

University of Westminster Archive Collection Information Policy

This policy sets out what researchers can expect in relation to the information we provide about the archives in our care.

1. Policy

Mission

- 1.1. The mission of the University of Westminster Archive (hereafter the University Archive) is to collect and preserve records, the corporate memory of the university, created by the university and its predecessors to make them accessible to students, colleagues and the public both now and in the future.

Principles

- 1.2. This policy is supported by collections-related actions undertaken by University Records and Archives through the annual operating plan, as well as by other policies, standards and legislation detailed in Appendix A.
- 1.3. We create information about the archives in our care and make that information publicly available, subject to any contractual or statutory restrictions.
- 1.4. We aim to maximise access to and use of our collections, whilst also prioritising the long-term security and preservation of our collections. Good quality collections information is essential to managing access to collections while maintaining their integrity.
- 1.5. We capture high level descriptive and management information from the point a new collection is offered to us and keep this information permanently.
- 1.6. We publish descriptions of new archive collections in a timely manner.
- 1.7. We maintain an online, publicly searchable catalogue.
- 1.8. The catalogue is harvested by online collections information aggregators and internet search engines.
- 1.9. We consider the University Archive's stakeholders when we collect or create collections information, considering how it might assist them and their interests and priorities.
- 1.10. We undertake an ongoing, iterative review of our descriptive practices, revisiting and revising catalogue descriptions where appropriate. We may preserve outmoded language where it is necessary to facilitate discovery and retrieval while flagging oppressive or harmful language and seeking to remediate past silences and omissions, to provide an appropriate contextual, equitable and representative archive.

- 1.11. Our catalogue represents archives in the custody of the University of Westminster Records and Archives service. Archives held elsewhere may be represented with the prior consent of the holder and owner of such archives.

Collections information

- 1.12. Collections information is information that the University Archive gathers, creates, holds and maintains in relation to items in our collections. This includes information about provenance, accessioning, acquisition, format, content, physical condition, location, ownership, access rights, management, research, contextual information, verbal or written descriptions and exhibition interpretation of an item.
- 1.13. We adopt and observe international and national standards for the management, identification, arrangement and description of the archives in our care and publish information about the standards we adopt.
- 1.14. We observe the mandatory requirements of ISAD(G) in creating new finding aids.
- 1.15. We create and apply name authority records using controlled vocabularies access terms and observing the minimum requirements of ISAAR(CPF).
- 1.16. We enhance finding aids by providing information about other sources of information about the nature and use of archives, including secondary texts citing the archives.
- 1.17. The primary and authoritative source of information about our collections is our [AtoM catalogue](#).

Access to collections information

- 1.18. The University Archive is committed to open access with regards to its collections information which is made freely available via our catalogue and webpages.
- 1.19. There are certain circumstances where collections information is not automatically publicly released. These include where information could compromise collection security (e.g. detailed location information), or information currently closed under contractual or statutory restrictions.

2. Implementation and review

- 2.1. The policy is managed by the Head of University Records and Archives and approved by the Library and Archive Services Management Team.
- 2.2. All staff in University Records and Archives are responsible for implementing and adhering to this policy.
- 2.3. This policy will be reviewed at least every five years.

3. Feedback and complaints

- 3.1. We welcome feedback on our procedures and policies and will review all feedback as appropriate.

Version Control

DATE	VERSION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGED BY
Aug 2025	1.0	New Policy. Ratified by L&AS Mgt Team 31/10/25.	Elaine Penn

Date of next review: August 2030

Appendix A – Legislation and standards

We create information about the collections in our care 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 URA policies

- 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 Acquisition and Development 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