Library Services

Archives Collection Policy

1 Background information

1.1 Queen Mary, University of London has a rich and diverse history. The institution can be traced to the People’s Palace, which began as a philanthropic endeavour to provide east Londoners with education and social activities in 1885 and saw the foundation of the People’s Palace Technical Schools in 1887. From the technical schools emerged East London Technical College in 1896. This was renamed East London College in 1907, when it became a School of the University of London. A Charter of Incorporation was granted in 1934 for the renamed Queen Mary College. In 1989 Queen Mary College merged with Westfield College (established 1882, granted a Royal Charter 1932) to become Queen Mary and Westfield College. In 1995, two distinguished medical colleges, The Medical College of St Bartholomew’s Hospital (established in 1843), and the London Hospital Medical College, (England's first medical school, founded in 1785), joined Queen Mary and Westfield.

1.2 Queen Mary, University of London and its predecessor bodies\(^1\) have maintained their own records since their inception. Archive material including collections of private papers and organisations and business archives, has also been deposited and donated to the Archives over the years.

1.3 This policy relates to archival material held in the Library at Mile End – including the historic archives of Westfield College and Queen Mary College and the merged College, but excluding the School of Medicine and Dentistry.

1.4 The Archives are administered by Library Services.

2 Objectives

2.1. Statement of Purpose

a. The Archives are part of the Library and Student Services, which supports all College knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination.

b. Specific objectives are:

i. To preserve and protect the Archive collections.

ii. To support the College’s teaching and research programmes by affording appropriate access to the collections in the Archives.

iii. To transfer knowledge generated by the College to business and the community regionally, nationally, internationally by providing and promoting appropriate external access to the collections in the Archives, and as such support the College’s dedication to the public good.

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\(^1\) *Predecessor bodies* refers to the People’s Palace, Peoples Palace Technical School, East London Technical School, East London College, Queen Mary College (1887-1989); Westfield College (1882-1989).
2.2. Commitment and Accountability

a. It is intended that the Archives should meet or actively work towards the following standards:
   i. Archives Service Accreditation Standard
   ii. PD 5454: 2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials

b. The Archives is committed to providing access and managing collections in compliance with legislative requirements including the Re-use of Public Sector Information 2005, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988, and any other relevant legislation. Access is provided in support of the principles of equality and diversity.

2.3. Community

a. The Archives serves Queen Mary undergraduates, postgraduates, academics, professional staff, former college students or staff, and other regional, national and international undergraduates, postgraduates, academics, family historians, media, researchers and members of the public.

b. Access to services and collections is provided on an equal basis to all members of the community served by the Archives, and the Archives aims to provide a consistently high standard of customer care.

3 Existing holdings

3.1 a. Institutional
   Queen Mary Archives consists of records\(^2\) and other material deemed appropriate for permanent retention as follows:
   i. Records created by Queen Mary, University of London and its predecessor bodies.
   ii. Records relating to individuals connected to Queen Mary, University of London and its predecessor bodies.
   iii. Artefacts and memorabilia reflecting the history of Queen Mary, University of London and its predecessor bodies.

b. Other Collections
   Queen Mary Archives also holds a number of archival collections of private papers, organisations and business archives, which date from the early 18\(^{th}\) century to the present day, and broadly relate to subjects in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

4 Basis for acquisition and selection

4.1 The College seeks to acquire the following major groups of records and other material.

a. Records created by Queen Mary, University of London and its predecessor bodies. Records of archival value are identified in the Records Retention Policy, and transferred at an agreed date to the Archives, when the records have completed their retention or at the time of creation.

b. Records relating to individuals connected to Queen Mary, University of London and its predecessor bodies.

c. Artefacts, memorabilia and records reflecting the history and prehistory of Queen Mary, University of London and its predecessor bodies.

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\(^2\) Records in this context means archival material
4.2 Our current strengths, in our existing collections, are in the arts, humanities and social sciences. On a more selective basis the College seeks to acquire archival material with academic relevance to:

a. The historical and cultural milieu of its predecessor bodies.
b. Areas of historic and future relevance to research and teaching.
   E.g. Collections of private papers and organisations and business archives:
   i. Relate to the University teaching and research profile.
   ii. Link to East London and the London Thames Gateway.
   iii. Date from the 18th century to the present day.

4.3 In accordance with the principle of archival provenance and integrity a collection may be accepted in entirety if only a part falls within the parameters of the collecting policy.

5 Limitations

5.1 The Library recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to the archival collections, to ensure the appropriate care, documentation and use of those collections.

5.2 Limitations on collecting imposed by resource factors (such as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements) will be taken into account.

5.3 The Archive does not systematically collect the following.

a. The records and other material of Barts and The London Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry.
b. Copies of original materials.
c. Press cuttings collections.
d. Personal libraries.

6 Collecting policies of other archives

6.1 The Archives will seek to liaise with other institutions when necessary to ensure that archives are secured in an appropriate place of deposit and to avoid duplication and unnecessary waste of resources.

6.2 The collection policies of other institutions collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields will be taken into account. These institutions will be consulted to define areas of specialism, where conflicts of interest may arise.

6.3 The advice of The National Archives: National Advisory Services will be sought where appropriate.

7 Processes and conditions of acquisition

7.1 Records relating to the College will normally be acquired from other parts of the College.

7.2 Material will be acquired by gift, donation or bequest. Gifts, donations and bequests will be accepted on the basis that depositor complete a Depositors Agreement, outlining the terms of the deposit, which will be signed by the depositor and the Archivist.

7.3 Purchases will be made only of material of outstanding importance to the College as funds allow.
7.4 Loans from external bodies will only be accepted in terms that are set out in writing and formally agreed by the Archivist, in consultation with the Director of Library Services, (e.g. for the purposes of temporary exhibition or copying or where an item is of exceptional interest to the College).

7.6 The Archivist reserves the right to refuse any offer of material.

7.7 The Archives will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, any item unless the governing body is satisfied that the Archives can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

7.8 The Archives will not normally accept material which is of a particularly specialist nature, requiring skills or equipment beyond the Library’s resources to preserve, exploit or interpret.

8 Disposal procedures

8.1 The Archives has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The College accepts the principle that, except for sound reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Archives. The Archivist will not dispose of any item in the collection without good reason.

9 Access to the collections

9.1 Notice of every new acquisition and of any restrictions on its access or use will be made public at the earliest opportunity, through the National Register of Archives.

9.2 The Archives will systematically supply copies of its finding aids to Archives for London and the M25 Area (AIM25) and will publish the finding aids in the archives section of the library website.

9.3 Archival material will be accessible in the ways outlined in the Reader Services Manual (September 2010). Record copying will be provided in the ways outlined in the Reader Services Manual (September 2010) and in accordance with Copyright law.

9.4 Archival material will be issued to users in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, and Data Protection Act.

10 Policy review procedures

10.1 The review date for this policy will be August 2015.

10.3 Thereafter the Archives Collection Policy will be reviewed at least once every five years.
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By Lorraine Screene, Archivist, January 2014
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