



The University of  
**Nottingham**

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**UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM**  
**MANUSCRIPTS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

**Acquisitions Policy for  
Manuscripts and Archives**

**2021**

**The repository:**

Manuscripts and Special Collections, The University of Nottingham, King's Meadow Campus, Lenton Lane, Nottingham. NG7 2NR

**Governing body:**

The University of Nottingham, acting through the University Council and other appropriate committee bodies.

**1. Introduction**

In 1997 the University of Nottingham first published its Acquisitions Policy for Archives, following the recommendations of the Historical Manuscripts Commission *Standard for Record Repositories* (1990, revised as *The National Archives' Standard for Record Repositories*, 2004 and replaced by the *Archive Service Accreditation Standard*, 2014). The policy, which was formally reviewed and approved by University Council in 2002, has remained in force.

The present revision takes account of changes in collection strengths over the last decade, new relationships with key user groups within the University and capacity for digital preservation.

The Acquisitions Policy for Archives is one of a set of policies relating to the collections managed by the Manuscripts and Special Collections department. Separate policies cover the rare book collections and the local studies East Midlands Collection. The archives policy includes the key elements recommended under *The Standard for Record Repositories*.

**2. Archive keeping at the University and service objectives**

Minutes of the University Council from the 1930s refer to the University Library's accession of significant gifts and deposits of archival materials from families and individuals in the local area. A separate Department of Manuscripts was established within the University Library in 1958 under the management of a professional archivist, designated Keeper of the Manuscripts. Senate Minutes of 1957-58 describe the functions and responsibilities of the new Department and its staff, which were reported to Council. Since then, deposit agreements concerning major collections and other contracts of particular significance have been signed on behalf of the University by the University Registrar.

The initial function of the service was to provide the University's academic staff with access to original research materials. This user base was extended as the collections grew, and new categories of holdings were added, including the University's own historic records and the library's early printed and local studies holdings. The collections are now actively used by undergraduate and postgraduate students and university administration.

The University's own academic community retains its priority status. Academic initiative regularly leads to new collecting interests and academic participation is sought in collection development work.

At the same time, the University recognises its responsibility to the wider community in curating heritage collections of local, national and international significance. External access has steadily grown and public awareness of the collections is promoted through display and digital resources.

**3. Official external recognition**

The office has been appointed by the Lord Chancellor as a repository for specified classes of public records (hospital records; British Coal, research report series) under the Public Records Act (1958) as defined in the Place of Deposit Instrument (revised July 2011).

It is recognised by the Master of the Rolls as a repository for manorial documents under the Law of Property Act (1922).

Its status as an approved repository was confirmed by The National Archives in 2009 following inspection in October 2008 of its new premises at King's Meadow Campus.

It is designated by the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham as a repository for the archive of the former Archdeaconry of Nottingham.

It has been approved for the custody of collections of national significance accepted in lieu of tax.

Key collection areas (Newcastle and Portland archival groups and DH Lawrence papers) have been awarded national designation status by the former Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

It was awarded Archive Service Accreditation by The National Archives in 2017, a standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery.

#### **4. Standards**

The University of Nottingham follows the recommendations of *The National Archives' Archives Accreditation Standard* (2018) in the development and management of its archive collections.

#### **5. General principles of acquisition**

The University acquires archival documents by transfer, gift, bequest, purchase, deposit or loans for specific periods, following the Collecting Policy outlined below, 7.1-7.4. Acquisitions are not sought outside the terms of the Collecting Policy.

The term 'documents' refers to hand-written evidence on paper, parchment or other material; records in printed form; maps and plans; topographical drawings; art works and photographs. Such records may be born-digital. Copies of documents held privately or in other repositories are also, in some cases, acquired.

Newspapers and published secondary works may be retained within collections if they demonstrate archival characteristics of significance in their context and provenance. Substantial runs of published materials will generally be added to the library's rare book collections, to be managed as bibliographical items, with collection level information preserving the evidence of their association with the archive.

Within the context of an archive, some examples of artefacts, textiles, and audio or film (reel, tape or digital) may be present but the preservation and access needs of such formats will be respected. Acquisitions will not be sought unless appropriate facilities are available for the specialist requirements of storage and consultation, or plans for the securing of such facilities are in hand.

