



The University of
Nottingham

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**UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
MANUSCRIPTS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

Access Policy

2022

1. Scope

This policy documents how Manuscripts and Special Collections will provide access to its holdings for:

- Teaching
- Research
- Public and alumni engagement

Access to material held by Manuscripts and Special Collections will be as unrestricted as possible, but needs to take into account the proper preservation and security of our holdings. Access will also be subject to statutory or other legal requirements, as well as to proper considerations of confidentiality and to the rights of owners, copyright holders and others.

2. Our community

Manuscripts and Special Collections serves the following communities:

- University of Nottingham staff, students, volunteers and alumni
- Academics and students of other institutions world wide
- General public including local and family historians, local history and community groups, educational groups, private and commercial researchers and exhibition visitors
- Donors and depositors of collections and their heirs or representatives

3. Standards

Manuscripts and Special Collections facilitates access to the collections in accordance with the Public Service Quality Group, *Standard for Access to Archives* and our Preservation and Conservation Policy, Collections Development Plan and Collections Information Policy.

We have the following service standards:

- Items will be produced in the reading room within 30 minutes.
- Enquiries will be answered within 1 week
- Copying orders will be fulfilled within 1 to 2 weeks depending on the copying method used. Copies created using the photocopier or overhead copier will be supplied within 1 week, studio copying and prints from microfilms will be supplied within 2 weeks.
- Additions to the archival collections will be accessioned and a receipt issued within 1 week.

4. Making our collections available

4.1 Reading room

The reading room is open four days per week free of charge and opening hours are advertised at <http://nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/aboutus/openinghours.aspx>. It provides space to study archives, manuscripts and printed materials in a variety of formats and free access to WiFi. Supervised access is provided to all through a reader's ticket, issued on proof of identity and address, and valid for three years. All new readers will be issued with a

copy of the Reading Room Regulations on registration which include guidance on care and handling.

Manuscripts and Special Collections complies with the Disability Discrimination Act and the reading room provides:

- door access via level front door
- facilities on one level
- wheelchair-accessible unisex WC
- low level service point
- height-adjustable table
- parking for blue badge holders
- paid parking for other visitors

We work to remove any physical or intellectual barriers to access and staff are on hand to assist with interpreting collections in our care.

4.2 Catalogues

All catalogues will be made available online at <http://mssweb.nottingham.ac.uk/catalogue/> and in the Reading room. Web addresses of new catalogues will also be sent to The National Archives for inclusion on the Discovery platform and Collection Level Records made available through Archives Hub

4.3 Production

Readers are encouraged to order material in advance so that it can be produced and made ready for them on arrival. Where it is ordered during the day we aim to produce the first item within 30 minutes. Material must be ordered on document request slips and signed for on issue and return. For security reasons only three volumes or one bundle of documents will be issued at a time and bundles of loose documents will be weighed on issue and return.

4.4 Restrictions on access

While most holdings are freely accessible some items will be subject to access restrictions imposed by:

- Legislation e.g. Public Records Acts, Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act
- Confidentiality where the item contains confidential or sensitive information and in such cases the provisions of the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act will be fully implemented
- Rights of owners where any restrictions agreed will be based upon those of the Public Records Acts
- Copyright: copies are provided for non-commercial private research and permission to publish must be obtained from both Manuscripts and Special Collections and the copyright holder. Reproduction fees may be charged for publication
- Preservation: access will be withheld if the item is unfit to be handled but surrogates will be provided wherever possible
- Uncatalogued material: researchers are asked to contact us in advance of their visit if they require access to uncatalogued collections. In such cases every effort will be made to facilitate access whilst taking into account the security and preservation needs of the collection. Researchers may be asked to delay their visit to allow checking and initial listing of the collection.

Restrictions will be recorded on the catalogue in the 'AccessConditions' field, with the date when the restriction will be lifted, if appropriate, so users can clearly see where material is on restricted access and why. Any requests for access will be considered on an individual basis and decisions made in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. Readers looking at unpublished material less than 100 years old will be asked to sign a Restricted Access form, regardless of whether or not any Data Protection issues have been identified, to protect the rights of owners.

