

University of Bristol Archive Selection Policy: 1.0

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University of Bristol Archive Selection Policy

Background

1. The University of Bristol Archive is the body of documentary material produced and accumulated by the University, which has been selected for permanent preservation as evidence of the establishment and development of its most significant functions and activities.
2. The Archive is a key tool not only for research and teaching but also for narrating the history of the University to a wider public, enabling others, including family and local historians, to discover more of the University's past.

Scope

3. The selection policy applies to all records created or held by the University of Bristol, its predecessors and affiliated bodies, including personal archives of staff and students and materials that preserve evidence of life as lived at the University, e.g. records from halls of residence. The records date from 1833 to the present day and may be held in any media, including audio-visual and digital formats. For information about the broader scope and collecting policy of Special Collections please refer to the University of Bristol Library Special Collections: Collection development policy

Purpose

4. The purpose of this Selection Policy is to inform decision-making on the selection of records for inclusion in the University of Bristol Archive. Responsibility for decision-making on archives selection lies with the University Archivist and Special Collections Manager but this policy helps to inform University staff to identify material for potential transfer to the archive.
5. The policy aims to:
 - Provide the principles that underpin decisions concerning which documentary material is worthy of permanent preservation as part of the institutional archive
 - Formalise accountability for the ongoing integrity of the archive
 - Assist the University Archivist to achieve consistency of decision-making, to ensure that material of genuine archival and/or research value is identified and managed appropriately

Selection Principles

6. Institutional archives generally comprise around 5-10% of all records generated or held by the creating body. Selection of records should be guided by the following principles and with reference to the institutional record retention schedule:

- The archive should prioritise records of continuing value to the ongoing business of the University and those that demonstrate how policies and strategic plans for the University were formulated, developed and implemented.
- Where possible records should represent series accumulated through ongoing business activities, rather than artificially assembled collections, i.e. a series of committee minutes rather than individual minutes of particular meetings.
- Records should not be rearranged, weeded, or cherry-picked as researchers need to know the context in which they were created to aid understanding of the material. For example, correspondence relating to committee minutes should not be destroyed just on the grounds that they contain personal data, as there is a specific exemption for retention for research/historical purposes, approved by the Information Commissioner.
- Master copies are normally identified and retained, in special circumstances supporting copies may be retained.
- Although not strictly a function of the institution, the archive is enriched by more informal records of the cultural and social aspects of university life, for example material related to extracurricular activities, life in halls of residence, records of individuals etc.
- The archive does not generally seek to replicate material held elsewhere, for example papers from external bodies

Access Principles

7. Access to archival material will be at the discretion of the University Archivist, working in collaboration with the Secretary's Office and taking into account statutory obligations such as freedom of information and data protection, and the physical condition of the archival material being requested.
8. Much modern archival material will be subject to restricted access or closure periods, in respect of individuals' data protection rights, and corporate confidentiality considerations. For some collections, only a limited amount of information will be made available on the catalogue.
9. Materials available for consultation must be viewed in the Special Collections Reading Room, unless special exemptions are determined as appropriate.

Responsibilities

10. Those members of staff responsible for records should be aware of the relevant retention and disposal outcomes as laid down in the records retention schedule.
11. It is the responsibility of schools/divisions to manage records in accordance with the records retention schedule and this policy and to alert the University Archivist to the possible transfer of records to the archive
12. After records have been transferred to the archive, the Archivist has the authority to make further selection and disposal decisions (with reference to the institutional record retention schedule)

Selection Criteria

13. The archive is focused around the University's principal and administrative functions:
 - Research

- Education
- Student Services
- Research and Enterprise Development
- Governance
- Resource management
- External relations
- University life

Research (see also Research and Enterprise Development)

14.a. The aim is to preserve evidence of the University's research programme. This includes records related to the:

- Development of research strategies and policies
- Management of research quality and standards, e.g. ethics of research committee
- Development and management of strategic research initiatives e.g. URIs, SRIs and centres

Education

14.b. The aim is to preserve evidence of the University's delivery of its taught programmes at both graduate and undergraduate level. This includes records related to the:

- Development of teaching strategies and policies
- Management of teaching standards
- Development, administration, review and assessment of taught programmes and courses e.g. programme handbooks
- Conferment of awards

Student Services

14.c. The aim is to preserve evidence of the University's recruitment, administration and support of students. This includes records related to the:

- Development of student admission and progression strategies and policies
- Recruitment and admission of students
- Management of student relations
- Development, management and delivery of student support services
- Development and management of the University's Student Union

Research and Enterprise Development

14.d. The aim is to preserve evidence about the work alongside student, academic and entrepreneur communities to help sustain, and grow, activities that create the culture, reputation, and impact of the University and the establishment of related companies which are wholly or partly owned by the institution. This includes records related to the:

- Planning, policy development and management of commercial services
- Development of related companies' strategies and management and disposal of related companies
- Intellectual property management, including management of patents and exploitation of research
- Development of strategic alliances and partnerships

Governance

14.e. The aim is to preserve evidence of the University's governance. This includes records related to the:

- Development of the University's legal framework and governance structure e.g. charter and statutes, ordinances and regulations
- Management of governing and executive bodies e.g. minutes and supporting papers of Court, Senate and Board of Trustees
- Management of academic and research units e.g. faculties, schools and departments
- Management of senior officer appointments
- Management of the University's relationship with government and other funding bodies e.g. UKRI and other government bodies
- Strategic development of departments and faculties e.g. EFM Transformation Programme

Resource Management

14.f. The aim is to preserve evidence of the management of the University's estates, staff, information and IT resources and finance. This includes records related to the:

- Development of estate management strategies and policies e.g. estates committee minutes
- Management and development of the University estates e.g. deeds of properties, Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus and Campus Heart developments
- Development of finance strategies and policies e.g. finance committee minutes
- Accounts and asset management e.g. audit committee minutes
- Recruitment of staff
- Development of personnel strategies and policies e.g. major restructuring plans and consultation documents
- Relations with staff, including appointment, development, welfare, and severance
- Workforce planning and management including the management of industrial relations e.g. records of trade union liaison meetings
- Development of information resources, University records and archives and the University Library e.g. documents relating to gifts and accessions to Special Collections

External Relations

14.g. The aim is to preserve evidence of how the University manages and maintains its public profile. This includes records relating to the:

- Development of marketing and public relations strategies and policies
- Development and management of the University's corporate identity e.g. logos, corporate style manuals
- Development of alumni relations strategies and policies
- Management of alumni relations and events e.g. Bristol Alumni Weekend
- Development of fundraising campaigns e.g. Centenary Campaign
- Development of community relations strategies and policies e.g. lecture series, open days
- Management of community relations
- Management of University special events and ceremonial life of the University e.g. honorary degrees, royal visits, visiting academics
- Key University publications
- Media coverage of the institution

Life at the University: Staff and Student Experience

14.h. Whilst not a principal function of the institution, the aim is to preserve evidence of life as lived in the University. This includes information and records related to the:

- Development and management of extracurricular activities within the institution e.g. clubs, volunteering, music, sports, etc.
- Documentary and photographic record of student lives, including graduation, lectures, informal situations
- Experiences of student life in halls of residence
- Student union activities
- History of the University as a whole and through individual departments

Related Documents

14. The University of Bristol Archive Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- University of Bristol Special Collections: Collection Development Policy
- University of Bristol Record Retention Schedule <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/secretary/documents/information-governance/records-retention-schedule.pdf>
- University of Bristol Archives Transfer Procedure <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/library/documents/special-collections/archives-transfer-procedure.pdf>
- University of Bristol Art Collection: Collection Development Policy