



## Special Collections (Streatham) Collections Access Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 University of Exeter aims to provide as wide access as possible to the material held by Special Collections in proportion to resources available.
- 1.2 This policy details how Special Collections will maintain and extend access to collections and collections information, including facilitating physical, sensory and intellectual access, on site and virtually, and by lending and borrowing.
- 1.3 This policy is part of a Collections Management Policy framework, which comprises a Collections Development Policy, a Collections Care Policy, a Collections Information Policy and a Collections Access Policy.

### 2. Mission Statement

- 2.1 Special Collections supports the missions of the University of Exeter and its Library. Its mission is to preserve, develop, promote, and facilitate access to the University's Special Collections, which, by virtue of their rarity, provenance, or special physical feature, require secure closed access storage and supervised use.
- 2.2 Special Collections pursues this mission in support of:
  - the University's research, teaching and learning strategies and objectives
  - the Library's key objective of developing learning opportunities and enabling research by providing all the resources needed for teaching and learning, support for Colleges and their research, learning and teaching activities and supporting all users with their information needs.
- 2.3 Special Collections seeks to raise the profile of the University and Library by achieving recognition of the regional, national, and international significance of its collections.

### 3. Definition of Access

3.1 Access is any means by which people interact with the collections either physically or virtually. These means can be physical, sensory, social, cultural, intellectual or financial. They can include individuals or groups who may be members of the general public, specific types of user such as academic researchers, artists, other professionals, depositors, staff, partners and contractors.

#### 4. Underlying Principles of Collections Access

- 4.1. It is presumed that anyone may access any element of the collections unless there is a **substantial** reason that prohibits access, including (but not limited to):
- Legal restrictions e.g. data protection
  - Ethical requirements e.g. human remains
  - Resource restrictions e.g. outside of standard opening times
  - Collections care e.g. poor condition of record
  - Collections security e.g. records at high risk of theft
  - Restrictions under the terms of individual depositor agreements
- 4.2 Where access cannot be provided as originally requested Special Collections will endeavor to find a suitable alternative.
- 4.3 Special Collections works proactively to ensure that people can access collections and are made aware of their entitlement to access collections, even where they are not aware of them or experience attitudinal barriers to accessing the collections to e.g., through public outreach work tailored to specific audiences, wide reaching online resources, working in partnership with outside organisations and publicity for Special Collections events.

#### 5. Aims of Access

- 5.1 The key aims of access at Special Collections are to:
- Facilitate supervised access to the physical collections to members of the University and others.
  - To provide a good quality reading environment for individual and group study.
  - To assist remote exploration of the collections by providing up-to-date information on collections, responding to enquiries, by providing a reprographics service, by promoting digital resources.
  - To achieve greater recognition of the work of the Library and University through working with internal and external (including commercial) partners to enhance access and understanding of the collections.
  - Support research at all levels in the UK and abroad
  - Increase understanding of the history of the South West Region

- Provide opportunities for education and learning across communities and age ranges
- Support the identity and sense of place of individuals and communities in the South West Region and beyond
- Provide new experiences for audiences which are surprising and engaging

## **6. Access and Use of the Collections**

### **6.1 Physical and Sensory Access**

- Special Collections will actively seek to make its collections physically accessible through a changing variety of means to a wide range of audiences, including those with special needs. This will include a rolling programme of temporary exhibitions.

### **6.2 Opening Hours**

- Special Collections is committed to maximising opening hours depending on the resources available.
- Opening hours will be published on our website and we will provide adequate notice of any planned closures.
- Alternative methods of accessing collections outside of opening hours will also be developed e.g. online resources and loans to other institutions.

### **6.3 Visiting**

- Visitors are able to use the archives for bona fide research without charge on an appointment only basis
- All readers can expect appropriately qualified, helpful, courteous and knowledgeable staff on duty.
- All researchers will be required to complete any registration documentation specified by staff prior to accessing material from the Archive. A form of identification and personal references may be required prior to researchers' visits.
- All researchers should be considerate to the documents and research environment and follow all search room guidelines. Special Collections reserves the right to ask anyone failing to do so to leave.

### **6.4 Enquiries**

- Special Collections will respond to all enquiries whether by post, email, telephone, or through our social media accounts.
- Information will be provided free of charge about Special Collections holdings and how to access them. It is not possible to undertake detailed research on behalf of enquirers other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Special Collections will provide timely responses to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act, indicating where

charges need to be made in line with guidance from the University's Freedom of Information Officer.

