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# University Archives and Special Collections Centre

# Documentation Policy

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## 1.    Introduction

This Policy lays out the commitment and core factors of the University Archives and Special Collections Centre (ASCC) for ensuring all its collections are adequately documented.  The Policy has been formally adopted by the Centre and will be reviewed every three years.

## 2.    Mission Statement

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre supports the Library Futures Vision of our Services.

At our heart is a commitment to offer an outstanding service to our students, facilitating and supporting student enquiry and discovery throughout the whole student journey.

Library Futures 2023

Library Futures is our ambitious plan to undergo a radical process of transformation of services and processes, to be fully connected and aligned to the University's ten year strategy:

We achieve this through our core values of:

- Putting students' needs at the heart of everything we do
- Committing to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility in all our interactions and practices
- Treating everyone with respect, kindness and compassion
- Developing through professional enquiry, critical reflection and continuous improvement
- Collaborating to achieve our full potential

**2.1 Policy alignment**

This policy is part of Library and Student Services Collection Management Policy framework and it aligns with the following approved UAL policy documents:
- Library Services Collection Development and Management Policy
- Art Collection Management and Development Policy
- Archives, Museums and Special Collections Acquisition Policy
- Archives, Museums and Special Collections Disposals Policy
- UAL Archives, Museum and Special Collections Digital Preservation Policy
- Web Archiving Policy
- ASCC Loans Policy

It aligns with key UAL governance strategies:

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**UAL Strategy (2022-32)**
This outlines the challenges and opportunities that are most important to UAL and its future. Three guiding policies respond to each of these issues in turn.

- **Guiding policy 1:** To give our students the education they need to flourish in a changing world.
- **Guiding policy 2:** To bring a high-quality creative education to more students than ever before.
- **Guiding policy 3:** To change the world through our creative endeavour.

**Research Strategy (2023-2028)**

Changing the world through our creative endeavour

## 3.	The Role of Documentation

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre recognises that it has ethical, legal and operational responsibilities for the expert care of all its collections.  It is committed to ensuring these collections are effectively documented to current professional standards to enable their security, management and access.  The ASCC is committed to ensuring that collection documentation enables access to information for a wide range of audiences including students, researchers, staff, partner organisations and the general public.

## 4.	Approach

Documentation practice will be proactive to ensure it applies up-to-date standards and procedures and identifies and incorporates opportunities that broaden access e.g. ensuring software systems and documentation content can participate in linked data projects or scenarios.

## 5.	Documentation Practice

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre will ensure that:

- Appropriate training and technology is in place for staff and others who support cataloguing, such as interns or placement students, to enable high quality, efficient documentation processes.
- As a minimum all collections will have sufficient documentation to identify and locate all items for which the ASCC is responsible, including loans.
- All collections are appropriately accessioned on the point of their entry into the collections and within 7 working days of entering the ASCC.

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- All ethical codes comply with the Museum Association Code of Ethics, the Code of Conduct of the Archives and Records Association, and CILIP's Code of Professional Conduct.
- Critical cataloguing guidelines will be applied, and regularly reviewed, by archivists and by a broad range of users who represent local and international communities, to ensure that documentation reflects the lives of those represented in the material.
- All legal requirements are complied with, notably those relating to Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Environmental Information and intellectual property rights.
- Current professional documentation standards will be observed at all times and in a way appropriate to the nature of the collection.  Museum collections will be documented in accordance with SPECTRUM requirements.  Archive collections will be catalogued with appropriate regard for a range of standards such as ISAD(G), NCA Rules for Name Construction and ISAAR (CPF).
- For Museum collections, there will be a minimum documentation as required, but must meet the minimum standards for SPECTRUM primary procedures:  Object Entry, Acquisition, Loan in, Loan out, Location and movement control, Cataloguing, Object exit
- Archive collections will be catalogued to at least the minimum ISAD(G) requirements: Reference code, Title, Creator(s), Abstract, Creation dates, Extent and form, Access conditions, Level of description
- Where collections are not yet accessible due to lack of documentation the ASCC staff will develop and implement appropriate plans for reducing cataloguing backlogs. This will include identifying and obtaining suitable financial resources either from internal budgets or through funding applications.

## 6.      Staffing

Documentation will be undertaken by staff with the appropriate level of skill and experience.  In certain cases, where documentation procedures are very straightforward, documentation may be undertaken by interns or placement students, specifically trained for documentation work and under the close supervision of the relevant curator, archivist or librarian.

## 7.      Security and Digital Continuity

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre recognises the importance of keeping documentation secure and accessible.

UAL has an Information Security Policy which sets out the security goals, roles, responsibilities and ownership of information assets at UAL.  The documentation systems used by ASCC, such as the content management systems CALM and The Museum System, comply with the requirements of this Policy.

The secure management of ASCC's digital assets and metadata, two storage areas are used:
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1) The Digital Archives and Collection (DAC) Synology Box, where digital assets and metadata are prepared for long-term preservation

2) Our digital preservation system (DPS), where assets and metadata are stored for long-term preservation

The DAC Synology Box is RAID storage with enhanced security permissions, accessible only to a limited set of named users within LSS and D&T.

We have implemented a DPS that is compliant with the Open Archival Information System (ISO 14721:2012), a conceptual framework for an archival system dedicated to preserving and maintaining access to digital information over the long term. It is also PREMIS compliant. As part of this compliance, the DPS produces an audit trail of any changes made to digital assets, both to support intellectual management of these assets and to ensure their authenticity. Our instance of the DPS also leverages the security benefits of cloud storage, namely the capacity to store multiple copies in multiple geographical locations.

Our DPS provider has itself implemented an information security management system (ISMS) which complies with the ISO 27001:2013 Information Security Management standard. Whilst our approaches to security and digital continuity remain solutions-agnostic, further information from our current DPS provider (including certificates and policies) can be found in their Trust Center

Regular and collaborative review of our Digital Preservation Policy supports us in ensuring our approaches in these areas continue to be best suited to UAL's requirements.


8.    Access to Documentation

All finished catalogues are made publicly available to both onsite visitors and through the website of the University Archives and Special Collections Centre.
https://www.arts.ac.uk/students/library-services/special-collections-and-archives/archives-and-special-collections-centre

Certain elements of the catalogue will not be available to ensure legal requirements are complied with (e.g. GDPR) and collection security is maintained. Where this is the case, a note will be added to the catalogue to inform researchers of restrictions on access.

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## 9.     Approval

Approval date: This policy was approved by the Archives, Museum and Special Collections Board on [18th May 2021]

Review date: 3 years

## 10.     Version Control

| Date | Version | Author(s) | Status |
|------|---------|-----------|--------|
| 2021 | 1 | Sarah Mahurter (Manager, ASCC) | Approved by AMSC Board May 2021 |
| 2024 | 2 | Sarah Mahurter (Manager, ASCC) | Approved by AMSC Board November 2024 |

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