

## ACCESS POLICY

### **Introduction**

The purpose of Special Libraries and Archives (SLA) is to select, preserve and make available the University's collections of rare books, manuscripts and archives. It aims to serve members of the University by meeting their information needs for teaching and research, and to serve the wider community by innovatively opening up the collections to a variety of different audiences.

The University's collections are its key cultural assets which it holds in trust for both the University and the nation. The collections are accessible to all and access is free of charge. SLA welcomes people from every part of the community and is committed to promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of the service.

Access is made possible through a range of services offered including: provision of information about SLA (in print, via the website and in person); on-site access for individuals and small groups; remote access through correspondence, telephone and electronic enquiries; seminars delivered by staff; and outreach activities.

Every opportunity will be taken to provide equality of access to reflect the diversity of users, including future users and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief. All opportunities will be taken to communicate with users and seek their views and opinions on services. SLA will respond and, where possible, make improvements to reflect the interests of its users. To gain further information on the University's Equality and diversity Policy, please see [www.abdn.ac.uk/ppg/diversity](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/ppg/diversity).

### **Personal Enquiries**

A Reading Room at King's College provides users with facilities for the consultation of the collections. Guidance on collections, their access, safe handling and interpretation, is given by Reading Room staff and is supplemented by a range of information factsheets.

Users are made aware of their responsibilities when accessing the collections by information contained within the Library Regulations, which are prominently displayed in the Reading Room and also available on Library and Historic Collections website. Library members are given access to the collections upon presentation of a Library card; non-members are requested to present photographic identification. In so doing users agree to comply with the Regulations.

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Library Regulations (specifically section 6) [www.abdn.ac.uk/library/regulations.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/regulations.shtml)

SLA Reading Room additional information [www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Reading\\_room.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Reading_room.shtml)

SLA makes every attempt to address accessibility issues within the constraints of the current building. The Reading Room is located on the first floor and does not have a lift; however, arrangements can be made to provide access to collections on the ground floor. Users are requested to contact the Reading Room in advance of any visit should this be required.

### **Remote Enquiries**

SLA provides enquirers with information about the content of the collections, about how to find material and request access to collections and, where appropriate, offers advice on other archive/library services that may be able to better assist. If the requested information can be simply gleaned from the original, this will be provided. Where the request goes beyond providing general information about the collections, or requires extensive research, the enquirer will be advised, with support from staff, to consult the documents or printed material themselves. Staff also advise enquirers how quickly their request can be met; this varies depending on enquiry deadlines and the level of research required, however all enquiries will receive an initial response within five working days.

### **Information about SLA**

The library catalogue, archive catalogue, research guides, on-line collections (digital images) and web exhibitions are available on the Library and Historic Collections web pages.

Research guides and collection catalogues are also available in printed form in the Reading Room. Search results from catalogues, research guides and web presented text and images can be printed remotely.

The printed book collections are accessible via the main library catalogue while the manuscript and archive collections have a dedicated on-line catalogue. For the printed collections there is also information (searchable and browseable) on the composition of the collection and its division into chronological and named collections.

Library catalogue [www.abdn.ac.uk/library/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/)

Manuscript and archive catalogue <http://calms.abdn.ac.uk/searchingthearchives>

Printed collections database [www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/pc\\_cld\\_searchpage.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/pc_cld_searchpage.shtml)

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Information about the archive collections is also available through other means. SLA provides the National Register of Archives with annual information on new archive accessions and general descriptions of the archive collections are available through national archive portals, specifically the [Scottish Archive Network](#) and the [Archives Hub](#). Copies of archives catalogues are also lodged with the National Register of Archives (Scotland) and at The National Archives in London (older catalogues in paper, more recent ones in digital format). The University's printed catalogue is also available via [COPAC](#): union catalogue of major UK research libraries. Many of the pre-1801 holdings are represented on [ESTC](#) (English Short Title Catalogue).

### **Outreach and promotion**

SLA is committed to making its collections accessible to local and regional communities and to as wide a range of new audiences as possible, a commitment embodied in the University's Cultural Engagement Strategy and Public Engagement in Science Strategy. This is currently achieved through a programme of teaching, public talks and events, publications, displays/exhibitions and workshops for school-age learners and those in formal education.

### **Access restrictions**

Access to the collections is as unrestricted as possible, however, access must be consistent with owner rights, copyright, conservation and security issues. Access to the collections is also subject to certain statutory or legal requirements, notably the Data Protection Act, 1998, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002 and copyright legislation. Where there are restrictions users are provided with an explanation and guidance on access procedures, if appropriate.

- Confidentiality: archive material which contains personally sensitive or confidential information is not generally available for consultation and in such cases the provisions laid out in the Data Protection Act (1998) will be implemented.
- Owner Rights: where there is an existing agreement between the owner of a collection and SLA restricting access, that information will be recorded in the relevant catalogue entry. Restrictions may also apply solely to copying and publishing material.
- Copyright: information derived from the collections and copies supplied must be used in conformity with current copyright legislation and in accordance with SLA guidelines. [www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Reprographics.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Reprographics.shtml)
- Conservation: access to any part of a collection may be withheld if it is considered by SLA staff to be physically unfit to be safely handled. Where a surrogate copy (including a digital copy) exists, that copy will normally be produced in preference to the original.

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- Security: SLA reserves the right to withhold from consultation any parts of the collection which are unlisted and/or inadequately arranged and where access might affect the integrity of that collection.

### **Reprographic Services**

Where conservation, copyright and other considerations permit, SLA will provide copies from the collections. Costs for scanning and photographic work are available from SLA staff and are published on SLA's web pages. Where copying is required for publication purposes an additional permission fee will be charged.

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Reprographics.shtml>

### **Service Development**

SLA will strive to continually improve its services by developing new policies, drawing up action plans, targeting resources and regularly reviewing the services it provides. SLA has implemented a targeted action plan to meet the full requirements of the *National Council On Archives/Public Service Quality Group: A Standard For Access For Archives 2008*.

### **Consultation and user comments**

SLA welcomes user comments on its services. It will consult over policy and quality in execution through participation in user surveys and through customer feedback processes. If you would like to provide feedback please contact the department.

### **Feedback and Complaints**

SLA have a Feedback and Complaints procedure through which personal and remote enquirers can provide feedback and comments about our services or make a formal complaint.

[http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/speclib\\_page.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/speclib_page.shtml)

### **Responsibility and Review**

This policy has been approved on 26 April 2010 and will be reviewed on an annual basis.