

**UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER ARCHIVE
COLLECTION ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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Revision History

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19/08/2025	2.0 Collection Acquisition and Development Policy	Review and revision of policy as part of application for Archive Service Accreditation and to align with WMA Collection Development Policy	Elaine Penn
07/10/2019	1.1 Collection and Acquisition Policy	Review and minor revisions in alignment with Records Management Policy; adopted by Research Committee	Elaine Penn
07/06/2017	1.0 Collection and Acquisition Policy	Review and revision of policy adopted by Research Committee	Elaine Penn
29/06/2005	2005 Archive Policy: Final	Statement of Collecting Policy adopted by Research Committee	Elaine Penn

Digital Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring our websites and content is digitally accessible according to the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations (2018). This policy is published on our website and can be requested in a range of formats e.g. Word, PDF, plain text, alternative formats such as large print or Braille.

1. Scope

1.1. This policy sets out how the University of Westminster Archive (hereafter University Archive) develops its archive holdings, including what we collect, how we make collecting decisions and the terms on which we collect archives.

1.2. The Policy forms part of the mission of Student and Academic Services to help meet the university's strategic objectives relating to teaching, research and administration.¹

2. Introduction

Mission

2.1. The mission of the University Archive is to collect and preserve records, the corporate memory of the university, created by the university and its predecessors in order to make them accessible to students, colleagues and the public both now and in the future

Background

2.2. The University Archive was established in June 1994 by the first professional archivist, Brenda Weeden. Prior to this date initial finding aids created by the library service consisted of hard copy basic listings of known historical records, dividing them into "R" for Royal Polytechnic Institution and "P" for everything else. Any original order to the records was destroyed and no accession records were created as none of the processes followed professional archival standards or practice before 1994.

The collection moved from 16 Riding House Street to 4-12 Little Titchfield Street in 1999. Two archive strong-rooms were created on the basement level and the lower ground floor, both were fitted out with new shelving in 2004, at which time roller racking was installed in the basement room. The archive office which also doubled as a reading room for researchers was located on the first floor of the building. Weeden introduced first CAIRS, then CALM as the archival management system to catalogue the records. Weeden intellectually sorted and re-arranged the records into fonds and series. The first online catalogue was published as part of the AIM25 project in 2002.

The first Records Manager was appointed in 2001, creating a combined service with responsibility for the university's institutional records and archives. From 2006 the team has managed an active records management programme for semi-and non-current records. The current Head of University Records and Archives and University Archivist, Dr Elaine Penn, joined the university in 2005, when Weeden moved sideways to write a QHT-funded history of the Royal Polytechnic Institution.² The team expanded to support the university's 175th anniversary in 2013 and currently comprises 3.6FTE.

In 2012 the accommodation of the archive was improved with a move to the lower ground floor of the building, creating an enlarged office space and separate reading room for researchers on the same level as one of the archive strong-rooms. Also in 2012, the first standalone online archive catalogue was published using CALMView. This was superseded in 2017 by AtoM (Access to Memory) which enabled the use of non-English languages and the inclusion of digital objects.³ AtoM fully integrates with a dedicated digital records preservation system which was implemented in 2016.

The University Archive is managed as part of University Records and Archives, positioned in the Library and Archives Service department, part of the Student and Academic Services Directorate within Professional Services.⁴ University Records and Archives derives its authority to collect from policies agreed within the University. The first Archive Policy was adopted by the University's Senior Management Group in 1995.

¹ This policy complements the *Westminster Menswear Archive Collection Development Policy* (January 2019) and the *Library Services Collection Development Policy* (December 2013).

² Brenda Weeden, *An Education of the Eye: A history of the Royal Polytechnic Institution* (2008).

³ <https://ukdps.uwestminster-ro.tmp.accesstomemory.org/>

⁴ The URA team also manage the Westminster Menswear Archive based at Harrow.

2.3. The University Archive has adopted The National Archives' *Standards for Record Repositories* (2004)⁵ and the accompanying *Framework of Standards*⁶ to help it achieve best professional practice in safeguarding and making accessible the collections in its care.