#### 6.5 Intellectual Access

- Special Collections will aim to provide intellectual access to as wide a range of users as possible.
- This intellectual access will be underpinned by a coherent, on-going documentation programme, which will provide the basis for intellectual content and explanation.
- Special Collections aims to make its archive collections available as soon as possible after accession. Lists, full catalogue entries, user guides and document images will be made available as resources permit. All newly-created finding aids have due regard to agreed national and international standards for archival description.
- Intellectual content will be appropriately chosen and communicated to specific audiences through a variety of media: including catalogues, text for exhibitions, publications, handbooks, LibGuides, learning resources and online exhibitions.
- Digital technologies, such as our Omeka online collections platform and Word Press blog, will be exploited to maximise the reach of Special Collections.

#### 6.6 Financial Access

- General public access to Special Collections will be free
- Charges will be made for reprographics. These charges are detailed on our website
- Requests for publication may incur charges. The exact fee will be determined by prior arrangement with Special Collections. In some cases a literary executor or agent will expect a fee as well.
- Broadcasters may be charged an enquiry fee. The fee will be negotiated with the individual broadcaster. These measures reflect standard industry practice.

#### 6.7 Photography and Reprographics

- If you are visiting the reading room it is possible for you to make copies using your own digital camera.
- All images are for private research only and are subject to copyright legislation.
- No self-service digital photography is permitted for items which are in copyright without prior written permission by the copyright holder.
- All readers undertaking self-service digital photography must complete an image request and declaration form.
- No flash photography is allowed without prior consent from Special Collections Staff

- No unauthorised general filming is permitted in the Reading Room for data protection and Intellectual Property Rights reasons.
- Photocopying of original documents may be undertaken by staff at their discretion. Special Collections reserves the right to refuse any photocopying request.
- Copies are supplied for the purposes of research for a non-commercial purpose or private study and must not be sold, circulated or recopied.
- Charges for Reprographics are available on our website

## 6.8 Loans

- To help reach a wide range of audiences Special Collections will consider requests for loans from its collection.
- In order to do so the following conditions will have to be met:
  - The borrowing Institution must be able to satisfy all the relevant clauses of the 'Standard Conditions for Loans' document which can be found in Special Collections' Collection Care Policy.
  - A Loan Agreement sets out the terms of the loan.
  - The item is physically suitable for transport and display at the borrowing institution.
  - The level of risk to the item(s) is acceptable to Special Collections.
  - The loan does not adversely affect the interests of Special Collections' own audiences.
  - The resources required to make the item available are acceptable to Special Collections.
  - The suitability of the borrowing institution is acceptable to Special Collections.
  - Any prior commitment for the item does not prohibit the loans.
  - The item has significance to the theme and purpose of the exhibition.
  - The borrower accepts all the costs of the loan.
  - In the event that the item does not belong to Special Collections (i.e., it is itself on loan or deposit), prior agreement needs to have been made with the original loaning body.
  - Where a digital surrogate of a document, photograph or piece of film exists, there must be a valid reason for using the original.

## 7. Standards for Access

- 7.1 The Service will observe relevant professional standards for providing access; including the Accreditation Standard for Archives, and professional ethical codes including the Code of Conduct of the Archives and Records Association, and CILIP's Code of Professional Conduct.

## **8. Facilities**

- 8.1 General and group visitors to Special Collections will be able to use the public areas of the Old Library, which are wheelchair accessible, and contain a variety of permanent and temporary exhibitions to exhibit the breadth of the collections in a meaningful way
- 8.2 For groups or individuals wishing to handle individual archives and study them in depth, a dedicated supervised reading room with bookable spaces is available.
- 8.3 Educational and other groups will be accommodated in seminar rooms.
- 8.4 Original audio material will be accessible in the Reading Room, or in a dedicated study space with the supervision of suitably qualified staff, using appropriate equipment.

## **9. Staff and Volunteer Development**

- 9.1 Access is the primary purpose of Special Collections. Special Collections will recruit appropriate staff and volunteers of a high calibre and provide them with on-going skills development to ensure that they can implement Special Collections' aspiration of access for all.
- 9.2 Individuals will be recruited and trained to a level appropriate for their role.

## **10. Review**

- 10.1 This policy is an active document which will be reviewed in the light of changes in the Library and the University, not less than every five years.