

# Archives Services Access Policy

Libraries & Collections

February 2016

## Policy Statement

Archives Services is positioned in the Research & Impact Department of Libraries & Collections Division, part of the wider Students and Education Directorate. The role of Archives Services is to collect, catalogue, preserve and provide access to King's College London College Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives.

The Archives Services Access Policy explains the principles guiding the provision of access to King's College London College Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives. This policy defines the principles that ensure that access to our resources and facilities is consistent and fair for all users and in line with professional best practices and relevant legislation.

In developing this policy, similar published policies and reports have been consulted, as well as pertinent legislation and/or authorities on best practice (see section 7).

## Principles

### 1. General

1.1. Archives Services aims to make the collections held by the College Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives available for consultation and research. This is done in line with Libraries & Collections' mission of '...developing innovative, trusted and accessible services, collections and resources in pursuit of the King's mission', and the Libraries & Collections Customer Charter.

1.2 The following stakeholders are served by the College Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives:

- King's College London students and staff
- Members of other educational institutions
- Depositors, donors and owners of records held by Archives Services
- Those who fund the archives (grant givers, financial donors, King's College London)
- Those responsible for the governance of the archives (King's College London, the Trustees of the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives)
- Any member of the public with a genuine interest in our holdings

1.3. Any individual who abides by the rules and procedures of Archives Services is welcome to view the records held, irrespective of age (users under 16 years of age may need to be accompanied by an adult), gender, ethnicity, disability, religious or political affiliation, or any other similar differentiation, in line with King's College London's Equality and Diversity Statement.

1.4. Access to information about the collections can be obtained via paper catalogues held in the Reading Room; online through the Archives Services webpages on the King's College London website and online catalogues, which can be accessed through the Archives Services webpages and the networks AIM25 and The National Archives Discovery Portal; and by contacting Archives staff by letter, telephone, email, or in person during opening hours. Access to records can be obtained in person in the Reading Room. Access to select records may also be made available online via the Archives Services webpages or other relevant online portals. Copies of records can also be obtained, and by following set procedures, subject to restrictions. These restrictions and procedures are explained more fully later in this policy.

1.5. Libraries & Collections is committed to providing a high quality service to all users including Archives users, and this commitment is evidenced by our participation in the Customer Service Excellence award scheme. However, in the event that a user is unhappy with the service provided, we will endeavour to resolve the problem. In the first instance any complaint should be made to the Archives Services Manager. In the event of an unsatisfactory resolution, the complaint will be referred to the Head of Archives Services or can be escalated through the Libraries & Collections complaints procedure to the Associate Director (Customer Engagement) and Director of Libraries & Collections.

## 2. On-site access

2.1. Original documents held by the College Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives can be consulted at the Michael Howard Reading Room, Strand Building, King's College London, by any person free of charge.

2.2. We require that individuals complete a registration form and produce identification before consulting the holdings of the College Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives. No member of King's College London, or the general public, has the right to see any original document without completing the registration procedure, unless (s)he is the owner of the document.

2.3. We ask that users make an appointment prior to visiting the archives, in order to ensure that adequate staff and resources are available to fulfil their requests. Although we do endeavour to accommodate users who have not made an appointment, Archives Services reserves the right to refuse access to users without an appointment.

2.4. Users are able to visit the Michael Howard Reading Room during designated opening hours. Archives Services may occasionally have to close to the public during designated opening hours for teaching and group visits. Any planned closures will be advertised on the Archives webpages in advance.

2.5. Our staff will provide courteous and helpful guidance to any user who visits the Archives. Users can expect to receive assistance in using finding aids and catalogues, identifying useful research materials and handling archival material.

2.6. In order to ensure equal and responsible access, our users are expected to respect the Archive materials, staff and other users, and adhere to the rules governing access (see Appendix 1). Users are informed of the rules that they must adhere to upon registration.

