



University staff resources in Special Collections

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QG HCOL037 [<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/documents/guides/qghcol037.pdf>]

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

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Introduction

The great majority of family historians who contact us do so because their ancestor may have attended and/or worked at the University.

A brief note on the University's history may help direct research in the first instance. The University of Aberdeen was a creation of the union of *King's College* (founded in 1495) and *Marischal College* (founded in 1593). These two institutions joined together in the fusion of 1860 to become the University of Aberdeen.

As well as the University's own records there are other institutions that have affiliated with the University and transferred their own records; the Aberdeen teacher training colleges, Christ's College, Aberdeen, North of Scotland College of Agriculture and the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health.

Please note that this factsheet should be consulted in conjunction with the factsheets on [QG HCOL031: School and teacher training resources in Special Collections](#), [QG HCOL038: University student and alumni society resources in Special Collections](#) and [QG HCOL040: University student resources in Special Collections](#).

Published lists of staff

Much of the key information up to 1970 - relating to graduates, alumni and staff of King's and Marischal Colleges and the University - is available in published form. These are available via the Reading Room Local Collection or other libraries and some are now available via the internet. The Rolls from 1495 - 1970 have been digitised and are searchable here: www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/rolls-of-graduates-212.php

King's College and Marischal College (1495 - 1860)

King's College

Officers and graduates of University and King's College Aberdeen MVD-MDCCCLX (ed. P.J. Anderson, Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1893) - includes:

- List of staff, containing biographical information, position held, date of appointment, previous classes taught and publications (pages 3 - 94).
- A table illustrating the date sequence of regents (pages 313 - 323).

Marischal College

Fasti Academiae Mariscallanae Aberdonensis: selections from the records of the Marischal College and University MDXCIII-MDCCCLX (ed. P. J. Anderson, Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1898). Volume 2 includes:

- List of staff, containing biographical information, position held, date of appointment, previous classes taught and publications (pages 3 - 77).
- A table illustrating the date sequence of regents (pages 587 - 595).

University of Aberdeen (1860 - current)

The published Rolls of Graduates for these years do not contain lists of staff. However, as many students went onto work for the University, it would be advisable to check these sources.

Roll of the graduates of the University of Aberdeen, 1860-1900, ed. William Johnston (AUP, 1906).

Roll of the graduates of the University of Aberdeen 1901-1925, with supplement 1860-1900, ed. Theodore Watt (AUP, 1935).

Roll of the graduates of the University of Aberdeen, 1926-1955, with supplement 1860-1925, ed. J. MacKintosh (AUP, 1960).

Roll of the graduates of the University of Aberdeen 1956-1970, with supplement 1860-1955, compilers Louise Donald & W. S. MacDonald (Aberdeen University Press (AUP, 1982).

***Please note that the last published Roll dates to 1970 and for information relating to staff from 1970 to current, enquiries should be directed to the University Registry. For more information see the ACCESS section below.**

Other lists of staff

'Fusion' history 1860 - 1960

A key resource for biographies of staff between 1860 and 1960 is a volume published on occasion of the centenary of the creation of the University: *The Fusion of 1860: A Record of the Centenary Celebrations and a History of the University of Aberdeen 1860-1960* (ed. W Douglas Simpson, Aberdeen University Studies No. 146, Oliver & Boyd, 1963). The volume provides a concise history on the development of the University and contains detailed biographies of professors and selected other staff and includes testimonials and in some cases pen sketch caricatures.

Calendars

University Calendars (1860 to 2002) are a key resource containing information such as lists of staff and their appointments. The Calendars list: Court and Senate members; deans; lecturers; assistants; readers; and members of the General Council. Some of the Calendars also contain lists of all the former University officials from 1860 to the year of the Calendar (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

Staff Lists

Latterly staff lists were not included in the Calendars and separate alphabetical lists were published: 1982 - 1997 (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

General Council register of members

All staff are automatically added to the General Council registers: 1860 - current. See copies as part of the Local Collection and also archive copies at ([MSU 401](#)). The registers, which contain names and addresses, are mainly useful for locating staff from 1971 – current (i.e. after the last published Roll of Graduates was compiled).