4.5 Surrogates

Surrogate copies of items will be made where appropriate, to limit handling of the originals. This will normally be for reasons of heavy demand, exceptional fragility, potential future degradation or deterioration, or in response to particular teaching or research needs. Surrogates may be created in a range of formats - digital, photographic, photocopies or microfilm - depending on what is most appropriate in the circumstances. Generally, where surrogates exist they must be used by readers and staff in the first instance. Access to surrogates will be free of charge within the reading room but remote access might be subject to charges or commercial licensing.

4.6 Enquiries

Members of staff will always be on duty in the reading room to help with enquiries about the collections and to help direct individual visitors to particular research material. We aim to respond to enquiries by telephone, letter and email within one week. Staff will provide basic information on our holdings free of charge and a research service is available for people who wish us to undertake more in-depth searches into the collections.

4.7 Reprographics Services

Where there are no restrictions on a collection readers may use their own camera, mobile phone or tablet to make copies within the reading room. Otherwise photocopies or digital copies may be ordered as determined by the Reprographics Policy which also includes our service standards. Charges for these services are published on our web pages at <http://nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/reprographics/reprographicsprices.aspx>

4.8 Virtual Reading Room

Access to the collections is provided via our Virtual Reading Room for people who, for whatever reason, do not wish to visit the reading room on King's Meadow Campus. The service allows users to view items from the collections via a visualiser. The Virtual Reading Room is actively promoted to readers where appropriate – for instance to save a physical visit to view only a small number of items, to confirm that material is of interest to a reader, or to provide access when a visit to MSC is not possible – and is also advertised on our website at <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/readingroom/virtual-reading-room.aspx>. The Virtual Reading Room service can also be used for groups and classes to access the collections remotely and is free for all users.

5. Promoting our collections

5.1 Publications

A magazine will be published three times a year with information on recent acquisitions. Various leaflets are also available on our collections and services.

5.2 Web pages

Extensive information on our collections, services and visiting is made available through our web pages at <http://nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/>

5.3 Teaching

Classes will be held on request for undergraduate and postgraduate students and for external groups.

5.4 Visits

Visits will be organised for new staff, University VIP's and other stakeholders.

5.5 Exhibitions

Two exhibitions of original material per year will be mounted in our dedicated exhibition space, the Weston Gallery, at Lakeside Arts, on University Park. These are accompanied by a diverse programme of events and talks. Admission to the gallery is free and the gallery is open six days per week. A digital version of the exhibition runs alongside the physical, and is archived afterwards on our online exhibitions pages:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/exhibitions/online/about.aspx>.

Surrogate displays are provided at other locations across the University.

Items will be lent for display in other exhibitions where adequate security and environmental conditions can be provided as stipulated in BS 4971 and BS EN 16893.

5.6 Media

Access will be promoted through a variety of print and broadcast media in particular to promote events and new acquisitions. Some media access will be chargeable.

5.7 Social Media

Collection access will also be promoted through a blog <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscripts/>, Instagram [Instagram.com/mssUniNott](https://www.instagram.com/mssUniNott) and twitter accounts <https://twitter.com/mssUniNott>, which are used to provide news about acquisitions, outreach events and exhibitions and other collection-related topics. A minimum of one blog will be posted a fortnight. Access is also promoted through Library and University social media channels as appropriate.

6. Customer care and consultation

6.1 University of Nottingham Libraries Customer Charter

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/library/about/about.aspx>

Manuscripts and Special Collections will comply with the Customer Charter which states our commitment to 'providing excellent services, resources and facilities to support your learning, teaching, research and enjoyment'.

6.2 Consultation

Feedback will be gathered from different stakeholder groups to improve our services:

- Public Service Quality Group survey of visitors to archives
- Public Service Quality Group remote user's survey
- University of Nottingham Professional Services quality survey
- University of Nottingham Libraries annual library customer survey
- Views of senior stakeholders
- Class-visit survey for participants in any of our classes
- Generic feedback forms are available in the reading room so that all visitors have the opportunity to comment on our services. Responses will be published on the notice board
- Weston Gallery comments book to leave feedback on our exhibitions

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.0	Mark Dorrington	20-01-2016	Approved by Libraries, Research and Learning Resources Senior Management Team
1.2	Mark Dorrington	14-10-2019	Minor updates and revisions
2.0	Hayley Cotterill	26-09-2022	Revisions to most sections to reflect changes in standards, growth in digital access, and changes in restrictions to accessing uncatalogued collections.

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