items where multiple copies are specifically required.

8.2.2 Availability in surrogate form: published works, especially journals, which become available in digital format, unless they are iconic titles in the history of medical publishing or the quality of surrogate access is deemed insufficiently flexible or trustworthy.

8.2.3 Superseded editions: some reference works and items in Special Collections when superseded by new editions.

8.2.4 Relevance: items which SGUL now regards as falling outside its collecting remit and which would be more appropriately held in another collection in the public domain.

8.2.5 Time limitation: items such as journals or databases that are not suitable for long-term preservation.

8.2.6 Physical deterioration or technical obsolescence: items deteriorated beyond economic repair, over-restored items, or items deemed to be beyond technical capability to preserve or make accessible.

8.2.7 Health risk: items which are infested, contaminated or hazardous, and which put people or other items at risk.

9. Policy Review Procedure

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Archivist to ensure that it meets the University's operational and legal requirements.

Document Information	
Document Name	Archives & Special Collections Policy
Author	Carly Manson, Archivist
Issue Date	16/04/2018
Approved By	Information Strategy Committee (ISC)
Last review	16/04/2018
Next review	April 2019
Related policies	Archives & Special Collections Policy Archives & Special Collections Access Policy Loan of Archive Items for Exhibition: Terms and Conditions Records Management Policy Retention and Disposal Policy

Document History		
Version	Date	Summary of change
1	16/04/2018	Policy created and approved.
2	04/09/2019	Policy reviewed. Added sub-heading '1.1 Mission Statement' to the mission statement within the introduction section. Section 4- added 'other formats as deemed appropriate'. Section 5.4- referenced retention schedules and where these can be located on SGUL website.
2	07/10/2019	Changes approved by Information Governance Steering Group (IGSG).