Student guides/handbooks

The guides were issued to students and contain appointments and addresses for staff: 1893 – 1960s (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

University Diaries

Academic diaries issued by the University contain lists of staff with their appointments, roles on University Committees and home addresses: 1910 – 1926 (see copies as part of the Local Collection)

University institutional papers

The University's archives are diverse and are a key source for researching staff and their roles and activities.

They range from the original senatus books, to charters, dispositions, writs, and other legal documents relating to the regulation of the colleges, their teaching, and in support of their considerable landholdings.

There are letters, licences, and agreements, between the two colleges, and between them and the Town, Parliament, and even Crown. The colleges had a powerful political dimension, and they operated on a local, national and international level. More comprehensively, from the 18th century onwards, there are student registers, bursary and trust papers, inventories and catalogues, records re. building repairs, and papers concerning rectorial elections and staff appointments ([KINGS](#)) & ([MARISCHAL](#)).

Court papers: 1861 - current ([MSU 380](#)) and Senate papers: 1861 - current ([MSU 370](#)) (a set of minutes are also available to consult in the Reading Room) note staff appointments, research, grants and much other relevant information.

Departmental records from 1860 are a source as well for researching staff. Examples include the Faculty minutes: Arts ([MSU 646](#)), Divinity ([MSU 649](#)), Law ([MSU 924](#)), Medicine ([MSU 647](#)) and Science ([MSU 648](#)).

Aberdeen Association of University Teachers: 1921 – 2002 ([MS 3738](#)).

***Please note that Special Collections do not hold personnel files of past and current staff.**

Personal papers of staff

Special Collections also hold personal papers of individuals associated with the University, in their teaching, research and administrative capacities. See separate factsheet [QG HCOL030: Personal papers in Special Collections](#).

Class records

Class commemorative publications

There are some classes, predominately arts and medical classes, who produced commemorative publications on the occasion of a reunion and often produced subsequent publications for many years after. Most also have sections on staff members and often contain photographs (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

Photographs of staff

Academic and class photographs

This core collection comprises class photographs (which often include staff as well) from the Arts, Divinity, Law, Medical and Science faculties. They are sometimes accompanied by

'Autograph Books' which are a key to the photographs and feature facsimile signatures: 19th century – 20th century ([MSU 591](#)).

Student Bodies and Sports Clubs officers

The Sports Union photographs include administrative officers: 1950s – current ([MSU 1452](#)).

Student magazines and newspapers

The printed student publications (notable examples are Alma Mater, Athletic Alma and Gaudie) contain numerous photographs of staff (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

University Art Collection

The Art Collections are managed by the Museums service and there are many portraits of notable individuals connected with the University. Many are available to view via our Digital resources catalogue: <http://digitool.abdn.ac.uk>

In Memoriam and Roll of Service

There are two published sources: those students, alumni and staff who served and died in World War One and those who died in World War Two.

Aberdeen Roll of Service 1914-1919 (ed. Mabel Desborough Allardyce, AUP, 1921) & *Book of Remembrance (including 1939-1945)*, (University of Aberdeen, 1952).

Both printed sources have been digitised and are available on-line:

www.abdn.ac.uk/library/roll-of-honour/

Oral history collections

University of Aberdeen Oral History Archive comprises nearly 200 interviews with individuals connected with the University, including recollections on life at the University ([MS 3620](#)).

Other relevant printed collections

University magazines

There have been numerous University publications such as Newsletter and Gaudeamus. These contain articles on University life and staff activities (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

Student magazines and newspapers

There have been numerous student publications, starting in the late 19th century, the main ones being: Aberdeen University Magazine, Alma Mater, Athletic Alma and Gaudie. These are key resources for researching, not just student life, but University staff and their activities (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

Publications by members of staff

This publication ran from 1982 – 1989 (previously recorded in University Annual reports 1969 - 1982) See copies as part of the Local Collection.

