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Collections Care Policy for Leeds University Library

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A. Function and scope of the policy

Leeds University Library has rich and diverse collections whose core function is to support the work of the University in all its aspects but which also represent a valuable resource for the wider scholarly community. Moreover, many of these collections represent a resource held in trust for the benefit of future generations. This policy aims to provide a comprehensive statement of intent and framework concerning the care of the collections which are entrusted to the Library. It covers both digital and non-digital materials, although the Library recognises that it will use different methods and draw on different skills, procedures and partnerships, for managing digital and non-digital collections over time.

B. Core principles

1. Leeds University Library recognises that preserving its collections is a core business function and that it has a fundamental responsibility to work to the highest standards in caring for its collections, so ensuring that they are available for use both in the present and, where appropriate, for future generations.
2. In addressing its preservation commitments, the Library recognises that different items and collections may need different levels and types of care, security and intervention. This may involve differences in how long materials will be maintained, and how far the Library will go in seeking to avoid or overcome either damage or loss.
3. The Library will formally identify, through its Collections Strategy, those collections which it considers to be of long-term value, i.e. Heritage and Legacy collections, and will prioritise the care of these collections in order to preserve them for long-term use.
4. This policy sets out the key principles which the Library will follow in order to eliminate or mitigate the principal risks to the collections. It is complemented by specifications and operational procedures set out in detailed documents which address specific areas and are referred to from this policy.
5. Preservation and collections care is a pervasive function which is integral to all Library activities. Every staff member will therefore play a part in the successful implementation of this policy.

C. Managing the risks to the collections

All items in the Library collections are exposed to factors which threaten their existence. These risks arise both from the nature of the material in question and from the conditions and circumstances in which the item is stored, managed and/or used. Some risk is therefore inevitable but all risks should be identified and managed, taking into account their likelihood and impact.

In all cases, the Library will endeavour to identify relevant standards and best practice, and use these as the basis of its collections care.

1. Emergency preparedness and business continuity.

The Library will ensure that best practice contingency plans and procedures are in place in order to prevent, react to and recover from emergency situations that may have an adverse effect on the Library, its core operations and its collections. Staff will be made aware of their role in emergency preparedness and trained accordingly. The efficacy of the Library's Emergency Plan will be tested periodically. Library Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring the Plan is regularly updated. The Library is registered to a specialist contractor as a Priority User for the emergency recovery of physical collections. The Library will also maintain an emergency plan for IT systems and infrastructure, which forms part of the strategy for safeguarding digital content, systems and collections.

2. Premises, security and storage.

The Library will seek to ensure appropriate and secure accommodation for all collections (both physical and digital), with appropriate shelving, housing and storage as required. It will provide adequate security measures to ensure that materials are protected – as far as is feasible – from fire, flood, theft, vandalism and other damage or loss in storage, during use or in transit. All Library buildings, systems and services will be maintained to agreed levels.

3. Digital environment.

The Library holds digital materials from a variety of sources, of various content types and in many different technical formats, all of which need care and planning to ensure their long-term usability, over and above the fundamental and ongoing requirement to ensure material is safeguarded in both storage and operation.

The Library will plan for and actively manage the changing landscape of the digital environment through training, development of workflows and pilot projects in digital preservation. It will ensure that both infrastructure and workflows reflect agreed standards and best practice within the sector.

4. Physical environment.

Inappropriate environmental and storage conditions pose a significant risk to the long-term preservation of physical collections. The Library will seek to ensure that all collections are housed in conditions which meet minimum standards appropriate to the nature of the material concerned and following relevant guidelines such as those given in PD5454:2012 & PAS198:2012. This will include

the specification of temperature, relative humidity, light levels, air quality, and other relevant parameters for various areas according to use and the specific material types held.

Ongoing environmental monitoring of storage areas will be undertaken to ensure the efficacy of existing controls and to inform preservation planning. The Library will ensure that systems are in place for reporting and remediation of environmental problems. It also aims for best practice in establishing programmes for integrated pest management, housekeeping and cleaning routines in support of preservation of the collections.

