

# UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

## UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS

### Digitisation Policy

#### 1 UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS PURPOSE

Since 1495, the University of Aberdeen has been open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others. University Collections supports this foundational purpose, aiming to curate, enable, innovate and promote access for all to the University's internationally important archives, rare books and museum collections for teaching, research and public engagement.

#### 2 AIMS AND SCOPE

Digitisation is a key part of the activities of University Collections as a means of increasing access to collections and making them more available for a worldwide audience. This policy outlines the approach and principles of digitisation of material from the University collections to:

- Improve access to collections for a worldwide audience and raise awareness of content.
- Provide material for research, internal & external publication, lectures, exhibitions, events and learning resources.
- Assist with preservation by providing high quality digital surrogates of material of exceptional fragility, rarity or in high demand.

This policy covers the digitisation of material in the care of University Collections. Digitisation of material in the collections will be undertaken by trained University Collections staff or by an appropriate outsourced service. Material will normally only be digitised if it is unique and is not held elsewhere. A request for digitisation or photography for research purposes may be declined if it would result in damage to the material requested. In such cases, conservation treatment will be considered that would enable digitisation.

#### 3 DIGITISATION PROCEDURES

##### 3.1 *Digitisation by researchers (self-copying)*

Self-copying is encouraged, and researchers are expected to take images of material for their own use wherever possible. Researchers are not permitted to use any photographic equipment which may harm or otherwise damage the collections, such as interchangeable lens cameras that might detach and/or flash photography, without prior agreement.

##### 3.2 *Small-scale digitisation by staff (staff-copying)*

If self-copying is not possible because researchers are unable to visit Aberdeen, the material requires special handling or there are copyright restrictions, the staff of University Collections may make small quantities of images (normally up to 5 images) available at no charge. This service generally excludes the copying of complete items, such as a whole book, or material which is digitally available elsewhere.

##### 3.3 *Specialist digitisation*

A charge will apply for the digitisation of material that has not already been digitised or which requires new digitisation (such as at a higher quality). It may not be possible to digitise items if this would require specialist techniques, if material is vulnerable to damage, if digitisation raises health and safety concerns or if it consists of copious quantities of material. Requests for this service should be made using the appropriate form. Items that are fully digitised will normally be added to the digital repository under a CC BY licence to facilitate use of images.

#### 4 CHARGING SCHEDULE

#### **4.1 Charges**

There are no charges for the use of digital images of items in which the University has copyright and the picture is available online. Standard charges apply to new photography or photography done at higher resolution than that which is publicly available on the University Collections online portals. Digitisation of other media (e.g. cassette-based tapes, reel to reel, vinyl, DVDs, etc) and specialist imaging techniques (3D scanning, photogrammetry, etc) will be charged per quote based on the time taken for digitisation. Charges will be published on the University Collections web pages (see Appendix 1).

#### **4.2 Payment**

Prior to confirmation of costing, a quote will be given estimating the cost of work. Upon completion of work, the final charge will be given that will not exceed the figure given in the initial quote. Invoicing and payments will follow University finance policies and procedures.

### **5 MANAGEMENT OF DIGITAL RESOURCES**

#### **5.1 Technical Standards**

The aim is that material will only be digitised once, unless the existing master files do not meet modern standards or are insufficient for outsize prints. Digitisation is carried out in line with the Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) standards and best practices. There will be no manipulation of the digital masters so that digital surrogates will represent the original item as closely as possible. Technical metadata is included alongside the master files.

Descriptive metadata and rights information will be added using Dublin Core metadata, as it is format unbiased, so can be applied to a wide range of materials. Some of our images may be embedded with Content Credentials. Content Credentials, also known as C2PA, are a new open technology which details the author and editing history of an image. Our images with Content Credentials include reference to our CC By 4.0 licence.

#### **5.2 Rights, Licensing and Reuse**

Where the University owns the copyright in the item being digitised, material is licensed under a Creative Commons by Attribution Licence (CC BY 4.0) which allows users to share and adapt the material if appropriate credit is given (if appropriate including the catalogue number of the item), but not in any way that suggests that the University endorses the use of the image. No additional legal terms or measures may be applied to images that restrict others from doing anything the licence permits. There may be certain collections which have different licensing or be under copyright. In the case of these items, this will be made clearly visible in any metadata/description associated with the image. Where possible, copyright owners will be contacted to make arrangements for the University to be licensed so that material can be digitised effectively.

#### **5.3 Management of Digital Resources**

Master digital files are saved in uncompressed open formats (TIFF, WAV, etc.) in a managed file storage system. Access copies may be created in lossy formats. Newly digitised material is routinely added to the University's digital asset management system. All master files are stored on a secured access network drive which is backed up every 24 hours. Image supply will normally use the ZendTo service.

### **6 POLICY RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW**

This operational policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Management Team of University Collections, with changes to be approved by the Directorate of Digital and Information Services Leadership Team. Associated forms, guidance and charges will be consistent with this operational policy and are approved by the Management Team of University Collections.

Approved by Directorate of Digital and Information Services Leadership Team, 25 November 2025.

## APPENDIX 1 - DIGITISATION REQUESTS FORM

The teaching enquiry form is hosted online <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/collections/our-collections/image-requests/digitisation-requests/>

### Digitisation Request form

#### Your Details

- 1 First Name
- 2 Last Name
- 3 Email Address

#### Item Information

- 4 Type of material to be digitised
  - Museum Object
  - Rare Books
  - Archival Material
- 5 Item reference code/number  
For example: ABDUA-2454, MS 24/6/2 or Lib-R-82-3985-Cha.
- 6 What is to be digitised
- 7 Intended use of images
- 8 Date digitisation required  
We normally aim to digitise material within 20 days of a request, however letting us know when you need the images will help us plan our work.

## APPENDIX 2 - CHARGES

### Charges for new imaging

Time taken	Cost
Up to 1hr	Donation
1hr to 2hr	£50
Hourly rate thereafter	£50 + £25 for every additional hour