Departmental publications

There have been numerous relevant publications and notable examples include Arbor (Forestry Society), Orb (Geographical Society) and Zodiac (Medical Society) See copies as part of the Local Collection).

Theses

Staff who were also graduates of the University may also have submitted a thesis (PhD and research MLitt and MSc): 1880s - current. Early students of King's and Marischal submitted graduation thesis and some are held as part of the printed book collections. Please search the library catalogue to identify individual items.

www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/search-catalogues/index.php

Aberdeen University Review (including obituaries, from 1913 to current)

Another key resource for staff publishing their research. Also an invaluable resource for finding additional information and obituaries of staff. A part index is available in the Reading Room (see copies as part of the Local Collection).

Affiliated institutions

Aberdeen teacher training colleges

There are extensive records of staff including published sources for the church run colleges. See separate Factsheet *School and teacher training resources in Special Collections*.

Christ's College and predecessor bodies

Aberdeen Free Church College was founded in 1843, closing in 1986 when teaching was removed to the University. The archives were transferred ([MS 3241](#)). There is a published volume of students for the early years and it also includes lists of staff and some photographs.

The Church College in Aberdeen: Free Church College, 1843 - 1900, United Free Church College, 1900 - 1929; complete roll of alumni, 1843 - 1929 (AUP, 1936).

North of Scotland College of Agriculture

The College (founded in 1904) merged with the University in 1963, to form the School of Agriculture. The College prior to merger and then as a University School, issued their own publications such as Calendars. These list staff and research activities. See copies as part of the Local Collection.

Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health

The Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health founded in 1913 merged with the University in 2008. The archive is extensive and contains numerous record series such as staff research papers and photographs: 1913 – current ([MSU 1451](#)).

Other relevant collections

NHS Grampian Archives

The archive dates from the founding of Aberdeen Infirmary in 1739 and contains substantial material relating to 18th and 19th century hospital provision, notably general and specialist hospitals, cottage hospitals and asylums.

There are many relevant collections relating to medical education and connections with the University. (See: www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/nhs-grampian-archives-72.php)

Medico-Chirurgical Society

The Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society was founded in 1789 in response to the perceived lack of medical teaching offered by both King's and Marischal Colleges. There are many relevant collections relating to medical education and connections with the University. For more information see the website but please note that although the catalogue is available via the University, the papers are held by the Medico-Chirurgical Society. (See: www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/the-aberdeen-medicochirurgical-society-256.php)

Access

Materials are available upon request for consultation in the Wolfson Reading Room. Please search online catalogues to identify individual items.

www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/search-catalogues/index.php

For information relating to staff from 1970 to current (i.e. after the last year of the published Rolls), enquiries should be directed to the University Registry.

Please note that some records contain personal information and may be closed for 75 (for adults) and 100 (for children 16 and under) years under the Data Protection Act (1998).

For access to the University Art Collection, please contact the Museums service: www.abdn.ac.uk/museums/

Further reading

For further reading please also see the studies of a number of our manuscripts, printed books and collections in the journals *Aberdeen University Library Bulletin*, *Aberdeen University Review* and *Northern Scotland*.

Peter John Anderson (ed.), *Aberdeen Rectorial Addresses 1835 – 1900* (AUP, 1902)

Peter John Anderson (ed.), *Studies in the History and Development of the University* (AUP, 1906). This also contains the most detailed bibliography relating to the Universities.

R. D. Anderson, *The Student Community at Aberdeen 1860-1939* (AUP, 1988). See also the other publications as part of the Quincentennial Studies series.

Colin McLaren, *Aberdeen Students 1600-1860* (Aberdeen, University of Aberdeen, 2005).

W. Douglas Simpson (ed.), *The Fusion of 1860: A Record of the Centenary Celebrations and a History of the University of Aberdeen 1860-1960* (Aberdeen University Studies No. 146, Oliver & Boyd, 1963).

Links

National Register of Archives
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>