



Archive Access and Collection Development Policy

1. Purpose

The principal objective of the Archive is to collect, preserve and promote the use of records documenting the history of the College. This includes records of its administration and finances, land and property ownership and individual members of College. This policy aims to provide a clear statement on taking new records into the Exeter College Archive and on its statutory/legal position.

2. Background

Exeter College was founded in 1314 and is a world-class teaching organisation and institution of historic standing. Records are a vital part of the College's institutional memory, providing important historical information and representing a significant part of the educational history of the United Kingdom. They map the College's development over time, constituting a key resource for both academic research and the current administration of the College. Exeter College Archive is located at Cohen Quad, Walton Street Oxford OX1 2HE. The College Archivist reports to the College Librarian and Fellow Archivist, responsible through the Library, Archive and Special Collections committee to the Governing Body of the College. The **Archive** aims to support the College's educational, cultural and charitable objectives, and to be a repository of evidence and information valuable to academic researchers within Oxford and the wider national and international community.

3. Scope of collection

The Archive collects:

- institutional records relating to the administration of the College, its societies, estates and assets;
- records of the Rector, Fellows and other members relating to their association with the College;
- items which illustrate a cross-section of College life, and which might not normally survive as part of the official record

The Archive does not accept:

- material relating to individual members of the College, unless it is of significance to the College's history;
- material of local interest but not directly relevant to the objectives outlined above
- duplicated material already held within the archive;
- objects including artwork, textiles or silverware – the **Chattels Fellow** should be contacted

The Archivist and Records Manager will provide details of a more suitable repository to a potential donator, if potential records do not meet the criteria

4. Conditions of gifting

- Records accepted into the archive should, where possible, be primary source materials;
- Copies and transcripts are only acquired where originals are not available and is of sufficient importance;
- No records will be accepted unless the donator has proper authority or title to gift the records;
- **Gifted collections of a significant size may only be accepted into the College Archive if funding can be provided or sought to assist with cataloguing, but this condition will be at the discretion of the Archivist and Records Manager**
- Records in the following formats will be accepted, including:
 - paper and parchment;
 - born-digital and digitised material;
 - maps, plans, drawings, engravings and photographic images; audio-visual and computer media;
 - printed newsletters, magazines and other publications;
 - ephemera, including posters, menu cards and programs

Records will be retained in their original formats, to include born-digital records; copies of dual or multiple format records will be retained in each format. Digital copies of audio-visual material in obsolete formats will be made and retained within DigiSafe the digital archive.

Acquisitions will be appraised at the point of accession and during cataloguing, which may result in recommendations for disposal of some material; disposals will be agreed with the donor and approved if required by the Fellow Archivist and the Library, Archive and Special Collections Committee.

The College Archive will act as a place of final deposit, and designated archives will be retained permanently.

5. Methods of acquisition

5.1 External acquisitions

- Records from external sources will be acquired as donations (*gifts*), providing the College with clear and valid title of ownership;
- Donors' wishes on the confidentiality and copyright status of material will be agreed in advance. Specific closed periods may be negotiated for particular records but no permanently closed material will be accepted;
- The Archive will not purchase any material, unless in exceptional circumstances;
- We shall not dispose of any records in our ownership by sale. Earlier uncatalogued material will be periodically reviewed and, if appropriate, transferred to a more suitable repository, with the agreement of the original donator

5.2 Internal acquisitions

- Institutional records will be transferred by arrangement with College departments; only records judged to have an administrative, legal, financial or research value will be transferred for permanent retention;
- Records management retention and disposal schedules have been drawn up and agreed upon with College departments, specifying disposal arrangements for records no longer required for current business, and identifying key records of continuing historical value and worthy of permanent retention for transfer into the Archive;
- Gaps within existing collections will be identified in the course of cataloguing and efforts will be made to acquire 'missing' items from alumni or previous staff members

6. Accession procedures

- No records will be accepted into the Archive without the approval of the Archivist and Records Manager, with assistance from the College Librarian and Fellow Archivist if required;
- Internal transfer procedures will be agreed with College departments and periodic transfers will be arranged, in accordance with the departmental retention schedule;
- Ad hoc offers of records to the Archives will be appraised to confirm that the records fall within the scope of this policy, and do not duplicate existing holdings;
- All new acquisitions will be logged under an accession number and a written agreement of terms of deposit and conditions will need to be signed with receipts for the records;
- Details of the donor's name and address will be kept securely electronically, and used by authorised College staff only to identify ownership and actions that may be taken regarding the material deposited. No personal details of the depositor will be made available, according to Data Protection guidance

7. Preservation

- Records are stored in secure and appropriate environmental conditions, which as far as possible conform to recognised archival standards;
- The Archive may temporarily withhold access to documents that, in the opinion of archive staff, are too fragile to be handled;
- Records may be photographed or copied for preservation purposes if appropriate;
- Professional conservation work may be carried out on the records as required

8. Access to Archive material

- Records will be accepted into the Archive in the expectation that they will be available for bona fide research in accordance with Archive access policies and statutory requirements and taking into account data protection and freedom of information legislation;
- Access to Governing Body, College Orders and other Committee papers will be closed for 30 years from the date of their creation, under legal and data protection, in line with other college archives;
- Records will be sorted, catalogued, and indexed over time and details will appear on the online archive catalogue for researchers to search;
- Exeter College Archive has a reading room for academic researchers to view archive, which is open 9.30am-12.00pm and 12.30pm-4.00pm Monday-Friday. Appointments can be made 24 hours in advance of an intended visit;
- If some archive material contains either imagery or text of a sensitive nature, particularly if individuals are still living, there will be a notice on the record. It does not exclude access to the material, it just pre-alerts researchers to the content;

- Images of records may be used in newsletters, talks, social media and exhibitions, as and when required

9. Review and Development

This policy, shall be periodically reviewed by the Archivist and Records Manager, alongside the College Librarian and Fellow Archivist and approved by the Governing Body to ensure that it:

- remains operationally fit for purpose;
- reflects changes in technologies;
- Is aligned to recognised best practice; and
- support continued regulatory, contractual, and legal compliance

This Archive Access and Collection Development Policy should be read in conjunction with the following College policies on

- Data Protection Policy
- Digital Preservation Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Acquisition form
- Departmental Retention and Disposal schedules
- Researcher registration form

By College Order 24/102 this policy was approved by Governing Body on 4th December 2024 with immediate effect, and is to be reviewed by 31st December 2027 and was also approved for display on the website.

Document Control

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Reviewed Frequency	Every 3 years

Version History

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