Working With Our Collections

We welcome all researchers to the Wolfson Reading Room on the lower ground floor of the Sir Duncan Rice Library.

Some material is available on open access including the Local Collection, a collection of titles relating to bibliography and a selection of historical periodicals. As other materials are in closed access stores, please contact us before your visit if you wish to consult them.

If you are not a member of the University, you will need to register for an Access Pass. This is free and can be done online (see our website). Please remember to bring photographic ID and proof of address to complete the process.

Facilities and services include:
- Lockers
- 36 reader places
- Microfilm reader/printers
- Map and plan table
- Research copy, and self-copy services
- Research enquiry assistance

See our website for more information, including:
- Online catalogues - the portals to our collections
- Factsheets - on the range of media and subjects

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Special Collections Centre

1. Special Collections Centre (Sir Duncan Rice Library)
2. King’s Museum (Old Aberdeen Town House)
3. Zoology Museum
4. ArtSpace at MacRobert

Wolfson Reading Room opening hours

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Staff office hours
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Contact
Special Collections Centre, The Sir Duncan Rice Library, Bedford Road, Aberdeen, AB24 3AA
T: 01224 272598 E: speclib@abdn.ac.uk

For enquiries about NHS Grampian Archives
T: 01224 274912 E: grampian.archives@nhs.net

We are online
web: www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections
blog: http://specialcollectionslearning.wordpress.com
facebook: SpecialCollectionsCentreUniversityOfAberdeen
twitter: @scc_aberdeen

The University of Aberdeen is a charity registered in Scotland No:SC038483
Who We Are

The University of Aberdeen is a 15th century foundation, with King’s College established in 1495, Marischal College in 1593, and the University formed in 1860 from their fusion.

The Special Collections Centre in the Sir Duncan Rice Library reflects this rich heritage. The Centre houses the University’s historic collection of rare books, archives and manuscripts. Comprising some 230,000 books and over 5,000 archive collections, they cover aspects of the history of the University, Aberdeen and the region and their relationships with the wider world.

The collections can be consulted in the Wolfson Reading Room, while many of our collections and greatest treasures are also accessible on our website. These include the Aberdeen Bestiary, the George Washington Wilson photographic collection, the rolls of graduates from 1495 to 1970 and information about the provenance of the University’s rare books.

As part of the University’s Museums and Special Collections, we also have a lively exhibition and events programme, digitisation suite and conservation studio. Please see our ‘What’s On’ leaflet and website for the latest news and information.

Books

Among the books dating from the 1460s to the present are over 230 incunabulae (books printed before 1501), some 4,000 16th century titles and a sequence of rare books published in Aberdeen before 1800

There are over 40 ‘named’ collections. These cover a wide range of interests, including Catholicism, Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism and Rabbinica, early science and medicine, Jacobitism, literature (including strengths in Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Victoriana and writing for children), printing, pharmacology, and railways.

There are also collections from individuals associated with the University and a major local collection that relates to the history of the University itself, but also covers the former counties of Aberdeen, Kincardine, Banff, Moray and Nairn.

Archives

The collections date from antiquity to the present day, including fine medieval and early modern manuscripts and outstanding 17th, 19th century holdings relating to science, medicine, and Scottish Enlightenment philosophy.

The University archives illuminate the relationships between Aberdeen’s higher education institutions, the city and the region. There are archives from affiliated institutions: the ‘Aberdeen Colleges of Education’, Christ’s College Aberdeen, and the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health.

There are also thousands of collections, including the records of families, estates, churches, organisations and businesses, as well as the literary, academic and antiquarian papers of individuals. These include oral history records of the University and the oil and gas industry, the Scottish Catholic Archives from the 12th to the late 19th century, and the NHS Grampian Archives which contain material from over 100 hospitals and health organisations from the mid-18th century.