



Brunel University London

Archives and Special Collections Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Brunel University London is proud of its distinct heritage as a technology university with a diverse and international community and world-leading research.
- 1.2. Our heritage can be seen in its Archives and Special Collections which the University is committed to managing, preserving and making available to support its own activities and to foster research.
- 1.3. Archives and Special Collections are part of the University Library Services.
- 1.4. This policy is intended to guide the acquisition, management and accessibility of all archive and special collection materials in all formats.

2. Mission Statement

- 2.1. We seek to identify, collect, manage and preserve those original and unique records in whatever format that document Brunel's history, its predecessor colleges and academic interests.
- 2.2. The archives activities are informed by the University's strategy, focusing on providing excellent information and learning resources that inspire education and enhance knowledge.

3. Purpose of the Archives and Special Collections

- 3.1. Brunel University London Archives and Special Collections (hereafter "the Archive") collects, preserves and makes accessible unique collections documenting the history, functions and development of Brunel University London, and subject-specific special collections that support research strengths. Informed by Brunel University's values, the Archive aims to:
 - House the collections in a fit for purpose, climate controlled and fire-resistant storage area.
 - Increase access to resources and support new research and learning both internally and externally.
 - Promote Brunel University and the Archives through public and student engagement programmes including teaching, research, exhibitions and social media.

4. Management of the Archive

- 4.1. Qualified archivists will be responsible for the arrangement and preservation of the Archives according to archival principles to preserve their evidential value and allow them to be easily accessible for consultation.
- 4.2. In particular, standards that will be adhered to include The International Standard of Archival Description (General) (ISAD (G), Encoded Archival Description (EAD), International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and

Families) ISAAF (CPF), Standard for Record Repositories (Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1990), BS 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage and BS 4971:2017 Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections.

5. Current Collections

- 5.1. The archive collections, which have accrued naturally as part of the day to day operations of the University and its predecessor colleges, date from 1798 to the present day and comprise the Institutional Archives of the University, Maria Grey College Archives, the British and Foreign School Society (BFSS) Archives, Shoreditch College Archives and the West London Institute of Higher Education Archives. Together they show the history of education and teacher training from the very beginning and are of national and international importance.
- 5.2. Our Special Collections, archival and secondary source materials proactively collected because they are linked by origin and/or thematic focus, include the Bill Griffiths Collection, the Burnett Archive of Working-class Autobiographies, Transport History Collection, Clarity & Co Archives, and the Shakespearean Collections. These Collections have been either donated to the University or acquired for the purpose of enhancing teaching and research.

6. Digitised Archive Collections

- 6.1. The Archives and Special Collections are dedicated to enhancing access to materials for research, teaching, and learning. Digitisation efforts are carried out both in response to requests from individuals seeking copies of original materials for research purposes, as well as pre-emptively to safeguard items that are at risk of degradation or loss.
- 6.2. The Archive team will digitise material as required to ensure long-term preservation, to provide access and support the ongoing operations of the University.
- 6.3. The archive is committed to preserving the University's digital history through safeguarding born-digital materials and ensuring that researchers have access to these digital resources. More information on the Archive's approach to digitisation can be found in the RASC Digitisation Policy.

7. Acquisitions

- 7.1. The following considerations will be made before acquiring new material for the Archive:
 - The extent to which the items link to existing collections.
 - The extent to which a collection will have long term research or teaching use within Brunel University and potential for outreach.
 - Whether the collection may be more appropriately housed elsewhere.

- The physical condition of the material, whereby its condition may affect access and the conservation needs are disproportionate to the items historical value.
- Careful consideration will be made before accepting material that might be subject to long closure periods, whether due to legal or organisational constraints.
- Material will be accepted in any format, including digital on the basis it can safely stored and access can be provided to researchers.

7.2. Archives including paper, photographs, digital and electronic records and sound records by internal transfer, gift or purchase of permanent value created by the University and its predecessors will be collected.

