Archives Services Collection Information Policy

Libraries & Collections

Policy Statement

The Archives Services Collection Information Policy explains what information is created during the processes of acquiring, accessioning, cataloguing and preserving collections in King's College London Archives and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives (LHCMA), and the standards and processes followed. The information thus gathered is intended to aid the efficient management of the collections held, safeguard the interests of collection creators, donors and depositors, and to enable effective access to the collections by researchers.

1. Background

1.1 Since 2007 basic accession information, including details of donors/depositors, has been recorded in a CALM database. Prior to that date, all LHCMA accessions were recorded in bound accession registers. Correspondence with LHCMA donors and depositors and box lists (where present) were stored in alphabetical files. These files have been preserved, though almost all correspondence is now electronic, and is stored on a shared server. The accession information from the original registers was entered retrospectively into the CALM database.

1.2 Accession information on College Archives accessions was recorded more sporadically before 2007, although correspondence with donors and depositors, and box lists (where present) were stored alphabetically, and has been preserved, with more recent correspondence stored on the shared server.

1.3 The oldest catalogues were created more than 50 years ago, and some do not meet current best practice standards. Where resources allow, these are being updated and improved: many have been revised, expanded and completely rewritten over the years.

2. Accessioning

2.1 Upon receipt of a collection, an accession record is created in CALM, detailing:

- Whether College Archives or LHCMA
- Date of receipt
- Accession number
- Date or date range of contents
- Quantity (number of archive boxes, or number of gigabytes)
- Outline description of the collection, or location on shared staff server of a box list
- Storage location of the collection
- Whether bequest/deposit/purchase/gift/transfer/loan for copying
- Date of deposit (normally same as date of receipt)
- Condition
- Whether conservation work required
- Any additional notes
- Link to CALM depositor record

2.2 Additional notes may include:
- The history of the collection, if available
- The possibility of any future additional accessions
- The wishes of the donor/depositor with regard to any future de-accessioned part of the collection

3. Summary guides

3.1 All collections are described in a collection-level summary guide that complies with ISAD(G). These are created using a customised version of the MODX open source content management system, and published online on the King's Archives Services pages, at http://www.kingscollections.org/catalogues/home

3.2 Digital collections receive only a collection-level summary guide.

3.2 There is a recognition that in some instances any finding aid, even if it falls short of the optimum, is better than none, and Archives staff endeavour to make more basic lists available as pdfs linked to summary guides.

4. Detailed catalogues

4.1 Archives Services aims to create detailed catalogues for paper collections that are larger than three standard archive boxes, or are particularly historically significant, or contain particularly valuable material. Cataloguing is normally at file-level or equivalent.

4.2 The detailed catalogues depart from ISAD(G) guidelines notably in a deliberate repetition of information if and when this enables each catalogue entry to be intelligible to the reader when viewed in isolation. For more details, see the *Archives Services: Creating a detailed catalogue*.

5. Finding aid accessibility

Summary guides and detailed catalogues are published online, at
http://www.kingscollections.org/catalogues/home
Summary guides are also published on the AIM25 site, at http://www.aim25.ac.uk/
Accessions are also reported annually to The National Archives

6. Cataloguing backlog

6.1 Archives Services holds a number of uncatalogued collections, and collections with finding aids that could be improved. Planning for future cataloguing work is based on a priority ranking, according to:
- Significance (graded 1-10, from routine institutional administration to part of national/international cultural heritage)
- Popularity of subject area (0-5, from none to particular research strength)
- Present level of productions in Reading Room (1-3, from none to 3+ times a year)
- Shortcoming of existing finding aid (0-3, from none extant to so general that it does not aid research)
- Potential for future use (0-5, from none to in demand for King's teaching courses)

6.2 Archives Services has attracted both internal and external funding for cataloguing work (most recently, Libraries & Collections funds to address a backlog of institutional records, and Wellcome Trust funding for the papers of Dame Cicely Saunders), and seeking such funding for future work continues to be a priority.

7. De-accessioning

7.1 Historically, large-scale de-accessioning has not been a priority. Rather, Archives Services has sought not to accession material likely to be discarded at a future date. If the process of detailed cataloguing identifies specific items within a collection that are deemed inappropriate for inclusion, they are offered back to the donor or depositor, and only destroyed with their explicit permission.

7.2 If future revisions to the King's College London *Records Retention Schedule* re-categorise currently archived institutional records as no longer for permanent retention, such records may be destroyed.

7.3 Research data may be retained as an archival collection on grounds of its potential historic value and future re-use: if in such a case over some years a collection attracts no use despite the existence of an online finding aid, it may be reviewed for potential return to the creator, or transfer to another repository, or for destruction.

8. Implementation and review

8.1. 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.

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

9. Useful sources

- King's College London: minutes of meetings of the Trustees of the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives
- King's College London: minutes of meetings of the Library Services Collection Development and Management Group
- King's College London: *Archives Services: Creating a summary guide* (revised, 2016)
- King's College London: *Archives Services: Creating a detailed catalogue* (revised, 2015)
- International Council on Archives *ISAD(G): General international standard archival description* (2000)
- University of Swansea *Richard Burton Archives collections information policy* (2014)
- Cumbria Archive Service *Collections Information policy* (2013)

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Description of Changes	Review