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Donation and deposit of records
Andrew MacGregor, June 2015
QG HCOL006 [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/hcol/qghcol006.pdf]

The written heritage of the North
For well over a century, the University of Aberdeen has taken a leading role in preserving the written heritage of the North of Scotland. The repository of Archives currently holds around 5000 collections of manuscripts and archives, which are used to support teaching, learning and research throughout the University community and beyond.

The Archives continue to collect unique records created by, or relating to, the University or its predecessors; King’s and Marischal Colleges. It is also a place of deposit for the records of North-East businesses, private individuals, families, and organisations. Records can be gifted, deposited on long term loan or, exceptionally, they may be purchased. In every case, a formal written agreement is concluded with the depositor.

Gifting records to the University
Gifting records to the University transfers their legal ownership, along with associated rights and responsibilities in them, to the University, and it is important to ensure that depositors have the right to do so.

Depositing records in the University on long term loan
Records deposited on long term loan are managed by the University but remain the property of the depositor. This arrangement is more complicated than a gift and the Archives will now only consider it in special circumstances and under certain conditions.

Cataloguing
Collections are arranged and a list compiled of their contents, a copy of which is provided to the depositor. Lists will also be given to the National Register of Archives, and made available to search at the online catalogue of archives and manuscripts held by the University of Aberdeen. Please note that, as the University has many deposited collections, it may be some years before a large collection can be listed.

Records may be numbered with a reference code for their own safety and for identification purposes. The name of the depositor will be publicised unless otherwise requested. Copyright in the list remains with the University.

In appraising a collection, staff may find material deemed to be of no historical value, or which falls outside the terms of the University Archives’ collection policy. In such circumstances the records will be returned to the depositor, transferred to a more suitable repository or, with the depositor’s consent, disposed of.

Preservation and storage
Once deposited, records are stored under the same conditions as the University’s own collections, in standards approved by The National Archives and The National Archives of Scotland. The University will not be liable to the depositor beyond this for the damage, loss, or theft of papers while in the care of the institution.

Conservation
Where records require conservation, depositors will be advised and invited to contribute to the cost of any treatment. If papers are in a fragile condition, access will not normally be granted until they have been conserved.

Access
When the records have been arranged and listed they will become available for use; only in exceptional circumstances will unlisted collections be produced. Collections are consulted in the Reading Room, under the direct supervision of Special Collections staff.
Conditions on access by researchers may be agreed in advance of deposit for material of a personal or confidential nature, with due consideration to the statutory provisions contained in current Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

Staff will not knowingly allow anyone to make use of the records for legal purposes without the prior written consent of the depositor, except where a court orders the documents to be produced.

Reproduction and copyright

The University reserves the right to reproduce or publish records, in accordance with current copyright legislation, unless the deposit agreement states otherwise.

Depositors are asked to give staff the discretion to approve the publication of records, provided that the publisher makes appropriate acknowledgement.

Records will only be copied by Special Collections staff in compliance with current copyright legislation and consistent with the safety of the records.

Exhibitions

Records may be required for an exhibition or to illustrate a talk or lecture by Collections staff. Depositors will be asked for discretion to authorise the temporary removal of papers from the University for up to three months for exhibition or other valid reason.

Records will only be released once assurances have been secured that they will be properly and securely cared for and that appropriate insurance or indemnity has been arranged against loss or damage.

Withdrawals

Records gifted to the University may not be withdrawn by their previous owners, their heirs or successors.

Records deposited on long term loan may only be permanently withdrawn after giving two months’ notice. If the depositor has hitherto made no contribution towards the cost of managing the collection, they will be asked to repay some of the expenses incurred while the papers were in the University’s care. The University reserves the right to copy the records and hold these copies after the records have been withdrawn. Such copies are the property of the University of Aberdeen.

The formal agreement

The staff of Special Collections will be pleased to discuss the particular details relating to any proposed gift or deposit, and to supply a copy of the standard form of agreement.

Contact in the first instance should be with the Head of Special Collections.

Siobhan Convery
Special Collections Centre
The Sir Duncan Rice Library
University of Aberdeen
Bedford Road
Aberdeen
AB24 3AA

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Fax: (01224) 273891
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Please note that depositors are asked to notify the University of any change of name or address. The University will not accept responsibility for any consequences of failure to do so.