8. Loans

- 8.1. Original material will be loaned to other registered archives on the condition that the second party takes full responsibility for the care of the item/s and covers the cost for transport, insurance and, if necessary, conservation of the item/s on loan.
- 8.2. Original material will be loaned for display only if conditions are in accordance with, BS 4971, otherwise the use of facsimiles will be encouraged.

9. De-accessioning

- 9.1. De-accessioning will be considered for archives when they are judged to no longer benefit the collections or university. Items marked for de-accessioning may be offered to alternative repositories where appropriate. Materials will only be disposed of when we have a legal right to do so and key stakeholders where appropriate have been consulted.

10. Conservation

- 10.1. The primary responsibility of the Archive is to ensure the records are stored securely and are protected against physical deterioration and damage.
- 10.2. Every effort will be made to provide an appropriate temperature, relative humidity and light levels in a pollution and pest-free environment in compliance with the British Standard BS 4971:2017 Conservation & Care of Archive and Library Collections and BS 5454.
- 10.3. Archive staff will undertake minor conservation duties inhouse, but as the University does not employ a professional conservator nor have the required facilities on-site, the advice and help of a professional conservator will be sought if and when necessary.

11. Access

- 11.1. The Archives will be available to internal and external researchers including academics and students of Brunel University London. Access to the Archives is by appointment only. The archive opening hours are Monday-Friday, 9:30am-3:30pm.
- 11.2. Researchers will be required to sign a Declaration Form which outlines their responsibility under the Data Protection and Copyright Acts before consulting the material and making copies of documents.
- 11.3. In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Regulations, the records held in the University Archives will be open to the public, unless a specific exemption applies. Records containing personnel data may be exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. Fragile items may also be withheld, though digital copies will be made available where possible.
- 11.4. Researchers are expected to conform to the rules put in place by the Archive when consulting the material, which are designed to protect the longevity of the records and ensure legal compliance. To this end, Researchers will be supervised while consulting material in the reading room and provided with the guidelines prior to their visit.

12. Reproductions

- 12.1. Scanning will only be undertaken by a trained member of staff on the basis the item is not too fragile and does not infringe Copyright or Data Protection Legislation. This decision is at the discretion of the Archivist. The Archivist will consider alternative arrangements for the duplication of material including photography where necessary.

13. Enquiries

- 13.1. The Archives assist researchers in answering their enquiries either by phone, email or letter. Researchers will receive acknowledgment of their request and we aim to resolve the request within two weeks.
- 13.2. Where the research required is extensive, the researcher will be encouraged to make an appointment to consult the material in person.
- 13.3. The archive reserves the right to charge for research services in response to complex and/or time-consuming enquiries on behalf of researchers. Researchers will be informed of any charges and their agreement will be sought before research is undertaken or copies of materials are provided-

- 13.4. All copying is subject to the copyright status and physical condition of the original document. Permission must be obtained to use the material for anything other than personal reference. Copies will be sent in PDF or JPG format at a suitable quality for printing at 300dpi.

14. Equalities and Gap analysis

- 14.1. Brunel University prides itself on its history of inclusivity and its work over the years towards embedding equality and diversity into the university's culture. The Archive is committed to collecting as comprehensively as possible and opening up the collections to researchers with the particular aim of focusing on areas where there may be gaps or less material in the collections. Going forward the Archive will:

- Annually review the collection policy to ensure that in the future, our collections are truly representative of our audiences and stakeholders.
- A gap analysis of our holdings to identify areas for pro-active collecting.
- Develop engagement projects with under-represented members of our community and explore how to increase interaction with, and donation of materials from these groups.

- 14.2. Areas for future development will include building up our holdings of material created by underrepresented groups in key areas, such as:

- Archives of BAME academics and alumni at Brunel University London
- Archives created by LGBTQ+ academics and alumni relating to Brunel

15. Policy Review

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