



Library Services

Archives Access Policy

January 2014

Synopsis

This policy replaces the Reader Services Policy 2007. It outlines the archives research services and the alternative forms of access available, the restrictions to access and the methods used to communicate with stakeholders.

It should be read in conjunction with other policies such as the Archives Collections Policy, Archives Appraisal Policy, Archives Preservation Policy and QM Libraries Disaster Management Programme.

Other internal documentation is in place detailing the processes used for managing access and collection care.

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Archives holds a wealth of fascinating institutional, personal archives and rare prints, dating from the 17th Century to the present day. The collections document the rich history of the College, and provide vital evidence for research in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with other archives and library policies including: Archives Collections Policy, Archives Appraisal Policy, Archives Preservation Policy and QM Libraries Disaster Management Programme.

1.3. Internal documentation details the team processes for managing access and collections (e.g. reader services, cataloguing and digitisation manuals) and prioritises preservation, conservation and cataloguing work (e.g. archives preservation and cataloguing programmes).

1.4. Statement of Purpose

1.4.1. The Archives are part of the Library and Student Services, which supports all College knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination.

1.4.2. Specific objectives are:

- To preserve and protect the Archive collections.
- To support the College's teaching and research programmes by affording appropriate access to the collections in the Archives.
- To transfer knowledge generated by the College to business and the community regionally, nationally, internationally by providing and promoting appropriate external access to the collections in the Archives, and as such support the College's dedication to the public good.

1.5. Commitment and Accountability

1.5.1. It is intended that the Archives should meet or actively work towards the following standards:

Archives Service Accreditation Standard

PD 5454: 2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials

1.5.2. The Archives is committed to providing access and managing collections in compliance with legislative requirements including the Re-use of Public Sector Information 2005, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998, Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988, and any other relevant legislation. Access is provided in support of the principles of equality and diversity.

1.6. Community

1.6.1. The Archives serves Queen Mary undergraduates, postgraduates, academics, professional staff, former college students or staff, and other regional, national and international undergraduates, postgraduates, academics, family historians, media, researchers and members of the public.

1.6.2. 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. Archives Research Services

2.1. Archives Reading Room

2.1.1. The Archives Reading Room is located on the 2nd Floor of the Mile End Library, and provides a dedicated space for archive users to access the collections. It is accessible by lift. The Reading Room provides space for a maximum of four users at any one time.

2.1.2. The Archives Reading Room opening hours are advertised on the archives website: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/arranging-your-visit/>. If a user can only visit out of hours, then arrangements can be made to staff the Reading Room using trained Library support staff.

2.1.3. Archives users are not required to make an appointment in advance, but they are strongly advised to contact the archives team by emailing archives@qmul.ac.uk to discuss their research requirements before they visit.

2.1.4. New users are required to complete an *Archives Reader Registration* form and provide identification confirming their name and address during their first visit. By signing the form users are agreeing to abide by the *Regulations for Access to the Archives* detailed in 5.8. Long-term users will be asked to sign a new form every 5 years.

2.1.5. Users are permitted to order up to 6 files or items at any one time by signing an Archive Request Slip (available in the Archives Reading Room), during the following times, 10am-12.30pm, 2.00-4.00pm. The items or files will be retrieved from storage by a member of staff within no longer than 15 minutes from receipt of the order. Orders can also be made in advance by emailing the archives team.

2.1.6. The Archives Reading Room is supervised by a trained member of Library staff. They are able to assist users with their research by answering enquiries about the collections or services or searching the Archives Catalogue and providing results. By ensuring adherence to the *Regulations for Access to the Archives* the supervisor also protects the collections.

2.1.7. Items from the collections may be consulted in the Archives Reading Room, with the exception of microfilms or DVD's. Finding aids are available in the Archives Reading Room, namely printed copies of catalogues. Reference books concerning the collections are also available for consultation in the Archives Reading Room, and are listed on the Library Catalogue.

2.1.8. To protect documents and assist researchers the following items are available in the Archives Reading Room: Book supports, weights, magnifiers, pencils, gloves.

2.1.9. Details on visiting the archives and registration forms are available here: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/arranging-your-visit/>

2.2. Enquiries

2.2.1 Archives enquiries are answered by trained archives staff. Internal processes are in place to ensure consistency in the quality of responses to enquiries, as outlined in the Archives Reader Services Manual, and all responses are overseen by the Archivist. Where the Archives do not hold any information of relevance to the user then the archives team will endeavour to redirect users to other relevant repositories.

