Archives Collection Information Policy

1. Purpose

The mission of UCL Special Collections is to support research, learning and teaching across our collecting areas through the provision of high-quality facilities and services. Maintaining accurate information about our collections is central to this purpose. Collection information comprises information about collections ownership, accessioning, cataloguing, and - where necessary - de-accessioning and/or appraisal.

This policy sets out the standards, systems and practices in place to record information about the archive collections and records held by UCL Special Collections, addressing both newly accrued collections and legacy collections received prior to documented practices being introduced. It applies to all collections irrespective of format.

2. Accessioning

Recording provenance information about material collected by UCL Special Collections is crucial for preserving the integrity of our collections. All new accruals will adhere to current best practice standards recording both the content of the accession, and the legal terms on which the collection is held.

2.1 Legal agreements

A formal donation or deposit agreement is signed by the Head of Archives and the donor/depositor prior to the first major accession of all new collections accepted by UCL Special Collections. Agreements regarding donations or deposits to the College Archive by external parties will be signed by the Head of Records and the donor / depositor. All subsequent accessions will be covered by this main agreement.

2.2 Accession records

On acquisition, an accession record is created in Calm following internal procedures. At a minimum, the accession record records the name of the collection (or item), a preliminary indication of the content and creation dates, extent (boxes / linear metres / GB), legal status, any restrictions on access and the date of acquisition.

Further fields are used as required. The Appraisal field will be used to record actions relating to the evaluation of the accession for permanent retention, including any appraisal that took place before the collection was received, as well as the quantity of material confidentially disposed of or returned. The Copyright field records any specific information relating to any known intellectual property rights; where no information is given, staff are guided by the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and any relevant updates. The Access Status and Conditions fields will be used to record information relating to any restrictions on access and the date the material may be opened. Where the restrictions relate to personal data, staff will conform to the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

Each accession record is linked to the collection level record on the Calm catalogue, or at lower levels as required if the collection is fully catalogued.

A donor record is created in Calm recording the official name of the donor, and the name and contact details of the main contact. The donor and accession records are linked. UCL Special Collections aims to maintain a good relationship with its donors and depositors in order to maximise the information provided at the point of accession and to ensure that contact details are kept up to date.

Full details of the accession, including donor or depositor's contact details, will not be made available to the public. Annual accession reports are supplied to the National Register of Archives. Records on external portals (e.g. AIM25) are reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure new accessions are well publicised with user groups.

2.3 Collections filing
A hard-copy file holding vital records for each archive will be created and held securely. For digital collections, additional digital surveys and reports, created in-line with internal procedures, are stored securely on the department's shared drive.

2.4 Legacy collections
All hard copy accession records have been retained and are also entered on to the Calm database. The accessions database records all accessions from 1997 onwards for the Institute of Education Archives and where available, legacy data from hard-copy accession records created before this date, and from 1966 onwards for UCL Archive collections and Records.

Historically, some collections, or items, were not accessioned at the point at which they were received. In such instances, a retrospective accession record is created using the information available to staff. The legal ownership of the collection is assessed, researched, risk assessed and recorded. Where possible, the Archive Service strives to establish contact with donors and depositors to address legacy issues caused by uncertain provenance or changes in circumstances. A collection file is created containing all notes and records located and created during this retrospective work.

3. Cataloguing
Cataloguing the material held by UCL Special Collections is essential to enable public access. Cataloguing is co-ordinated through a managed priority plan and a set of detailed procedures.

3.1 Standards & Systems
All new cataloguing conforms to current professional standards, namely the principle and mandatory elements of the General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G)). All catalogues will include the six essential elements (Reference, Title, Creator, Covering dates, Extent and Level of description). Where relevant and necessary, further fields will be completed including but not limited to: scope and content, administrative

history, custodial history and acquisition, potential accruals, arrangement, any restrictions on access, copyright, related and associated material and cataloguing status.

All collections are catalogued in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

New catalogues will be created directly onto the CALM database and, once made live, will be available through our on-line catalogue https://archives.ucl.ac.uk/CalmView/ and entries on external sites, such as AIM25.

3.2 Cataloguing Prioritisation
At a minimum, a collection level record will be created in Calm for a new collection once it has been accessioned.

In common with most archive services in the UK, UCL Special Collections has a backlog of uncatalogued material, or collections that are not catalogued using current standards. All uncatalogued and under catalogued collections are assessed in accordance with a pre-determined cataloguing prioritisation methodology, which is aligned to our mission statement. Working to the Cataloguing Priority Plans, archive cataloguing is allocated to staff as part of their regular workload. For larger or more complex uncatalogued archive collections, the section seeks internal and external funding.

Many of the UCL archive collections were catalogued prior to the introduction of cataloguing standards and data protection legislation. These collections are often listed on card indexes, or hard copy handlists. A plan is in place to convert these old lists to ISAD(G) compliant catalogues on Calm. Collections are also risk assessed for compliance with data protection legislation, in accordance with internal procedures and guidance.

In some circumstances, interim box lists or volunteer cataloguing can provide more immediate access to large collections before they can be fully catalogued. These catalogues will be made available to the public on request but will be subject to change as work progresses.

3.3 Digital collections
UCL Special Collections will continue to collect and catalogue digital archive collections in-line with our cataloguing prioritization. All metadata will be stored in Calm, with links to our Digital Collections repository.

4. Deaccessioning
In the past, collections have been accepted that do not conform to collection development priorities. Some are absolute duplicates of collections held at other repositories, comprising copies made by that archive service. Others relate solely to local history and should be held by the local authority archive service rather than at UCL. A number of collections have also been accepted without conducting surveys or appraisal, and now require retrospective appraisal.

These collections have been identified through an in-depth survey of our holdings. The status, content and future management of these collections will be addressed as part of the Archives forward plan and will conform to UCL Special Collections Deaccessioning Plan and Procedure, written in accordance with The National Archives' Deaccessioning and Disposal Guidelines. Detailed records will be retained for any collection that is retrospectively appraised, or de-accessioned.

5. Collections Management Assessment

In addition to the data held on Calm, an in-depth survey has been conducted across all archive collections held by UCL. This information is recorded on the Collections Management Assessment, which is the main record used to manage all aspects of collection management including: ownership status; cataloguing status (including information held on external websites and portals); de-accessioning; appraisal; preservation and conservation requirements; digitization and fundraising. It records the most up to date information about all archive collections and is used for all areas of planning.

We aim to have at least a collection level record on Calm for all of our archive collections. However, some archive collections were received by UCL in the past and not recorded either in accession or catalogue records. There is little known information about these collections, but they are now listed on the Collections Management Assessment as an interim measure until they can be properly assessed and listed. The Head of Archives and UCL Archivist work in accordance with the Assessment documentation to fully survey each collection so they can be made available. Each survey assesses collection content, legal ownership (including risk), physical condition, and prioritization for cataloguing. During the survey all collection filing is researched and collated, or a report is written to aid future management.

Agreed by Director of Services 21/01/21