



Collections Care Policy for Special Collections at the University of Bradford

Version 2.0

Contents

Introduction	1
Accommodation	1
Security	1
Environmental control and monitoring.....	2
Packaging.....	2
Disasters and emergencies	2
Housekeeping	2
Conservation.....	3
Access and handling.....	3
Exhibitions	3
Inter-library loans	4
Digital preservation	4
Policy review.....	4

Introduction

Special Collections at the University of Bradford collects, organises, preserves and makes accessible, unique and distinctive collections to support learning, teaching and research for all.

This policy covers both our analogue and digital collections.

The policy adheres to British Standard 4971: 2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections.

The Collections Care Policy at University of Bradford has been reviewed and approved by the University Academic Librarian at University of Bradford.

Accommodation

Special Collections is located in the J.B. Priestley Library, in the centre of the city campus. We share the building complex with the rest of the Library, IT Services, the Students Union, Careers, and other University departments. The building is maintained by the University's Estates department.

Special Collections comprises a Reading Room and two main stores with a mixture of roller racking and static shelving. A dedicated Quarantine Room exists for the accommodation of new collections to ensure they pose no risk to existing collections from mould or pests.

Security

All archives are kept in secure closed access facilities. Access by staff other than Special Collections is by key and contractors are accompanied. Printed book collections are kept in the Reading Room, to enable readers to browse them, under supervision by Special Collections staff.

Access to material is available by appointment in the Reading Room only, under supervision by Special Collections staff. The Fetch service is available for university staff and students to use elsewhere in the library, for certain modern printed books where the risk is deemed acceptable.

Environmental control and monitoring

We monitor the environment in the stores and Reading Room using data loggers which record the temperature and relative humidity.

Conditions are relatively stable, though do not comply with the recommended standards. Our boxing programme helps create stable microclimates.

Packaging

We aim to package all donated material in appropriate enclosures using archival quality materials and are systematically working towards this goal as part of our ongoing collections management programme.

Disasters and emergencies

Special Collections staff are responsible for creating and maintaining emergency plans and procedures for the collections. This responsibility extends to printed collections elsewhere in the library. Planning is undertaken in conjunction with senior library managers and IT managers and reviewed and approved by the Associate Director for Information Services.

The Library Emergency Plan covers Special Collections and main book stock and is reviewed annually. There is also a Business Continuity Plan for the Library.

The library holds a Priority User contract with Harwell Document Restoration Services and is a member of the Yorkshire Rapid Response Network, a co-operative of heritage organisations who share equipment and arrange training.

Housekeeping

Special Collections staff monitor Special Collections spaces, to keep the areas tidy and put collections away when not in use. Issues are reported to Estates, Security, senior management, or other colleagues as appropriate. We also encourage colleagues and users to be vigilant and report anything unusual they see. We operate a cleaning programme to help reduce the risk from pests and dust.

Conservation

Special Collections does not have a dedicated Conservator, so we outsource such work to external contractors. They must demonstrate that they are professionally qualified and have relevant experience. All work must conform to the Icon Professional Standards and Judgement and Ethics, June 2020 and to BS 4971:2017.

Access and handling

To limit harm from use, all access to originals is invigilated. Readers are required to follow the rules of the Reading Room: bags stored separately, no food or drink, pencils only, handling with care.

Gloves are required only for handling photographic material and realia, though we recommend their use for handling covers affected by red rot. Following PD 5454 we recommend the use of nitrile gloves for photographic handling, though cotton gloves are still useful for other materials.

All new visitors receive an induction which explains these rules and helps them to understand what to do. The Reading Room stocks foam book supports, book snakes and weights, and pencils to help protect the documents when being handled and used.

A few items are too fragile to produce in the Reading Room as any handling would destroy them. This concern is noted when they are catalogued, cleaned, or otherwise handled. The situation is made clear in our catalogues. Such items are high priority for conservation work, but this may not always be possible or appropriate. We will endeavour wherever possible to provide a surrogate for users to consult.

Exhibitions

Special Collections does not currently have its own space for physical exhibitions, though we have plans to address this in future. Instead, we concentrate on creating online exhibitions and working with partners who have exhibition space. We are keen to work with such partners in any case, as external exhibitions bring Special Collections to new audiences.

We will lend originals when the borrower can satisfy the Archivist about conditions, security, insurance, and other concerns. The borrower is required to sign our standard agreement, which is based on guidance from the standards above. If organisations cannot meet our requirements, we will endeavour to supply surrogates.

Inter-library loans

All inter-library loans are at the discretion of the Archivist and are for reference use in the borrowing library only. This service is operated on our behalf by our Inter-Library Loan service. We will consider lending modern printed materials which are not unique or otherwise significant as artefacts. We will not consider other formats such as archives, early books or maps, anything fragile or which is in high demand in the Reading Room.

Digital preservation

We store our digital collections in our secure section of the University's One Drive. We don't keep them as email attachments or on local drives.

They are saved using standard formats such as .pdf and .jpeg. Files in unusual formats are converted. The University's drives are mission-critical to the University and are backed up to a high standard. Our digital collections are accessioned in our Accessions Register. Special Collections is working on a Digital Preservation Strategy.

Policy review

We will review this policy annually.