3. Collection summary and strengths

3.1. The University Archive seeks to acquire archives, manuscripts and other primary source material in analogue and digital formats relating to the history of the university and its constituent predecessor bodies as follows:

- Records created by and relating to the University of Westminster and its predecessor bodies including the Royal Polytechnic Institution, Regent Street Polytechnic and the Polytechnic of Central London.
- Records created by and relating to the wide range of sports and social clubs associated with the former Polytechnic, the Secondary School and the Polytechnic Touring Association.
- Personal papers of former students and colleagues where these help document the history of the university or support teaching and research.
- Non-current institutional records of long-term historical value will be transferred to the Archive as a result of the university's records management programme. Specifically, all records created by senior management colleagues are automatically transferred to the University of Westminster Archive for review and appraisal when the colleague leaves the university.⁷
- Collecting will also be driven by the University Archive's commitment to maximising the diversity of voices in its collections and collecting practices will be reviewed periodically to ensure that inclusivity is at the heart of decisions made about archival acquisition.

3.2 Other collecting areas

We also seek to acquire records unrelated to the history of the institution where:

- These records build upon and complement our existing holdings or the university's research strengths, or address identified areas of current weakness, provided that there is no conflict with other collecting repositories.

These records currently fall within the subject areas of:

the history of Media and Communication,
Architecture, and
Planning

- Within the university, decisions on these types of acquisitions are made by the University Archivist in consultation with Heads of College and the Chair of the University Research Committee as appropriate.

3.3. Archives in special format

The University Archive has excellent storage facilities for the majority of archives, and we hold collections in many formats and media. However, before we can accept records held in electronic, cine film or audio-visual format, we will need to discuss with the donor the various options for dealing with specialised or vulnerable media. This may include directing donors to specialist repositories such as the National Science and Media Museum or the British Library.

⁵ <https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/standard2005.pdf>

⁶ <https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/framework.pdf>

⁷ See Appendix 1 for details of the internal records transfer process.

4. Terms and conditions of acquisition

4.1. The University Archive recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections are considered. The growth of the collection will be limited by giving due consideration to the storage space and staff time available to catalogue and care for the items to required standards.

4.2. In order to protect the rights of the donor or depositor and the integrity of the University Archive, we abide by the following terms and conditions:

- No records will be accepted without an agreement form detailing the specific terms and conditions of donation/deposit (see Appendix 2). The University Archive will not accept donations or deposits on behalf of the University of Westminster where the University Archivist has not been party to the agreement.
- No records will be accepted without clear and valid title of ownership. The University Archivist must be satisfied that the donor/depositor has proper authority or title to transfer the records.
- Only records which, in the judgement of the University Archivist, are of sufficient quality for long-term preservation will be accepted. Material, which is judged to be ephemeral, unsuitable for public access, of no long-term historic value or duplicate will be disposed of or returned according to the agreement signed in advance with the donor/depositor.
- Records will only be accepted as donations or purchases. Loans will not be accepted.
- Individual items or collections relating to the history of the university may be purchased. Acquisitions purchased with the assistance of grant aid will be held subject to the terms and conditions of bodies from whom such aid has been received.
- Only records which can be made available for research, learning and teaching, will be acquired, although an agreed period of closure may be necessary for sensitive material.
- All acquisitions will be recorded in the Accession Register. Information on the nature and circumstances of each acquisition will be recorded. This will include the date and terms of transfer, the name and address of the donor/depositor, brief details of the records and any reference number necessary to allow the records themselves and any related documentation to be traced.

5. Records not suitable for acquisition by the University Archive

5.1. Material that would normally be acquired by other archive repositories

In acquiring records every effort will be made to avoid conflict and duplication with the collection policies of other archive repositories. Where applicable, other archive repositories will be consulted and/or potential donors/depositors referred to them as appropriate.

No attempt will be made to secure the acquisition or removal of any records held in another archive repository, except with the consent of the owner of the records and in consultation with the archivist in charge and governing body of that repository. No records shall be acquired or disposed of in contravention of the terms of any legislation pertaining at the time, particularly the Public Records Acts.

In the case of dispute between the university and another repository as to the proper custodian of the records, the advice of a neutral arbiter, such as The National Archives, will be taken.

5.2. Copies or facsimiles

We do not usually accept collections that comprise wholly or largely photocopies or facsimiles (analogue and/or digital) of original material, except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where the whereabouts of the original is not unknown, or where it is known to have been destroyed and no other version exists.