The University seeks to avoid conflict and duplication with the collecting policies of other record repositories. This particularly refers to the remit of Nottinghamshire Archives and other local authority archives of the East Midlands, and to the museum function of the D.H. Lawrence Heritage Centre at Eastwood, Nottinghamshire. (*See Appendix 1 for further details*)

No attempt will be made to secure the acquisition or removal of any records held in another record repository, except at the wish of the owner of the records and in consultation with the archivist in charge of that repository.

In responding to acquisition offers, the curators will consider the appropriateness of the University as a suitable place for their custody and consultation and will respect the principles of archival integrity. Where a prospective collection does not fit within the

University's acquisition policy, the prospective donor/depositor will be directed towards an appropriate national or local repository.

No documents shall be acquired or disposed of in contravention of the terms of any relevant legislation, and in particular the Public Records Acts and the Manorial Documents Rules.

Documents acquired or developed through public award or with public funding will be preserved in accordance with the conditions specified by national bodies or other funders.

Acquisition procedures will ensure the following:

- satisfactory title to transferred documents;
- formal records of transfer including reference to any terms or conditions governing gifted or deposited collections;
- departmental registration of all accessions;
- appropriate advice to donors and depositors regarding the implications of compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information regimes.

Notice of new acquisitions and of restrictions on access or use will be made public at the earliest opportunity, and archives will be made accessible to researchers as soon as is practicable after their acquisition.

## **6. General principles of disposal**

All donors/depositors will be informed at point of transfer that material which is duplicate, ephemeral, or for other reasons not deemed to be appropriate for permanent retention will be either destroyed, offered back to the original owner, or otherwise disposed of.

Records held together with an original archival unity will not normally be divided nor any item selected or removed in detriment to that unity. Where, however, a large collection falls into clearly discrete parts the records may be divided, with appropriate agreement and consent.

In all cases there is a strong presumption against the disposal, by any means, of records accepted into the repository, with the following exceptions:

- it is found that they belong more properly with records in another recognised repository, in which case they may be transferred with the consent of the owner;
- the repository becomes unable, either temporarily or permanently, to provide proper care for them, in which case they should be transferred on formal terms with the consent of the owner and the agreement of both institutions to another appropriate repository with similar objectives;
- the owner requests their return.

## **7. Collecting policy**

The library of University College Nottingham began to acquire local literary manuscripts and historical archives in the 1930s and from the early 1940s systematically built on its research collections. The core strengths of the current collections were established by the 1960s. This Collecting Policy acknowledges these strengths and the expectations of further development, with some reference to the priorities now being pursued.

### **7.1 Historical papers and archives of the East Midlands, building upon established strengths**

As the primary definition of this material is its geographic origin, the subject range is inevitably wide. The following categories of material are represented. In most of these categories there is potential overlap with the interests of Nottinghamshire Archives, whose own Collecting Policy is respected when major new collections are offered to the University (*See below Appendix 1*):

- Family and estate collections, particularly from the Dukeries and north Nottinghamshire area but including estates from adjacent counties. Significant series of political, diplomatic and official papers are present, touching on national and international affairs.  
This category of material is a particular strength. It includes two of the University's designated collections (Portland and Newcastle).
- Papers of local individuals. The range of individuals and their collections is very broad. In general, acquisitions reflect a personal or research link with the University, or an association between the papers and other University collection strengths.
- Ecclesiastical records, including the archive of the court of the former Archdeaconry of Nottingham, together with Unitarian, United Reform and some Baptist records.
- Records of local business, trade union and employer organisations. The collections reflect the strength of business history research at the University. New acquisitions are commonly initiated or proposed by academic colleagues.
- Water archives of the East Midlands, covering both rivers and drainage and water supply. The bulk of these consist of predecessor bodies of the Severn Trent Water Authority, and cover issues ranging from the drainage of the Lincolnshire fens to the creation of 19<sup>th</sup> century pumping stations and 20<sup>th</sup> century reservoirs.
- Literary papers; ranging from 17<sup>th</sup>-century verse in the Portland Collection to acquisitions of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century local writers. A particular interest in regional literature and drama has been encouraged by academic colleagues. The strength of the DH Lawrence holdings has made this area a separate collection strand (See *below 7.3*).
- Hospital records. The University's responsibility for hospital records, as a recognised Place of Deposit for public records, concerns the archives of the General Hospital Nottingham and associated institutions, including the Children's Hospital, the Eye Infirmary, and the Women's Hospital. Alongside the records of Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust following the 2006 merger of Queen's Medical Centre and Nottingham City Hospital.
- Meteorological records; this is one of several collecting areas which is supported by strong holdings in the department's rare book collections.

