

Archives Services Collection Care and Conservation Policy

Libraries & Collections

February 2016

Policy Statement

The Archives Services Collection Care and Conservation Policy is intended to ensure that the collections held by King's College London Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives (LHCMA) are managed and cared for safely and consistently, so that they can be made available for use now and in the future.

1. Storage – overview

1.1 Archives Services are committed to working towards meeting the standards detailed in British Standard PD5454, but presently manages a challenging array of discrete storage areas on different King's College London sites.

1.2 In the longer term, and as part of the Library's 2025 Vision, Library Services is exploring the feasibility of uniting Archives and Special Collections storage and access on a single site within King's Maughan Library in Chancery Lane, formerly the home of the Public Record Office.

1.3 In the medium term Library Services staff are working to secure improved storage space for Archives, with additional space for future accessions.

1.4 Since 2013 one large research collection (the Twins Early Development Study, 2000 boxes) has been held off-site in the Deepstore facility at Winsford, Cheshire.

2. Building security

All King's sites are monitored and patrolled by King's Estates Security staff. Fire and security systems are inspected, tested and serviced in line with university procedures.

3. Storage areas

3.1 All Archives storage areas are securely locked. Most are windowless. Access is restricted to Archives Services staff and staff from the Information Management and Compliance team, which manages current and semi-current records. Cleaners and external maintenance contractors are accompanied at all times when working in these areas.

3.2 Almost all Archives storage shelving is PD5454 compliant, and most is mobile, with some additional static shelving.

3.3 The temperature and relative humidity of all storage areas are monitored using data loggers.

3.4 The presence of pests is monitored using sticky insect traps.

4. Document handling in the Reading Room

4.1 Archive material is retrieved on request by Archives staff for consultation in the Archives Reading Room, which is overseen at all times. Staff reserve the right to refuse access to items that are considered so fragile that handling is likely to cause damage. Any such items are added to the register of items for conservation.

4.2 There is no limit on the number of orders that will be retrieved for each reader, but readers are instructed to consult only one file at a time, and to have only one box on the table at a time. The remainder of their order is stored on the shelves at the end of each table. Document handling guidelines are displayed on each Reading Room table.

4.3 Food, drink and ink are forbidden in the Reading Room. Pencils are freely provided.

4.4 Readers are permitted to take digital photographs in the Reading Room. Photocopying and scanning are undertaken by Archives Services staff only.

5. Conservation

Material requiring active conservation is sent off-site for work by experienced professional conservators. Candidate items for conservation are listed in a register maintained on the shared server, and assigned a priority ranking based on:

- Severity of damage (graded from 1 for information content not at risk to 3 for actively deteriorating/cannot be handled without further damage)
- The uniqueness of the material (graded 0 for not unique, 3 for unique)
- Significance of damaged material (graded from 1 for low importance to 6 for part of the national/international cultural heritage)
- Frequency of request (graded 0 for not retrieved in the last 5 years, to 3 for retrieved over 3 times a year)

6. In-house preservation (non-digital)

6.1 On accession, archive collections are put into 4-flap acid-free folders and acid-free boxes. Paper clips, pins, treasury tags and other metal fixings are removed and replaced with brass paperclips. Loose photographs and any fragile single sheets of paper are placed in Melinex polyester sleeves.

6.2 Staff also routinely check the condition of items upon retrieval and return, re-packaging if necessary.

7. Digital preservation and storage

7.1 This broadly complies with the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model.

7.2 At ingest, digital files are virus- and fixity-checked.

7.3 Digital files are kept in a dedicated digital store, with access restricted to the staff of Archives Services, Information Management and Compliance, and King's IT.

7.4 Preservation copies are stored with their associated checksums and metadata. Access copies are created and stored separately. Access copies are made available to readers only on a dedicated stand-alone PC in the Archives Reading Room.

7.5 The same processes are followed for born-digital accessions and for digitised copies of analogue originals, created to preserve the content of at-risk or loaned material.

7.6 Archives Services staff monitor the Technology Watch reports of the Digital Preservation Coalition for notifications and advice on updated software and hardware, and possible risk implications for stored data.

8. Disaster recovery and continuity

8.1 Archives Services has a regularly reviewed emergency planning procedure in line with other Libraries & Collections sites, based on the Harwell Document Restoration Services template.

8.2 King's College London Libraries & Collections subscribe to the Harwell Document Restoration Services Priority User service.

9. Implementation and review

9.1. 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.

9.2. The Archives Services Collection Care and Conservation Policy will be reviewed every two years. This does not preclude earlier review should internal or external development warrant it.

10. Useful sources

- King's College London Library Services *Preservation policy* (2014)
- King's College London Library Services *Library services 2025: our vision* (2015)
- King's College London Library Services *Document handling* (2015)
- King's College London Library Services Archives Services *Light touch review* (2015)
- King's College London Library Services Archives Services: *Preservation priorities* (revised 2016)
- King's College London Library Services Archives *disaster management plan* (revised, 2016)
- University of Swansea *Richard Burton Archives collections care and conservation policy* (2014)
- Cumbria Archive Service *Collections care and conservation policy* (2013)
- British Library Preservation Advisory Centre *Basic preservation* (2013)
- Digital Preservation Coalition *Digital preservation training programme: an introduction to digital preservation* (2014)

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Description of Changes	Review