5.3. Archives requiring long closure periods

Records requiring restricted access for a lengthy period of time, e.g. confidential or personnel files, will not normally be accepted, although one or two files requiring restricted access within a larger collection will be accepted.

5.4. Published material

We do not normally seek to acquire published material, as opposed to original archive material. Donors wishing to deposit large collections of published material may be referred to the university's libraries.

The only exceptions are:

- Small amounts of published material forming part of a larger archive;
- Rare or unique publications where they are deemed appropriate subject to the selection criteria detailed in 3. and 4. above.

5.5. Art and artefacts

We do not encourage the acquisition of artefacts or works of art unless they are a small part of a larger collection, or where they have a special significance or association with the university's history. Small items of memorabilia, such as medals, relating to the university's history will be held in the University Archive.

5.6. Human remains

The University Archive does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

5.7. Biological and geological material

So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the University Archive will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

5.8. Archaeological material

The University Archive will not acquire archaeological material.

5.9. Exceptions

Any exceptions to the above clauses 5.6-5.8 will only be because the University Archive is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases, the University Archive will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The University Archive will document when these exceptions occur.

6. Spoliation

The University Archive will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission, updated in 2016.

7. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects

The University of Westminster, acting on the advice of the University Archivist may take a decision to return items to a country or people of origin. The University Archive will take such decisions on a case-by-case basis; within its legal position and considering all ethical implications and available guidance.

8. Acquisition procedures

8.1. The University Archive will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any item unless the University Archivist is satisfied that the University Archive can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

8.2. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is that the University Archive will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the item has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

8.3. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1 November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the University Archive will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The University Archive will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

9. Appraisal procedure for significant donations

Significant donations which are substantial in volume and resource intensive require assessment according to an agreed procedure prior to acceptance. Prior to agreement to accept a significant donation the following local procedures should be followed:

- The selection criteria detailed in 3. and 4. above will be applied to the potential acquisition.
- Colleagues considering an archive acquisition should consult the Guidance available in Appendix 3.i.
- A template donation of records form (Appendix 3.ii) must be completed by prospective donor and sent to the University Archivist at the earliest opportunity.
- The University Archivist will undertake a risk assessment of the potential acquisition, to determine whether the benefit to the university is proportionate to identified risks.
- A costing exercise, to determine anticipated start-up costs (e.g. storage requirements) and anticipated ongoing revenue costs (e.g. cataloguing, maintenance and conservation, costs associated with scholarly use).
- After the assessment and costings exercise the University Archivist will take the consequent findings and recommendations to the Director of Student and Academic Services for consideration.
- The Director of Student and Academic Services, advised by the University Archivist, is responsible for recommending to the university decisions on substantial donations and proposed acquisitions of archives, following the assessment procedure outlined here, following consultant with relevant university colleagues, including academics, and having regard to the interests of other relevant organisations.

10. Ensuring the long-term preservation of archives

10.1. Once selected and accessioned, records will be preserved permanently in accordance with the agreement signed with the donor/depositor and made available to researchers from both within and outside the university.

10.2. However, responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal takes place as part of a collection's long-term collections policy to increase its public benefit. The University Archive reserves the right to conduct a periodic review of material and, where necessary, to recommend their disposal or destruction. This may be for the following reasons:

- Where material has been acquired in the past which belongs more properly with records held in another repository, in which case the records may be transferred with the consent of the owner (where appropriate) and with the knowledge of both governing bodies, subject to any relevant statutory provisions being observed.
- Duplicates, ephemeral or non-archival material which in the past has been incorrectly deemed suitable for permanent preservation.
- Material acquired in specialist format which is either no longer accessible (e.g. floppy disks) or poses a threat to itself and other collections (e.g. nitrate film). In this case, every effort will be made to conserve or transfer the material to an accessible and safe format and to find a more suitable repository for the original items as appropriate.
- Where items are damaged beyond repair or are corrupted and no information is accessible.
- The University Archive becomes unable, either temporarily or permanently, to provide proper care for the collections, in which case they should be transferred on such terms as will have been prior agreed with the donor/depositor, and with the consent of both governing bodies, to another appropriate repository with similar overall objectives.
- The owner requests the return of items on deposit. If the collection is formally on loan, the return will be governed by the conditions laid out in the agreement with the depositor. Older material donated in the past without adequate terms or lack of provenance may also find itself the subject of a legitimate claim by heirs to the original owner.
- Where items can be proven to be outside the University Archive's collections acquisition and development policy.