## **7.2 Material with a curriculum or research relevance to the University**

The department acts in association with the University's academic colleagues to secure material which can be used in teaching and research. Strong local collections have resulted from this collaboration, but this category also includes material which has no regional link.

Although many acquisitions build on established strengths and are made at the discretion of the curators, advice is sought from relevant academic colleagues if substantial new collections are offered as gifts or deposits. If the specialist area is a new one, collections will not generally be accepted unless academic support is expressed. The level of academic support will affect the priority given to processing and cataloguing newly acquired collections.

Where an extensive body of material is acquired to meet research priorities, the University makes a commitment to the long term maintenance and development of the collection. In practice, some years may pass without active teaching or research exploitation. The department will seek to raise academic awareness of such hidden or dormant collections.

Examples of local collections which have particular current interest to University colleagues are:

- Family papers from the Dukeries
- Literary papers; 17<sup>th</sup>-century verse; modern regional literature and drama
- Water archives; both of drainage and clean water supply
- Local commerce and industry, including labour and employer relations

Collections with no obvious local associations have generally resulted from academic initiative. The following few examples of such archives show how varied the research interests can be:

- Records of Brandts, the banker
- British Military Government in Berlin newsprint archives (formerly held by the University's Institute of German, Austrian and Swiss Affairs)
- British Radiofrequency Spectroscopy Group
- Cotton Research Corporation
- Historical Association
- Lent '86 national religious survey
- Marlay family of Westmeath, Ireland
- Soviet War Posters, 1944
- Georg Tugendhat and his family, and the Manchester Oil Refinery

### **7.3 Papers of and concerning the Nottinghamshire writer DH Lawrence**

The University is particularly known for the strength of its nationally designated DH Lawrence Collections. This is a complex group, based around the DH Lawrence Collection which was begun in the 1950s. It continues to grow through the addition of further series. Associated collections have been created for papers with a distinct provenance.

The Lawrence Collections could be identified within each of the other streams of this collecting policy, through their qualities of local relevance, academic interest, and association with the University, where Lawrence studied. The collections include the following formats and document types:

- Original literary manuscripts
- Correspondence of Lawrence, his family and friends
- Artistic works
- Photographs
- Audio and film recordings
- Reminiscences, memorabilia and commemorative records
- Scholarly papers of individuals and associations
- Published editions of Lawrence work in monographs, journals and other forms, including fine print editions
- Selected copies of foreign language editions
- Biographies
- Artefacts of particular personal significance and ephemera

Editions, publications of bibliographical rarity and secondary literature about Lawrence, his circle and his posthumous impact on society and culture are managed in parallel as one of the rare book collections held by the department.

### **7.4 Archives of the University and its predecessor body University College Nottingham**

The records of University College, Nottingham, which in 1948 by royal charter became The University of Nottingham, are almost entirely in the care of Manuscripts and Special Collections.

University College, Nottingham was originally a civic college and was managed by the local authority. Early records were transferred to the University of Nottingham from the Town Clerk's department. They provide considerable detail about some administrative functions but have significant gaps.

Records from the University of Nottingham (post 1948) period have generally remained with central departments, faculties and schools. Their transfer to Manuscripts and Special Collections has been sporadic and generally prompted by building and campus changes which involved the clearance of offices. Manuscripts and Special Collections have worked with the University Information Compliance Team so that records for permanent

preservation, including born-digital material, are identified in the University Records Retention Schedule for transfer to the archives.