2.2.2. For uncatalogued collections the archives team carries out a free *archives search*, namely search documents for relevant information for up to 30 minutes per unique enquiry. After that time users are asked to visit in person, arrange for a researcher to visit on their behalf or to order copies.

2.2.3. Information about contacting the archives is available here: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/contact-us/>

2.3. Record Copying

2.3.1. Record copying services including scanning and photocopying is provided to users upon request for private research purposes, and charges are applicable to cover the cost of the copy. To order copies users are required to complete an *Application for Copies Research* form available here: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/record-copying/>

2.3.2. For security and preservation reasons copying is carried out by trained staff. The Archives are committed to providing access whilst also preserving the collections in perpetuity, therefore fragile items that are likely to be damaged during the reprographics process such as bound volumes with loose binding, highly acidic paper that disintegrates upon handling, photographs suffering from 'silvering', will not be copied. Wherever possible the archives team will offer an alternative, such as self-service photography or recommend a different source.

2.3.3. Copying orders are processed in accordance with current UK copyright law. Where copyright for an image is not held by the College, the user must obtain the copyright holders permission, before the Archives can process their order. Users are permitted to request copies of up to 5% of an unpublished or published work.

2.3.4. Charges for photocopies and scans are listed on the archives website: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/record-copying/>

2.4. Publication

2.4.1. Users who wish to publish an item from the archives collections should request permission from the Archivist by completing a *Permission to Publish* form available here: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/record-copying/>. Publication includes the use of copies in books, journals, CDs, magazines, film, television, video, electronic publications such as websites and CD-ROMS, and other forms of public display such as exhibitions and public lectures. Publication fees are applied for commercial or non-commercial use. 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.

2.4.2. College staff or students are not charged reproduction fees provided that they intend to use the copies provided to fulfil the College's public task in delivering teaching and learning. But 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.

2.4.3. Publication fees are listed on the *Permission to Publish* form, which can be downloaded from the archives website: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/record-copying/>

2.5. Self-Service Photography

2.5.1. Users are permitted to take photographs of documents in the Archives Reading Room using their own digital camera provided they request permission by completing an *Application for Self-Service Photography* form, available from the Archives Reading Room supervisor. Tripods and flash photography are prohibited, in order to protect the documents being photographed. Users are required to adhere to UK copyright legislation, therefore permission is granted on the basis that copies are for non-commercial private research purposes only. 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.

2.6. Quotation and Citation

2.6.1. Users are asked to seek permission to quote from any of the collections in the Archives by writing to the College Archivist. For citation the following form of reference should be used:

Queen Mary University of London Archives: Collection name; Reference no; Title, date, page or item number.

2.7. Service Level Agreements

2.7.1. In order to ensure a high standard of customer care the Archives is committed to service level agreements, which are publicised on the archives website.

2.8. Regulations for Access to the Archives

2.8.1. Registered archives users are required to comply with the Regulations for Access to the Archives. The regulations have been created to inform users of their responsibilities, namely to comply with legislation such as Copyright and Data Protection and to follow regulations designed to ensure the security and care of the documents being consulted. A copy of the regulations can be found in *Appendix 1*, and on page 2 of the *Archives Reader Registration* form available on the archives website <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/arranging-your-visit/> and are displayed in the Archives Reading Room.

3. Alternative forms of Access

3.1. The Archives are committed to providing access to the collections in a range of ways to suit a variety of users, and as such the following alternative methods of access are available.

3.2. Digitised Records

3.2.1. Records that have been digitised are made available through the archives website, <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/digitised-records/>. Digitised records can also be accessed through the Archives Catalogue, via a hyperlink in the file level description, or a thumbnail embedded in the item description.

3.2.2. The archives team disseminate digitised records through a range of online exhibitions in Archive Galleries <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/archive-galleries>.

3.3. Exhibition and Display

3.3.1. The Archives maintains an exhibition facility located on the 2nd Floor of the Mile End Library, next to the Archives Reading Room. The museum quality cases ensure the security and preservation of the collections whilst also providing access to items in the collections. The exhibitions are regularly changed once per term, to minimise damage to the original items on display. Where possible the duplicates or facsimiles of fragile or particularly sensitive documents are displayed instead of originals.