10.3 The University Archive has no intention to dispose of records once received except, in accordance with the wishes and requirements of donors, to evaluate and select for destruction those documents deemed to be without value for long-term preservation. The intention shall have been made clear at the time of transfer in the formal agreement between the University Archive and the donor/depositor.

10.4. The University Archive acknowledges that *The National Archives' Deaccessioning and Disposal Guidance for archives services (2015)*⁸ does allow for financially motivated disposal in exceptional circumstances and only after all options to transfer the archives to another repository have been exhausted. The sale of archives is only considered ethical if the sale is the result of a private depositor withdrawing an archive collection from the custody of the archive repository or if the items considered for sale are proven to be outside the University Archive's collection development policy, are duplicates or non-archival-material, and not suitable for exhibition, display, teaching or research within the university. Any remuneration from financially motivated sales would be ring fenced for the long-term safeguarding of the University Archive's remaining collections.

⁸ <https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/Deaccessioning-and-disposal-guide.pdf>

10.5. Certain grant awarding bodies stipulate that records acquired or conserved with their grant may not be disposed or transferred to another organisation, or at least not without their express authority. The University Archive will honour such terms and conditions pertaining to collections of this nature.

11. Access and Security

All records which are open to inspection by the public will be clearly described, in publicly available finding aids. Information about new acquisitions and any restrictions on access or use will be added to the archive catalogue.⁹

Our aim is to make the archives collection as widely available as possible. Details of how to access the University Archive can be found on our website: <https://recordsandarchives.westminster.ac.uk/> For more detailed information and details of our access principles please see the University Records and Archives Access Policy (2025).

12. Donating to the University Archive

Please contact the University Archivist at University Records and Archives, 4-12 Little Titchfield Street, London W1W 7BY, or email archive@westminster.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0) 20 3506 9602 if you would like further information about donating to the University Archive.

13. Implementation and review

13.1. This Collection Acquisition and Development Policy, which updates the previously named Collection and Acquisition Policy, is managed by the Head of University Records and Archives (University Archivist) and is formally approved by the University of Westminster's Research Committee.

13.2. The Policy will be reviewed at least every five years in accordance with the recommendations of The National Archives.

13.3. The policy will be made publicly available on the web site: www.westminster.ac.uk/archives.

Date of next review: September 2030

⁹ Archival records are catalogued in accordance with the *ISAD(G) General International Standard Archival Description, 2nd Edition*: <https://www.ica.org/resource/isadg-general-international-standard-archival-description-second-edition/> See also the University of Westminster Archive Collection Information Policy, 2025.

APPENDIX 1: Internal Records Transfer Process

1. Introduction

1.1 University Records and Archives (URA) collects and preserves records, the corporate memory of the University of Westminster, created by the university and its predecessors in order to make them accessible to students, colleagues and the general public both now and in the future.

1.2 Records created by colleagues as part of their role as an employee are University of Westminster records.

1.3 URA is responsible for determining which university records are transferred to the University of Westminster Archive (hereafter the University Archive) to be retained permanently.

1.4 The purpose of this document is to outline how the transfer of internal records will be managed.

2. Records Transfer Form

2.1 The transfer form will be completed where appropriate for internal records being transferred to the University Archive, and the information on the form is used to populate finding aids for the records.

3. Finding Aids

3.1 The records will be assigned an accession number and then catalogued to a level and in a manner appropriate to their nature and volume, including mandatory ISAD(G) elements.¹⁰ Catalogue information about the records will be available on the public website.

3.2 Records retaining current business value, relating to current and on-going events and activities, or with particular sensitivities, will not have their catalogue information made publicly available. In the case of such records, URA will apply a 5-year period from the date of the youngest record to the publication of cataloguing information. At the end of the 5-year period this decision will be reviewed by URA with a view to making some or all of the cataloguing information publicly available. Throughout this period, cataloguing information will be available to URA for the purposes of managing the records.