5. Access and use.

The fundamental purpose of all the Library's collections is so that they can be accessed and used. The Library therefore maintains most physical collections on the open shelves or in the associated stores so that they can be freely used by registered members of the Library, in accordance with the Library Regulations and the Library Partnership. In parallel to the physical collections, digital content is made widely available within the terms of licenses, contracts and deposit agreements. However, in some cases, the financial value, the fragile or sensitive nature of the material, or the history or attributes of the specific collection require such use to be under more controlled conditions. Such materials will be subject to appropriate access restrictions.

6. Handling and transportation.

Appropriate handling of all collections by staff and customers is a vital means of ensuring minimal loss and damage. The Conservation Unit will provide guidelines, training and advice on handling library materials for staff and give handling guidance for customers. Users of Special Collections will be monitored to ensure that appropriate handling procedures are followed. Appropriate handling and security measures will be in place for the movement of any materials outside of their normal storage area. Specific and more controlled procedures will be followed for the transport of Special Collections materials. The risks of transport will be regularly assessed and appropriate measures, including security measures, implemented and regularly reviewed to reduce risk wherever possible.

7. Copying, reprographics and digitisation.

In order to facilitate use of its collections, the Library provides photocopiers, printers and other reprographic facilities, on a self-service basis in open collections, so that users can make a copy of selected material for personal research and study. The Library is committed to taking all reasonable measures to ensure that any copying complies with legal and contractual restrictions.

In Special Collections users are permitted to use digital cameras to take copies for private research and study provided that permission of Special Collections staff has been obtained. Such permission will be refused where this presents a risk to the material, or breaches legal or contractual restrictions. Library staff will undertake

copying of items, subject to its format and condition, and will endeavour to reduce the risk of damage to the original. Where the risk is too great, requests for copying will be refused.

Whenever possible, production of digital surrogates will be prioritised for material that is in high demand or too vulnerable for production in-line with digitisation prioritisation. Readers will be encouraged to consult surrogate copies if they are available in order to protect the physical copy.

8. Exhibitions and loans for exhibitions.

The Library recognises the value of exhibitions in promoting and facilitating access to its collections but also acknowledges the risk in exhibiting primary resources. It will therefore include preservation considerations when determining the selection criteria, duration and frequency for exhibition or loan purposes. Surrogates may be provided in the event of non-compliance or extended loan periods. Exhibitions will be mounted in accordance with accepted national and international guidelines and standards. Borrowing institutions will be required to sign a condition of loan agreement in compliance with the Library's exhibition guidelines and loans policy.

9. New acquisitions.

New material will be acquired in accordance with the relevant collecting policies. The Library will endeavour to take account of the preservation needs of the material and the likely cost of ongoing preservation as well as assessing the impact on the preservation needs of existing collections in addition to resources and space. It will follow procedures to reduce the risk to existing collections, buildings and systems from new acquisitions and provide the necessary resources for timely processing and remedial or conservation treatment, if required.

10. Subscription based and remote access content.

The Library will be proactive in addressing issues around long-term access to its portfolio of electronic publications. It will monitor developments and participate in collaborative initiatives and services such as Portfolio with a view to achieving sustainable solutions in order to minimise risks and address local priorities.

11. Training.

Members of staff are encouraged to attend relevant external training events relating to preservation and conservation, after which information and best practice should be shared throughout the Library. Preservation awareness training will also be made available for all library staff.

Additionally the Library will endeavour to raise the awareness of customers regarding good practice in using library materials through training and guides. Specific handling guidelines are publicised in Special Collections and the use of materials there is supervised by trained staff.

D. Preservation of digital content

The Library will create a robust, scalable and sustainable framework to support the development, dissemination and preservation of its digital collections. Staff skills, content workflows and technical infrastructure will be identified and addressed in order to demonstrate trustworthy custodianship of digital content.

Key challenges in this environment include the rate of technological change, the potential exponential growth of material deposited into the Library's care and expectations for access. The Library will use its Digital Preservation Strategy to set out in detail the key principles underpinning its approach to digital preservation in order to maintain transparency and trust in its operations.

1. Underpinning principles.

The Library will take an active approach to the management of digital objects, based on risk management and access to content. It will ensure that technical systems are available which offer appropriate levels of security for both storage and workflows. Objects will be retained in a form that is as close as possible to the original as intended by the creator. Where format migration or other transformations become necessary to ensure continued access to the content, the original data will also be retained, or sufficient information kept to enable its re-creation.