3.4. Microfilm

3.4.1. The Archives holds a number of microfilms and users can request a microfilm by completing an Archives Request Slip in the Archives Reading Room. Users can request up to two microfilms at any one time. Users can access the microfilm by using the microfilm reader and scanner on the Ground Floor of the Library. Assistance is provided to set up the microfilm reader. Users must return all microfilms to the Archives Reading Room once they have finished.

3.5. Digital Records

3.5.1. A limited number of DVD's are available in the collections, and access copies are made available to users. Users can request a DVD by completing an Archives Request Slip in the Archives Reading Room. Users can request one DVD at any one time. Users can watch the DVD by using the audio visual facilities on the Ground

Floor of the Library and a member of the archives team can assist. Users must return the DVD's to the Archives Reading Room when they are finished.

3.5.2. Access copies of born digital records that are 'open' are made accessible in print format in the Archives Reading Room or electronically, as read-only PDF files.

3.6. Accessibility and Disability

3.6.1. Information on access to the Library for users with a disability is available on the library website: <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/using-the-library/accessibility-and-disability/access-to-the-libraries/>

4. Restrictions to Access

4.1. The Archives endeavour to ensure openness when providing access to collections in line with Freedom of Information. However some records in the institutional and the private paper collections contain sensitive personal information relating to living individuals, and have to be closed in order to comply with the terms of the Data Protection Act. Some examples of closed records include personnel files, staff records, student records, references, testimonials, and papers detailing salaries, pensions, appointments, dismissals or appeals, confidential interviews, documents regarding law cases or litigation.

4.2. Information about whether a record is open can be found in the 'access status' field in the Archives Catalogue (at collection and file or item level). If the access status field states 'mostly open', 'mostly closed', 'closed' or 'apply to archivist', then some restrictions apply and the user is advised to contact the archives team for more information. Where practicable the archives team remove the sensitive documents from a file before issuing it to a user. However this is not always possible with bound volumes so they may not be accessible.

4.3. For uncatalogued collections the access status is stated in the collection level description. More specific information about the access status of files or items within the collection is available by contacting the archives team archives@qmul.ac.uk. The archives team carry out an assessment of the contents of uncatalogued collections before providing access to users.

4.4. Where records are not accessible for Data Protection reasons the archives team will make best efforts to identify alternative sources in the collections such as published sources or redirect the user to other repositories.

4.5. Some restrictions to access may also apply when records are very fragile and could be damaged as a result of handling. These restrictions are identified in the 'access status' field in catalogues. For example, volumes with loose binding, highly acidic paper (such as press cuttings) that disintegrates upon handling, photographs suffering from 'silvering'. In these cases the archives team will make best efforts to offer alternatives such as surrogates or duplicates if they are available or recommend other items in the collections or in other repositories.

5. Communicating with Stakeholders

5.1. Information Resources

5.1.1. An overview of the collections in the archives is available in the Guide to Archives <http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/guide-to-archives/>. Printed leaflets are also available in the Library and are circulated to other archive repositories for distribution.

5.1.2. The Archives Catalogue provides collection level descriptions and detailed catalogues of the collections held in the Archives. It is searchable and available through the archives website: <http://archives-catalogue.library.qmul.ac.uk/CalmView/default.aspx>. The Archives Catalogue is updated regularly as and when new catalogues are completed or new collections are received, it is therefore a continuously growing resource.

5.1.3. A collection level description is published on the Archives Catalogue of each collection including those that are uncatalogued. More detailed information about uncatalogued collections is available in other finding aids such as draft box lists and index cards, which are made available to users via email, post or in person.

5.1.4. The Archives aims to develop and maintain a presence on the College virtual learning environment *QM Plus*, and collaborate with academic departments on the dissemination of information resources of relevance to programmes and modules offered by the College.

5.1.5. Contact details and lists of collections held by the Archives are published on ARCHON and the National Register of Archives. Collection descriptions are made available on AIM25 and Archives Hub. Information on these external websites is updated regularly.

5.1.6. News stories are published regularly on the College and Library Facebook and Twitter accounts, and the Archives aims to develop an external presence on other websites such as Flickr and History Pin, and maintain an awareness of new social media platforms.