### **7.5 Material concerning the history of the University, including the private papers of former members of staff and alumni**

Official archives of the University are significantly enhanced by private papers, in physical and born-digital formats, of former staff and alumni. Opportunities to acquire such papers are actively pursued, often with the support of other departments and Schools in the University which have an interest in their own history and have collected material through research or alumni events. The principal categories are:

- Papers of former members of University staff, mainly at professorial level. These generally record individual research and teaching interests. For periods in the University's history for which there is poor archival survival, the papers of heads of departments can be a useful supplement to the official record.
- Alumni records. Collections from particular students range from photographs and student memorabilia to personal correspondence and accounts of subsequent careers.
- Photographs, student ephemera and memorabilia. Significant evidence of early student experience, including sport, rag week fund-raising and other society activities, is found in both photographic form and printed ephemera. All offers from alumni are given serious consideration and acquisitions include some artefacts and, in exceptional cases, examples of student clothing.
- Student work. Examples of student exercises and notes have been selectively acquired.
- Local historical records concerning the University. The role of the University within Nottingham has ensured reference in the local historical record. While much of this material is printed and will be acquired for the East Midlands Collection, documents, born-digital material and printed ephemera are sometimes presented by local individuals who have significant memories of the University or have had contact with its campuses and work.

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2.0	Mark Dorrington	20-01-2016	Minor updates and revisions. Approved by Libraries, Research and Learning Resources Senior Management Team
3.0	Nicola Wood	02-2021	Review of policy including minor updates and revisions. Approved by MSC Senior Management Team
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## Appendix 1

### **Links between the collecting interests of Manuscripts and Special Collections and those of other local heritage sector institutions**

The strength of the University's local collections makes it inevitable that there are points of overlap between its holdings and those of a number of other local repositories. Since the late 1990s the University has built strong connections with other repositories, previously working through Archives Connected East Midlands and the former East Midlands Museums Libraries and Archives Council. The Keeper meets regularly with the heads of service of local authority repositories in the region and the office has collaborated with regional colleagues on a number of cataloguing, educational and outreach activities.

The University will respect archival principles in assessing archives it receives. Material that belongs within the holdings of another collecting institution will be offered to that repository if it is found to be present in a new acquisition.

### **Nottinghamshire Archives (NA)**

Close working relations with NA are particularly important. Exchange of experience visits by staff members are encouraged. When substantial new collections are offered to the University, the curators seek reassurance that their acquisition does not breach existing expectations or agreements with NA.

Collection areas with known historic overlaps include the following:

Hospital archives: The history of hospital provision in Nottingham since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century has been complex and records have descended to new bodies as institutions closed or were reconstituted. In accordance with agreed division of the local records, material found in the University archives that relates to the City Hospital and to Mapperley and Saxondale Hospitals has been transferred to NA. Curators have liaised to ensure the appropriate disposition of historic records transferred from the former Nottingham Primary Care Trust and continue to work together as further changes are made in local hospital provision.

Water archives: Records of Nottingham city's water supply survive in the Corporation's records and are held by NA.

Diocesan Records: NA is designated as the local diocesan record office and holds the records of the modern archdeaconry of Nottingham. Wills from the four deaneries of the historic Archdeaconry of Nottingham have been transferred to NA from York.

Non-conformist records: Methodist archives and records of the Religious Society of Friends are collected by NA.

DH Lawrence associated papers: some archives of relevance to Lawrence's local origins fall within series that appropriately belong to Nottinghamshire archives. This includes, for instance, the records of Beauvale Primary School.

The University of Nottingham: As a local institution, the history of the University of Nottingham is inevitably recorded in local authority series (e.g. records of planning control). The origins of University College Nottingham as a civic institution make it inevitable that town council records will refer to it, although the core series relating to its management was transferred to the new University of Nottingham.

Family and estate papers: Each repository has strong holdings of family and estate papers. The repositories collaborate to ensure that accruals to estate archives go to the appropriate home. An exception is the archive of the Dukes of Portland. This vast collection was deliberately divided between the two repositories by the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Portland, who placed the series of personal, literary and political papers at the University and transferred estate records to NA.

### **The D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum**

Broxtowe Borough Council's museum at Eastwood has a particular interest in the local writer DH Lawrence and collects artefacts and other museum items which illuminate his life and the history of Eastwood in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The staff of Manuscripts and Special Collections support the curators in Eastwood, particularly in their development of visitor attractions featuring the University holdings alongside material from the museum collections. The University's designated DH Lawrence Collection is frequently drawn on for books, images and copies of documents to enhance displays at Eastwood.

In 2011 a two-year partnership between The University of Nottingham and Broxtowe Borough Council was launched. This supported initiatives to bring academic and educational activities to Eastwood, particularly by the University's School of English and the D.H. Lawrence Research Centre, and it enabled closer collaboration between Manuscripts and Special Collections and the Heritage Centre.