

Edge Hill University Library and Learning Services

Collection Management Policy for Special Collections and Archives

1. Introduction

The purpose and scope of this policy is to provide a framework for the development and management of the unique and distinctive Special Collections and Archives held by Edge Hill University Library and Learning Services and complies with guidelines provided by the [National Archives](#). It does not cover collections which are held within the main sequences of the University Library, which are covered by a separate policy.

Special Collections are usually identified as being printed materials, including books, pamphlets and journals, with associated ephemera, annotation and inserts. They can be classed as special because of their age, rarity, fragility, binding, provenance, association and/or financial value. **Archives** are defined as original items in a variety of media, including paper, photograph, sound or various born-digital formats. They have been created or received, accumulated and used by an individual or institution in the course of their daily activities and preserved for their continuing value. Archives provide us with primary evidence of the transactions, processes and events they record. They often have a complex structure and can contain a huge variety of material. Special Collections and Archives are held separately from the main library collections to maintain their integrity. They often include unique materials in manuscript or artefactual form and although these materials may not always be rare, valuable or old they receive special treatment in terms of housing, cataloguing, conservation and means of consultation.

The Special Collections and Archives are stored in climate-controlled accommodation in the Archive on the ground floor of Catalyst on the Ormskirk campus. They are managed by the Archivist, reporting to the Dean of Learning Services via the Collections Manager. The collections and access arrangements are available from the Library and Learning Services' web pages.

2. Mission, Purpose and Objectives

The **mission** for the Special Collections and Archives is:

- To support the University Mission of “creating and harnessing knowledge to deliver opportunity.”
- To provide an outstanding student experience, build research capacity and strengthen links to business and the region.
- To preserve older institutional records documenting the University’s history.

The **purpose** is to preserve unique and distinctive collections and provide the resources necessary to ensure that they are accessible, promote their use as educational, cultural and research resources and develop, by the means of acquisition (and sometimes disposal) the range and depth of the collections.

The principal **objectives** are:

- To extend access to the collections, including making digital surrogates available.
- To promote increased awareness, discovery and use of the collections through exhibitions, displays, web pages, publications, special events and other appropriate means.
- To fulfil a duty of care towards the collections by meeting appropriate standards for management, housing, security and preservation.
- To collaborate effectively with other relevant archival collections, regional and national bodies in order to seek advice, share expertise, collaborate on projects and to rationalise decision-making, including decisions on acquisitions to avoid competition or duplication where possible.

3. Collection Scope and Limitations

The key principle determining the development of Special Collections and Archives is to strengthen or support areas of research and teaching activity at Edge Hill University. Collection development reflects Edge Hill University’s [established research centres](#) in the areas of creative enterprise, social responsibility and health research; alongside a commitment to the preservation and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the university.

There is no specifically allocated budget for the purchase of special collections or archive collections. When appropriate material becomes available, various internal funding streams as well as external grant awarding bodies or fund-raising programmes will be considered. Library and Learning Services will be held subject to the terms and conditions of grant awarding bodies.

3.1 Criteria

All acquisitions are accessioned as soon as they are received.

In addition to the criteria below, all materials considered for acquisition will be assessed for its long-term historical value. In general, items or collections offered for donation or sale will be assessed for acquisition using the following criteria:

- a) The collection or items offered must support clearly defined research needs within the context of the current Edge Hill University Strategic Plan and research interests determined through consultation with academic departments. This can include use of the material as a research-led teaching resource.
- b) Acquisitions which add to the knowledge of Edge Hill University history.
- c) The size, format and physical condition of collections or individual items will be assessed and likely preservation and conservation costs estimated before acceptance.
- d) Acquisitions in all formats will be considered, including print, manuscript, photographs and standard digital formats. However, we do not usually acquire photocopies or facsimiles of original material, reprints of published articles or duplicates. Published journals will only normally be accepted if they are not easily available elsewhere in the region or online, or if they are part of a larger archive collection. Three dimensional artefacts will only be accepted as part of a larger collection and/or if they have a particular relationship with our collection scope and criteria.
- e) Individual items or the majority of items in a collection must be available for use by all researchers. Copyright, freedom of information, data protection or re-use of public sector information restrictions may apply to specific items and should be declared at the time of deposit.
- f) Acquisition of collections will, where appropriate, be undertaken in full consultation with other archives in the region.
- g) Potential of the material to enhance existing collections.
- h) Potential cost of cataloguing, conserving and storing the material.
- i) Potential of the material to enhance the University's reputation.

3.2 Exemptions

Library and Learning Services usually only acquire materials by gift, bequest or purchase, whether from private individuals or organisations. In general, we do not collect items which do not align with collection priorities or the profile of existing collections.

Where archival material is offered to Edge Hill University that is more appropriate to another known archive, the seller or donor will normally be referred to that archive. Copies of archives held elsewhere will not

normally be accepted unless there are exceptional reasons for keeping them (for example to use alongside existing collections).

Materials that duplicate or are very similar to current holdings will not be accepted, unless they have significant provenance, provide additional information (e.g. manuscript annotations), form part of a named individual's library, or are especially scarce.

Library and Learning Services will exercise due diligence and will not acquire any item or collection if queries regarding ownership and provenance cannot be fully addressed.

4. Retention and Disposal

Deaccessioning of individual items or collections will be considered when they are judged no longer to contribute to the purposes and collecting policy of Library and Learning Services, or if physical deterioration or damage means they cannot be preserved in a usable state.

In circumstances where a decision has been made to withdraw material, it is likely that a recommendation will be made to transfer items to a more appropriate collection or repository, or where appropriate, to sell or exchange.

Materials will only be disposed of when Edge Hill University has a legal right to do so and all decisions regarding deaccessioning and disposal will be made by the Archivist and Collections Manager, with the Dean of Learning Services consulted on major disposals.

5. Digital

Library and Learning Services recognise the importance of maintaining access to digital and other electronic items and are working towards establishing digital preservation policies and procedures.

Library and Learning Services do accept born digital archives in standard digital formats and it is acknowledged that digital objects will become a major component of the University archive and of deposited collections.

6. Policy Review

This policy was approved in January 2020 and will be reviewed annually. Revisions will be approved by the Dean of Learning Services.