5.2. Outreach

5.2.1. An Archives newsletter is circulated to registered users three times per year, which provides an update on changes to services, projects, special events and collections development. Developments are also reported to the Library Users Forum, through College and Student Union communications channels, such as bulletins, departmental circulars, and the website. News stories are regularly circulated on the archives website, external partner sites such as AIM25, Archives Hub, or to relevant research groups or organisations. Leaflets are distributed to other repositories with relevant collections and local heritage bodies.

5.2.2. The Archives undertakes outreach activities aimed at raising awareness of the collections amongst College staff and students. Archive workshops are regularly provided in collaboration with College academic departments to undergraduate and postgraduate students. Workshops are also provided to other external groups such as secondary schools, and alumni and are organised in consultation with the Widening Participation Office and Alumni Relations and Fundraising Department. These sessions are developed in response to need, so the number of sessions each year varies, but the Archives aims to establish a more coherent pattern of workshops in the longer-term.

5.2.3. Other outreach activities are provided with the intention of reaching new audiences outside the College such as behind the scenes tours of the archives, exhibitions, symposiums, seminars. More extensive public engagement projects are implemented as and when on-going fundraising initiatives have proved successful.

5.3. Monitoring and Improving Access

5.3.1. Statistics are maintained on usage of research services, alternative forms of access, attendance at outreach sessions. The figures also show the usage of particular collections and provide a breakdown of the user groups. The statistics are reported quarterly and annually to senior library management, the archives team and are also summarised to users annually. The statistics provide the information required to plan collection development, and review the impact of outreach and promotion, so that continued improvements can be achieved.

5.3.2. Users are invited to provide feedback about services in a variety of ways. An automated reply is sent to all emails received by the Archives, advising then of the service level agreements and inviting feedback. A comments box is located in the Archives Reading Room. Feedback about all library services including the

Archives is provided by the Library User Forum, a website feedback form on the library website and national surveys such as the National Student Survey and LibQual.

5.3.3. The Archives aims to complete a specific user engagement exercise every other year beginning in 2014 such as a survey or focus group meetings.

5.3.4. The Archives responds to feedback by replying directly to the user, if applicable, reporting responses on the archives website and in the archives newsletter, and by making changes where possible or planning future change.

5.3.5. Feedback forms are circulated to participants of outreach events and the responses are taking into consideration when planning future events.

Regulations for Access to the Archives

Admission

New users must complete a Reader Registration form and show proof of identity bearing their name and address. Long-term users will be required to complete the form every 5 years.

GDPR

Users should ensure that any information obtained relating to living persons is used in accordance with UK Data Protection law – namely the combined Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Copyright

Users should obtain the copyright holder's permission for the publication or reproduction of all unpublished materials. The onus for satisfying the legal requirements of the Copyright Acts rests with readers.

Copies of archives will be supplied to readers for *research purposes only* or for *publication purposes*, (subject to copyright regulations and permissions), provided that an *application form* is completed and payment supplied. Bound volumes and fragile material will not be copied.

Researchers are permitted to take photographs of archives material, *for research purposes only*, using a digital camera provided that an *application form* is completed. Tripods and flash photography are not permitted.

Collection Care and Security

Access

- Records must be consulted in the Archives Reading Room. Items are not available on loan.
- Records are available for consultation only while a member of staff is on duty to supervise.
- Bags and other bulky objects should be stored in the cupboard provided.
- Coats and umbrellas should be stored on the coat rack provided.
- The Library accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to users' personal property.
- Up to 6 files may be requested at any one time.
- Up to 2 microfilms may be requested at any one time.
- 1 DVD may be requested at any one time.
- It may not be possible to request further records until those in use have been finished with.

Handling Archives

Archives are unique and irreplaceable so care must be taken and they must be handled in a way that will not cause harm.

- Archives must not be marked, folded or leant upon.
- No unauthorised object should be placed within or on top of archives.
- When handling documents hands should be clean.
- Gloves are supplied for handling uncovered photographs or volumes suffering from leather rot.
- The book supports, weights, magnifiers, must be used wherever appropriate.
- It may not be possible to grant access to items which are in a fragile condition.
- Pencils may only be used by users consulting documents, no other writing implements may be used.
- Eating, drinking and smoking are not permitted.
- Laptop computers may be used.
- Laptops and mobile phones should be on silent mode.



The Archives Reading Room supervisor will advise users on how to handle records carefully.

The library reserves the right to amend or alter these rules at any time. Last issued May 2018.