UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

MANUSCRIPTS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Archive Collections Information Policy

2016

1. Scope

This policy documents the information obtained, maintained and made publicly accessible about our archive and manuscript collections and specifies what archival standards will be followed.

2. Background and legacy information

Manuscripts and Special Collections (MSC) has been collecting archives since the 1930s. In common with many other archive services the legacy information on our collections is not as comprehensive or consistent as we would like. In the same way legacy catalogues do not exhibit the consistency and detail of modern standards-driven finding aids.

Since 2004 CALM has been used for all accessioning, cataloguing and indexing. Staff use a CALM Manual produced in-house to ensure consistency in data entry.

3. Accessioning

Recording the provenance of material within our custody is a crucial part of preserving the integrity of the collection. All new acquisitions are now accessioned on CALM within one week of receipt. The accession record will give a preliminary indication of the scope, content and creation dates of the collection, record its legal status, any restrictions on access, its size (cubic capacity), as well as the contact details of its source and date of accession.

A formal receipt is generated from CALM for every acquisition, requiring the countersignature of the depositor or donor. This receipt is supplied with a copy of MSC's 'General conditions governing the gift/loan of Archives' available as a separate document, and is legally binding. The unique number assigned to each accession will subsequently be linked to the catalogue record.

Integral to the accessioning process is the management of information relating to the source of the material. This is retained in the Depositors database in CALM. Combined with information in the LegalStatus field, this now supplies the detail needed to authenticate ownership and the legal status of collections held.

Accession reports are supplied annually to The National Archives.

4. Cataloguing

Cataloguing collections within our custody is essential to enable staff to effectively manage our holdings and enable public access as appropriate. All new cataloguing is undertaken in CALM and conforms to the principles and mandatory elements of the *General International Standard of Archival Description* (ISAD(G)). Older catalogues may not meet these standards and work is ongoing to update and improve these.

The fundamental multilevel description rules outlined in ISAD(G) specify:
• Description from the general to the specific
• Information relevant to the level of description
• Linking of descriptions
• Non-repetition of information
The six essential elements of any catalogue are as follows:
• Reference number(s)
• Title
• Creator (ie person/organisation responsible for creating the records)

- Covering date(s)
- Extent (normally given in cubic metres or description of physical unit)
- Level of description

The level of description employed in each catalogue will be dictated by the significance of the collection and the needs of the user.

Any restrictions on access are recorded in the AccessConditions field. This is a publicly available field. Further information providing reasons for restrictions, such as data protection compliance or owner request, is recorded in the AccessNotes field which is only accessible to MSC staff.

Information about Copyright and Reproduction rights appears in the Copyright and ReprodnNote fields within the Collection Level Record. This information is generic, alerting users to the fact that material may be in copyright and that reprographic copies can be supplied for educational and private study purposes only. Access and Copyright information is added to the component level catalogue records if items have a specific status which differs from that applying to the collection as a whole.

Copyright holders, where known, are not usually named in our online catalogue records but supplementary information is available for staff in the accessions records where appropriate.

Catalogues are made available online through CALMView and in future they will also be accessible with other Library catalogues through a single search interface using Primo. Collection level descriptions are provided to the Archives Hub on a regular basis. Some Family and Estate collection catalogues were mounted on A2A and so can now be accessed through The National Archives (TNA) Discovery platform. Web addresses of new catalogues will also be sent to TNA for inclusion in Discovery.

5. Indexing

Index terms will be created mostly at collection level, using the National Council for Archives, *Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names* (1997). Subject indexing at collection level will employ Library of Congress Subject Headings and at lower levels will follow an in-house thesaurus where subject indexing is considered appropriate

6. Locations Database

Manuscripts and Special Collections managed without any form of locations finding aid until the 1990s, relying on the arrangement of collections in the Store and staff knowledge to find/retrieve documents, but at that time a decision was made to establish a basic Locations Register. This was created in-house with technical assistance from elsewhere in the University. The manuscripts Locations Register was initially held in PCFile. This information was then transferred to an Access database which is faster and more sophisticated. As part of the move to King's Meadow Campus (2006), NEXUS (the company who did the move of the physical stock) took the existing database and re-populated it with new locations at King's Meadow. The original locations at Hallward Library are still available and may be viewed on the same screen if appropriate.

Searches can be made by location (run, bay shelf), collection name, collection reference or accession number. Locations are to box level rather than item level, so searches are likely to be more successful if they are less rather than more, specific. Every run, bay and shelf in the Store, including map cabinet drawers, has a unique identifier.

Consideration will have to be given in the near future as to whether the database should be upgraded from Access 2007 or transferred to CALM.

7. Collections Information Plan

In common with most other archive services MSC has a cataloguing backlog and the reduction of this is a strategic priority of the MSC Forward Plan. Cataloguing priorities will be determined by a number of factors including the significance of the collection, user needs and the availability of resources or external funding. The Collections Information Plan establishes priorities for accessioning and cataloguing activities and the annual programme of work will include a mix of new cataloguing and catalogue improvement and will also include actions to improve legacy information on ownership and to update agreements.

Approved by Libraries, Research and Learning Resources Senior Management Team,

20 Jan 2016