4. Storage and Preservation

4.1 Physical Records

4.1.1 The records will be stored in a secure environment under conditions which conform as far as possible with the British Standard Institute specifications on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage (BS EN 16893:2018) and on the Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections (BS 4971:2017), or any modifications thereof.

4.1.2 The University Archive will take all reasonable precautions to preserve the records from damage, loss or theft. All archive holdings are included in the University's disaster recover policy which aims to restore the collections to a usable state in the event of any damage occurring.

4.2 Digital Records

4.2.1 Born digital or digitised records will be stored in our secure digital storage and preservation service and will be managed according to the principles set out in the University of Westminster Records and Archives [Digital Records Preservation Policy](#).

5. Access

5.1 The University of Westminster is subject to the UK Freedom of Information Act 2000. As a result, all information held by the university and the archive is open to access, subject to relevant exemptions.

5.2 For records defined in 3.2 above, requests for access will be considered in line with the University's [Freedom of Information Policy](#), [Personal Data Protection Policy](#) and the University Records and Archives [Access Policy](#).

5.3 Access to records transferred to the University Archive will be managed by URA.

Records Transfer Form

Transferring Body	
Department/Team	
Contact name	
Contact details	

¹⁰ ISAD(G) General International Standard Archival Description, 2nd Edition: <https://www.ica.org/resource/isadg-general-international-standard-archival-description-second-edition/>

Description of Records	
Volume of records to be transferred (i.e. 1 box, 3GB etc.)	
Date of records (earliest and latest date)	
Brief description	

Authorisation	
Signature of transferee	
Date of transfer	

URA to complete (where relevant)	
Off-site storage ref. no.	
Archive cat. ref.	
Accession no.	

APPENDIX 2. Donor Agreement form template

University of Westminster Records and Archives Gift of records agreement

1 Definitions and General

1.1 The University of Westminster collects appropriate archive collections in order to make them available for research and preserve them for the future. The purpose of this Agreement is to ensure that donors understand the implications of gifting records to the University Archive.

1.2 In these terms of agreement:

- 1.2.1 **the Archive** means the University of Westminster Archive.
- 1.2.2 **donor** means the person who gifts records to the Archive.
- 1.2.3 **Archivist** means the University Archivist in charge of University Records and Archives at the University of Westminster.
- 1.2.4 **gift** means that the donor has transferred ownership of the records referred to in the Schedule to the University of Westminster Records and Archives.

1.3 The donor confirms that he/she is the legal owner of the records.

1.4 The Archivist reserves the right to return to the donor any records deemed to be of no historical interest or, with the consent of the donor, to transfer them to a more appropriate place of deposit or to destroy.

1.5 The agreement will be kept permanently within the Archive, but the name and address of the donor will not be given to third parties without permission.

2. Conservation and Preservation

2.1 The records will be stored in a secure environment under conditions which conform as far as possible with the British Standard Institute specification on the storage and preservation of archives (BS EN 16893:2018; BS 4971:2017) or any modification thereof.

2.2 The Archive will take all reasonable precautions to preserve the records from damage, loss or theft, but shall not be liable for any loss sustained, nor undertake to compensate the donor financially should any such loss occur. All archive holdings are included in the University's disaster recovery policy, which aims to restore the collections to a usable state in the event of any damage occurring.

2.3 The Archive may at its discretion:

- 2.3.1 Photograph, or otherwise copy or reproduce the records, subject to current copyright law.
- 2.3.2 Undertake appropriate measures of preservation and conservation as may be considered desirable and practical by the Archivist.
- 2.3.3 Withhold or limit public access to records in fragile conditions until such time as suitable remedial action has been taken.

3. Listing

3.1 The records will be listed as part of the Archive's cataloguing programme to a level and in a manner appropriate to their nature and number, including mandatory ISAD(G) elements.¹¹ This will usually include numbering the documents for the purposes of identification, security and retrieval.

3.2 The copyright of all finding aids created by the Archive belongs to the Archive.

3.3 A catalogue description of the records will be made publicly available on the internet.

4. Access

4.1 At the discretion of the Archivist and subject to the exceptions outlined in 4.3 below, records will be freely available to the public for study and research.

