

Queen Mary University Archives Access Policy

1. Introduction

Archives and Special Collections are open to all who wish to make use of them, and we endeavour to make access as unrestricted as possible. However, access arrangements must take into consideration the need to preserve and secure these collections as part of the University's permanent collections. Access is also subject to statutory and legal requirements, as defined under data protection, freedom of information, copyright, and other relevant legislation.

The Archives serves Queen Mary students and staff, Queen Mary alumni and supporters, students and staff of other institutions, donors and depositors of collections and their heirs and representatives, and the public including local and family historians, media, and researchers.

Access to services and collections is provided on an equal basis to all members of the community served by the Archives, and the Archives aims to provide a consistently high standard of customer care.

2. Research Services

2.1 Research visits

The Archives' reading room is open by appointment only. It is located on the second floor of the Mile End Library and provides a dedicated space for archive users to access the collections. It is accessible by lift. The Archives Reading Room opening hours are advertised on the archive's website. Users will need to fill in a *Reader Registration Form* and in doing so agree to comply with the regulations for access to the archives, which are printed on the form and displayed in the reading room.

- Records must be consulted in the reading room and should be ordered in advance when booking an appointment.
- Additional items cannot usually be retrieved during a researcher's visit. The number of items that can be requested at any one time is limited at the discretion of the archivist and will be discussed with users when making an appointment.
- Items are not available to researchers on loan (although written requests for loans, for use in exhibition display, may be considered).
- It may not be possible to grant access to items which are in a fragile condition.
- Users should remember that the records are unique and irreplaceable. Care must be taken not to treat or handle them in any way likely to harm them. They must not be marked, folded, disassembled, or leant upon, and no unauthorised object should be placed within or on top of them. If you require any assistance handling material, please ask the supervising archivist. Archives staff reserve the right to refuse access to anyone considered to be mistreating the records in any way.
- Please keep items in order and help us by informing the supervising archivist if anything appears to be damaged, missing or out of place.
- No writing implements other than pencils may be used by enquirers consulting documents.
- Eating and drinking are not permitted in the reading room.

- Laptop computers may be used.
- Users may take their own photographs of archive items for the purposes of private study and research only.

2.2 Enquiries

Archives enquiries are answered by trained archives staff. Where the Archives do not hold any information of relevance to the user then the archives team will endeavour to redirect users to other repositories. For uncatalogued collections the archives team carries out a free archives search, namely we will search documents for relevant information for up to 30 minutes per unique enquiry. After that time users are asked to visit in person or arrange for a researcher to visit on their behalf.

2.3 Reprographics

Visitors to the reading room can take photographs of material using their own camera for the purposes of their personal non-commercial private research only, provided they do not use a tripod or flash. They must request permission by completing an *Application for Self-Service Photography* form, available from the Archives Reading Room supervisor. Users must list the items they photograph on the form and return it to the supervisor at the end of their visit. No charges are applied for self-service photography.

Archive staff may be able to provide copies of material for private research upon request. Items will either be scanned or photographed depending on the nature of the material and its suitability to undergo reprographics. This is decided by archive staff, and we reserve the right to refuse to copy items where the copying process may cause damage. Charges for copying services will be made and can be found on our website.

Users who wish to publish an item from the archive's collections should request permission from the Archivist by completing a *Permission to Publish* form, available on our website. Publication includes the use of copies in books, journals, CDs, magazines, film, television, video, electronic publications, and other forms of public display such as exhibitions and public lectures. Publication fees are applied for commercial or non-commercial use and can be found on the *Permission to Publish* form. Non-commercial use means an activity where no fee is paid, such as a free lecture or exhibition, or an article in a journal for which no fee has been paid. University staff or students are not charged reproduction fees if they intend to use the copies provided to fulfil the University's public task in delivering teaching and learning. However, they are not licensed for commercial re-use, so reproduction fees are applied to staff or students intending to use the same material in a commercial publication or other undertaking.

2.4 Other forms of access

The Archives are committed to providing access to the collections in a range of ways to suit a variety of users, and as such will seek to provide alternative methods of access such as: digitised records via our website or access points such as a microfilm reader or computer in the reading room; online exhibitions and archive galleries; physical displays in the Library, or other Queen Mary, spaces.

Information on access to the library for users with a disability is available via the library website: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/using-library-services/accessibility-and-disability/>

3. Audience Engagement

3.1 Learning and teaching

We collaborate with members of our academic community to provide a range of opportunities to engage students with our collections. These can include lectures, seminars, and one-to-one consultations.

3.2 Research

We collaborate with our academic community to develop opportunities to use our collections for research. Activities include involvement of Archives and Special Collections staff in research projects and grant applications, and we aim to increase research use of the archives in the future.

3.3 Public engagement

We support the University's outreach strategy by creating opportunities for members of the public to engage with our collections. This includes participating in annual events such as the Festival of Communities, and hosting visits.

3.4 Exhibitions

We promote our collections to Library visitors by staging exhibitions on the ground floor of the Mile End Library. Exhibitions may also be staged at the Whitechapel and West Smithfield Libraries. Items may be loaned for display by other institutions where appropriate environmental and security conditions can be met, as stipulated in PD5454 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival documents.

3.5 Media

We collaborate where possible with our academic community, Alumni team, and Communications department to promote our collections and through national and local print, online and broadcast media.

3.6 Website

We provide up-to-date information about our collections and services via the Library website.

3.7 Social media

We promote our physical and online collections through the Archives' Instagram account and Library's social media channels.

Approved by	Library Services Senior Management Team
Date of approval	21/09/2023
Review due	September 2026