

Leeds University Library Special Collections and Galleries:

Interim Student Support Policy – June 2020



Introduction

Using the Library's special collections of rare books, archives and art in teaching offers both the academic tutor and student a unique experience. It introduces students to vital research skills with primary sources that can be used throughout their university studies. This valuable exposure to collections has equal benefit for undergraduates and taught postgraduates. This also applies to the early career researcher, especially if they haven't studied at a University with such a rich and diverse cultural heritage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) measures have had a significant impact on Special Collections service provision. We expect this to continue for some time.

Restrictions will substantially affect the type of student support Special Collections can offer. Our focus in the coming months will be on providing virtual support through digitisation and delivering online resources to support archival research skills and digital literacy.

Special Collections will review the Student Support Policy in line with University Coronavirus (COVID-19) policy and procedure changes over the 2020/21 academic year. Although we are not currently able to estimate the extent of digitisation support Special Collections staff will be able to provide, we will support teaching at the University to the best of our abilities.

Special Collections and Galleries are committed to offering student opportunities for engagement with collections. We want students to become independent researchers, using collections for their research projects and inspiring post-graduate study. A realistic and consistent teaching support offer is defined based on core staff capacity to achieve these goals.

Special Collections and Galleries staff are not subject specific tutors and where additional support is required to deliver modules and offer work placements this should be negotiated with the Head of Special Collections as part of module planning and development.

Our commitment

Module-specific teaching

We will work collaboratively with academics to support their module-specific teaching:

- Academic tutors can enhance their module specific teaching by incorporating digital copies of (archive/ print/art) collection objects in online sessions.
- We will work with academic staff to support the use of digital material from our collections where possible. Special Collections and Galleries staff can advise on collection items that would be suitable for use in virtual sessions, and the

different types of digitisation that would be appropriate. Academic staff remain responsible for delivery of their teaching session.

- Special Collections staff will also, where possible, advise academic tutors on any copyright issues relating to the use of digitised material from our collections in teaching.
- A suite of online resources has been created for use by tutors and students. The resources aim to help undergraduate and taught post-graduate students develop archival research skills. Resources are available on the Special Collections webpages in the sections: Special Collections teaching support and Special Collections research support.
- The academic tutor is responsible for contacting Special Collections at the earliest possible opportunity (at least 4 weeks before the session) to discuss digital support. Special Collections staff will review all item requests. We reserve the right to refuse access to specific items on conservation grounds.
- Special Collections staff will ensure that digitised material is accessible for a range of teaching platforms.
- Resources will be advertised to students at the relevant time in their studies through Minerva and other appropriate platforms. Academic tutors are expected to make students aware of relevant material.

Hosting or delivering teaching activity

We will consider hosting/ delivering elements within modules on a case by case basis, where it is mutually beneficial to the School and Library service. This will be limited by staff resource.

- Special Collections and Galleries staff have a limited capacity to devise activities and projects in collaboration with academics. Staff roles must be agreed with the Head of Special Collections and Galleries at least three months before a module is advertised.
- Use of Special Collections digitised material and resources may be an assessed element in a module but curatorial staff will not assess student work. The academic remains the supervisor and is responsible for student conduct.
- Special Collections Events and Marketing specialists may be able to advise students wishing to develop events and marketing content relating to our collections.
- Public engagement activities must benefit the visitor experience and be considerate of the service brand and collections care.
- Special Collections are happy to promote/incorporate events and engagement activities produced by students where the content meets appropriate standards.

- The commitment made by the Library service must be explicit in course handbooks.
- Schools are encouraged to supply research assistant/ intern support to deliver bespoke projects in conjunction with curatorial staff.
- Students will be made aware of and expected to follow a code of digital conduct when working on Special Collections related projects.

Postgraduate research student placements

We will consider hosting postgraduate research student placements on a case-by-case basis, where it is mutually beneficial to the student's research and Special Collections.

- Academics who wish their research students to carry out a placement with Special Collections should contact the Head of Special Collections at least three – six months in advance of when they wish a placement to take place.
- In-depth physical access to collections is not currently possible. Any future access will depend on the re-opening of spaces and assessment of priorities. Academic supervisors should discuss such placements at least 6 months in advance of an anticipated start date.
- A member of the Special Collections and Galleries team will collaborate with the supervising academic and student to create a clear set of mutually beneficial goals – well-defined research aims for the student and access enhancements for the collection.
- Academics should ensure that researchers are a good fit for a placement in terms of skills and knowledge and are willing to undertake work to benefit Special Collections' wider access goals.
- Special Collections will give the student the necessary basic training and induction.
- Students will be made aware of and expected to follow a code of conduct when working in Special Collections and Galleries environments. The academic remains the supervisor and is responsible for student conduct.