4.2 Consultation of Archive collections will be in the supervised reading room of the Archive during its advertised opening hours and in accordance with current regulations for use of the Archive.

4.3 By agreement with the donor and the Archivist restrictions may be placed on public access to the records for a specific period of years either because of the particular sensitivity of their contents or to comply with legal requirements under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

5. Publication and Copyright

¹¹ ISAD(G) General International Standard Archival Description, 2nd Edition: <https://www.ica.org/resource/isadg-general-international-standard-archival-description-second-edition/>

- 5.1 At the discretion of the Archive, copies may be provided to the public for study and research purposes in accordance with current copyright and data protection legislation.
- 5.2 The Archive will give copyright permission to publish in full or in extract from records in respect of copyrights held by the donor. In signing the agreement, the donor acknowledges that he/she has transferred ownership of copyright in the records to the Archive.
- 5.3 The Archive reserves the right to publish records in University of Westminster publications, on the internet, or by way of other electronic formats.
- 5.4 All acknowledgements in publications or other media should be given to the University of Westminster Archive. The donor will not be individually acknowledged unless otherwise agreed and stated in the gift of records agreement.

6. Exhibitions and Lectures

- 6.1 Records may be required for exhibitions or to illustrate talks and lectures by the University of Westminster. They may be displayed in original or copy form at the discretion of the Archivist.
- 6.2 Requests to exhibit records, other than on the premises of the University of Westminster, will be considered by the Archivist.

7. Additional Gifts

- 7.1 Any future gifts to these records will be covered under the terms of the original gift of records agreement and added to the existing schedule, unless specifically stated in writing by the donor.

Signed by the donor:

Signed on behalf of
University Records and Archives:

Name:

Dr. Elaine Penn
University Archivist
University of Westminster
4-12 Little Titchfield Street
London W1W 7BY

Address:

Date:

Date:

APPENDIX 3.i. Guidance for colleagues who are offered archives as donations to the university

Introduction

This guidance is intended for University of Westminster colleagues who might be approached by a potential donor of an archive. It is important to consider a number of criteria before any donations can be accepted.

Scope

The University of Westminster Archive collections reflect the university's commitment to promote and develop innovative, cutting-edge and interdisciplinary research. They support our strategic priorities to 'provide curricular and cocurricular opportunities for students to engage in research and knowledge exchange,to explore creative ways of using research and KE to support authentic and active learning and assessment.'¹²

The University of Westminster Archive collections also support our commitment to 'the enrichment and benefit of the wider community by making knowledge available to all' and to 'finding solutions to make a difference for our communities and the world.'¹³

All donations must be in line with the *University of Westminster Archive Collection Acquisition and Development Policy*, to which this guidance is appended.

Procedure

If a colleague receives an offer of a donation of archives they are requested to work in partnership with the University of Westminster Archive and, as appropriate, other colleagues from within and outside the university including a legal advisor, from an early stage in the discussions. The Director of Student and Academic Services, advised by the University Archivist, is responsible for recommending to the university decisions on substantial donations and proposed acquisitions of archives, following the assessment procedure outlined here, involving consultation with relevant university colleagues and having regard to the interests of other relevant organisations.

The procedure has four stages:

1. Investigation
2. Resource assessment
3. Risk assessment and cost analysis
4. Decision

1. Investigation

An initial investigative discussion should take place between appropriate university colleagues, including the University Archivist, and the potential donor to establish whether the collection is likely to meet a substantial number of the following criteria:

Are the records:

- created by and relating to the University of Westminster and its predecessor bodies including the Royal Polytechnic Institution, Regent Street Polytechnic and the Polytechnic of Central London?
- created by and relating to the wide range of sports and social clubs associated with the former Polytechnic, the Secondary School and the Polytechnic Touring Association?
- personal papers of former students and colleagues where these help document the history of the university or support teaching and research?

If unrelated to the history of the institution, do the records:

- build upon and complement our existing holdings or the university's research strengths, or address identified areas of current weakness, provided that there is no conflict with other collecting repositories?
- fall within the subject areas of:
the history of Media and Communication,
Architecture, and

¹² University of Westminster Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2022-2029: *Making a Difference*

¹³ University of Westminster Public and Community Engagement Strategy 2023-2029: *The University of Westminster – an Institution for the Public Good*.