2.7. We aim to make all material from its holdings accessible to any individual. However, there are certain circumstances under which we may restrict access to individual documents or collections. These are as follows:

- **Legislative purposes**, in particular the Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Legislation (GDPR). The Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Legislation (GDPR) are in place in order to safeguard the personal data of individuals. If a document contains personal data about an individual, particularly of a sensitive nature, it will be closed for a period of up to 100 years. Serious researchers may apply for early access to closed records, by submitting a written request to the Head of Archives Services. These applications are reviewed on a case by case basis.
- **Preservation purposes**. Access to a document may be refused to documents in a particularly fragile condition or where handling is likely to cause damage to the document. The decision to refuse access on the grounds of preservation purposes is made at the discretion of the most senior member of Archives staff on duty, but arrangements may be made to provide access to a surrogate copy. Researchers are entitled to apply for access to such material by submitting a written request to the Head of Archives Services.
- **Depositor's wishes**. Many of the collections held by the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives have been deposited here by their legal owners to allow consultation by researchers. When this occurs, we enter into a deposit agreement with the owner. Occasionally, depositors may stipulate that certain conditions must be met for access to be granted, or ask for a designated closure period to be applied to particular documents.
- **Business sensitivity**. Certain university records are closed for a period following their creation. Researchers are entitled to apply for access to such material under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, by submitting a request to King's College London's Legal Compliance team.
- **Uncatalogued material**. The majority of our holdings are catalogued, but some remains uncatalogued. Access to uncatalogued material may be restricted, due to the staff time required find the required information.

2.8. If access to individual documents or collections is refused, the reason for doing so will be explained to the user in full.

### 3. Remote access

3.1. We recognise that it is not always practical or possible for researchers to visit us in person, and that the information held here may not be available elsewhere because of the unique and distinctive nature of our collections. We will endeavour to provide remote access as far as is reasonable within the resources available.

3.2. We will respond to all enquiries received from the public by telephone, letter, email or social media channels. All written enquiries will be answered within 10 working days of receipt.

3.3. We will provide information on our holdings and perform limited research within our holdings free of charge. For particularly lengthy or detailed research we will refer users to the list of private researchers approved by The National Archives.

3.4. We will provide access to selected material online through digitisation projects, blogs and online exhibitions as far as is reasonably practical. This is dependent upon resources available and legal constraints such as copyright law.

## 4. Provision of copies of documents

4.1. We endeavour to provide copies of documents to onsite and remote users at reasonable cost to the user. These charges are displayed on the Archives Services webpages.

4.2. Remote reprographics orders are subject to a minimum charge of £10.00 in order to cover the staff costs involved in processing these orders.

4.3. Users are permitted to take digital photographs of documents free of charge as an alternative to purchasing photocopies or scans.

4.4. We have a responsibility and duty of care to the unique resources in our care and may refuse to copy documents if the process is likely to cause damage to the document. This includes, but is not restricted to, bound volumes, photographs and oversized material. Alternative suitable forms of copying may be offered if we have appropriate facilities and equipment, but if we are unable to provide these facilities we reserve the right to refuse to provide copies. The decision to undertake or refuse to make copies of documents on the grounds of preservation is made at the discretion of the most senior member of staff on duty.

4.5. Copies of material are created and provided to or taken by users with regard to copyright and intellectual property law. No user will be provided with copies of documents, nor permitted to take their own digital photographs of documents, without first completing a copyright declaration form.

4.6. Copies of material are created or taken for private research use only. Copies provided or taken for commercial purposes may be subject to a reproduction fee.

## 5. Digital archives access

5.1. Archives Services holds a small but growing collection of digital archives which consists of both born-digital and digitised material. Access is provided to access copies of digital archives on a dedicated, stand-alone PC in the Michael Howard Reading Room.

## 6. Implementation and review

6.1. This policy will be communicated to Libraries & Collections staff, interested parties within King's College London, and to external agencies and others with an interest in its context, on demand. It will be made available to the public via Libraries & Collections webpages.

6.2. The Archives Services Access Policy will be reviewed every two years. This does not preclude earlier review should internal or external development warrant it.

## 7. Useful sources

7.1. Policies and sources of advice consulted during the drafting of this policy include:

- Public Services Quality Group, *PSQG Standard for Access to Archives* (2008)
- PAS 197:2009, *Code of practice for cultural collections management* (2009)
- University of Bradford, *Access Policy for Special Collections at the University of Bradford* (2014)
- University of Swansea, *Richard Burton Archives Collections Access Policy* (2014)
- Churchill Archives Centre, *Access Policy and Service Delivery Charter* (2015)
- King's College London, *Library Services Customer Charter* (2013)
- King's College London, *Library Services Strategic Plan 2013-2016* (2013)
- King's College London, *Equality and Diversity Statement* (2012)
- King's College London, *Freedom of Information Policy* (2012)

## Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Description of Changes	Review
2.0	June 2018	Lianne Smith	Updating the changes in the Data Protection Act	