2. Workflows.

Key activities in order to ingest, store, secure and create access mechanisms to the digital content will include:

- Establishing retention schedules, in association with the owners or creators of that content where appropriate, setting out what preservation actions will be undertaken for the different content categories
- Adopting an active management approach, identifying potential risks and acting on them where necessary, but avoiding pre-emptive or unnecessary preservation actions
- Maintaining verifiable manifests wherever possible
- Monitoring the integrity of both collections and individual objects on an ongoing basis
- Ensuring sufficient metadata - descriptive, technical and preservation - is created and managed to international standards
- Providing access to material under the terms agreed with the depositor or owner and in accordance with the relevant legislative frameworks within which the University operates.

E. Preservation of physical collections

In recognition of the core business function of preservation, the Library will maintain a Conservation Unit, supported by professional conservation expertise, in order to ensure current and future access to the Library's physical collections. In addition to expertise, the Unit will provide training, advice and advocacy for preservation throughout the Library, the University and the wider academic and general communities. The Conservation Officer will be responsible for preservation management within the Library and for service liaison with other Library and University managers on preservation issues and policies.

1. Assessment of need.

In order to inform preservation planning, resourcing and prioritisation, the Library has undertaken conservation and preservation needs assessments. It will continue to employ assessment tools, such as the Preservation Assessment Survey and other methodologies developed for the heritage sector, in determining collection care needs.

2. Prioritisation.

Prioritisation for conservation and preservation will take place within the context of available staff and resources and the stated objectives of the Library, including the categorisation of collections as Heritage or Legacy. Items or collections will be prioritised according to their physical condition; potential future deterioration; intrinsic or special value for public engagement activities, research or teaching; usage demands (expressed and predicted); rarity and significance.

3. Conservation treatments.

Remedial conservation treatment prolongs the useful life of materials through stabilisation or repair. Treatment will be undertaken within the Library's Conservation Unit or outsourced to suitably qualified specialists, as required. Treatment will be of minimal intervention, taking account of the item's evidential and historical integrity; it will be limited to what is considered necessary for long term stability and expected usage and undertaken in accordance with recommended professional ethics, standards and best practice.

4. Book Repair Unit

In parallel, the Library also operates a Book Repair Unit to undertake non-archival repairs on material from the open access collections, though advice is available from the Conservation Unit and individual items may receive more specialist conservation treatment where appropriate.

5. Preservation surrogates.

The Library will produce surrogate copies of materials, subject to capacity of the digitisation studio, if it is felt appropriate for preservation purposes. These surrogates may take the form of digital objects or microfilm dependent on the preservation and access requirements of the original materials. The Library is aware of the potentially damaging effect of making copies and this will be carefully considered when the decision to produce a surrogate is made. Every

attempt will be made to protect the integrity of the original item and conservation may take place to support this either before or after digitisation. However, in some cases it may be deemed acceptable to prioritise the production of the surrogate over the impact on the condition of the original item. The Library will adhere to the appropriate standards for quality and preservation in the production and long term storage of the surrogate copies. Access to digital surrogates will be provided by the appropriate digital repository where possible and appropriate, with links from any catalogue records.

F. Partnerships and professional collaboration

The Library maintains active professional relationships with other libraries and external organisations in order to address its preservation needs. It will participate in cooperative preservation projects and the recording and sharing of preservation information as appropriate. In particular, the Library will collaborate with other members of RLUK in order to share best practice and ensure that the national cultural heritage is preserved for future generations.

G. Implementation of this policy

This policy sets out the fundamental principles for collections care within Leeds University Library, and is approved by the University Librarian through the Library Leadership Team.

The Library will update the following documents regularly:

- Collections Care Strategy, identifying key issues for the physical collections and proposing a strategic way forward for addressing them. This will be led by the Conservation Officer.
- Digital Preservation Strategy, fulfilling a similar role for digital content and led by the Digital Content Team Leader.

Both documents will be presented to Leadership Team for approval. Leadership Team will be responsible for ensuring appropriate resource is available to carry out the approved strategies.

H. Revision schedule

This policy will be reviewed by Library Leadership Team on a biennial cycle. The next review is due by January 2017.