Planning?

2. Resource assessment

If the collection seems to fit the selection criteria, then it will be important to consider a number of quantitative issues to determine the potential resource requirement of the material. The template ‘Record of possible donation to the University of Westminster Archive’ (Appendix 3.ii) should be used to record this essential information before a final decision on acquisition is made.

3. Risk assessment and cost analysis

The answers to the questions in the template ‘Record of possible donation to the University of Westminster Archive’ will lead to an informed picture of the collection and its potential benefit to the university.

The University Archivist, in conjunction with the colleague and any other university colleagues as appropriate, should carry out an analysis of the strengths of the collection, the weaknesses, the opportunities it offers to the university, and the threats it might present should the university agreed to acquire it. This SWOT analysis will indicate the overall balance of risk and gain that the university might encounter.

The assessment team should also consider the risks in terms of their likelihood and impact and suggest mitigating measures which might be put in place to counter these.

A critical question to consider is whether the collection can be effectively managed within existing resources or what additional resources would be needed (including storage, staff and conservation costs). A cost analysis needs to be undertaken to determine the capital and revenue resource requirement of acquiring the collection.

4. Decision – approval or refusal

Following these considerations, a proposal can be made to accept or reject the collection, based on the principles in the *University of Westminster Collection Acquisition and Development Policy*.

For small gifts, which can be dealt with using existing resources, this proposal will be made by the University Archivist in liaison with appropriate colleagues.

For larger gifts, which will require significant additional resources, the proposal should be referred to the Director of Student and Academic Services who will take it to the University Research Committee if approval is recommended. This will ensure that the decision to accept the donation is made by the appropriate Senior University Managers who will take into consideration the information provided by the assessment team.

APPENDIX 3.ii. Record of possible donation to the University of Westminster Archive**1. Background information**

Potential donor's name and contact details
Date and venue of initial meeting with donor and names of those present

2. Details of the potential donation

1. What is the broad subject area of the material?
2. What is the format of the material (e.g. letters, manuscripts, photographs, artefacts)?
3. What is the approximate size of the gift (e.g. number of items, number of boxes)?
4. What is the general age of the material (e.g. pre-1900, post-1960)?
5. What is the general condition of the material (e.g. good, suspect mould or pest damage)?
6. Is the donor happy for us to select which records we want, or must the collection be accepted in its entirety?
7. Is the donor able to provide any assistance processing costs of acquiring the collection, including transportation of the collection to the University?
8. Does the donor have a connection with the University of Westminster? If not, why has the donor decided to offer this gift to us?

9. Has a current or future research interest in this field been demonstrated (e.g. have researchers accessed the collection or published on it)?
10. Who owns the copyright in the content of the donation? Please provide contact details if different from above.
11. Are digital copies of the material in existence, and are these part of the donation?
12. Notes written by whom and when
13. Additional information
14. Actions agreed following initial meeting

Appendix 4 – Legislation and standards

We collect, manage and preserve our collections within the following statutory, contractual and standards framework. We will adapt our services to meet any applicable legislation introduced over the lifetime of this policy.

Legislation

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- Public Records Act 1958, amended 1967

Standards

- EN 17820:2023 Specifications for the management of cultural heritage collections
- BS 4917:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- EN 16893:2018 Conservation of cultural heritage
- ISAD(G) General international standard archival description, 2nd edition

Codes of Ethics

- International Council on Archives, Code of Ethics 1996
- Archives and Records Association, Code of Ethics 2024
- Information and Records Management Society, Code of Ethics 2019

Related policies

- University of Westminster Freedom of Information Policy 2025
- University of Westminster Personal Data Protection Policy 2025
- University of Westminster Records and Archives Access Policy 2025
- University of Westminster Records and Archives Collections Management Policy 2025
- University of Westminster Records and Archives Privacy Notice 2025
- University of Westminster Archive Collection Information Policy 2025
- University of Westminster Archive Collection Care and Conservation Policy 2025
- University of Westminster Records Management Policy 2023
- University of Westminster Records and Archives Digital Preservation Policy 2024
- Westminster Menswear Archive Collection Development Policy 2025