

## RESEARCH GUIDE: UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE ARCHIVES

### Why Use This Guide?

Using a university or college archive can be a valuable resource for conducting research.

### What is generally in a University/College archive?

While all archives are different this guide will hopefully give you the confidence to use archives in universities and colleges for your research.

### The Archives: What Kind of Things You May Be Able to Find

University and college archives typically house a diverse range of materials related to the institution's history, faculty, students, and affiliated organisations. Some common items you may find in these archives include:

- **Administrative records:** Official documents, meeting minutes, and correspondence related to the university's governance and operations.
- **Institutional publications:** Yearbooks, newsletters, student newspapers, and alumni magazines that provide insights into campus life and events.
- **Personal papers and manuscripts:** Diaries, letters, and papers of notable individuals associated with the institution, such as faculty, alumni, or important figures in the university's history.
- **Photographs and visual materials:** Historical images, slides, negatives, and audio visual recordings capturing various aspects of campus life, events, and significant moments.
- **Oral histories:** Recorded interviews or transcripts of interviews with individuals who have a connection to the university or college, offering first hand accounts of their experiences.
- **Special collections:** Unique and rare materials such as rare books, manuscripts, maps, artwork, or artefacts that are of particular significance to the institution.



An Exorcism Manual from Cardiff University Archives and Special Collections

### Where to Start

Before diving into the archive, it's essential to familiarise yourself with the archive's policies, access restrictions, and opening hours. Start by visiting the archive's website or contacting the archivist or staff to gather the necessary information. Some key points to consider:

- **Location and hours:** Find out the physical location of the archive and the hours of operation. Note any closures or limited access periods due to holidays or renovations.
- **Access requirements:** Determine if you need to obtain a researcher identification card or fill out any registration forms before accessing the archive.
- **Appointment or booking:** Check if you need to make an appointment in advance, especially if you require access to specific materials or collections. In most cases you will need to.
- **Access restrictions:** Inquire about any restrictions on certain materials, such as items with sensitive information or those subject to copyright or donor restrictions.
- **Reproduction policies:** Understand the archive's policies regarding copying or reproducing materials, including any associated costs and permissions required.

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## Searching the Archive and Using the Collections

Once you have a clear understanding of the archive's policies and procedures, it's time to start your research. Here are some steps to guide you:

Image from Swansea University (Richard Burton Archives)

- **Define your research topic:** Clearly identify the subject or theme you wish to investigate within the archive. This will help you narrow down your search and focus on relevant materials.
- **Consult finding aids:** Finding aids are tools created by archivists to help researchers navigate the collections. These can include online catalogues, inventories, or guides specific to certain collections.
- **Keyword searching:** If the archive provides an online search interface, utilise keywords related to your research topic to explore the available materials. Take note of relevant collection names, call numbers, or box and folder numbers for future reference. For many special collections there will be a breakdown of the items available.
- **Seek assistance from archivists:** If you're having trouble finding specific materials or need guidance, don't hesitate to reach out to the archivists. They possess valuable knowledge about the archive's holdings and can offer suggestions or alternative resources.
- **Organise your findings:** As you discover relevant materials, maintain a systematic approach to document your findings. Create a research log or use digital tools to keep track of collection names, call numbers, dates, and any other relevant information.

### Some examples of university special collections:

#### Queens University Belfast-

Some of the collections include rare and early printed book, map, and manuscripts collections, as well as to more modern material relating to Ireland and Ulster in particular.

#### University of Glasgow-

Some of the collections include University archive, manuscripts, Scottish business archive and Scottish theatre archive.

#### University of Newcastle-

Some of the collections include the Bell (Gertrude) Archive (useful for researchers of the archaeology and history of the Near and Middle East), Bell (Gertrude) Collection (2,000 books on Arabic and Persian languages, and on the history and antiquities of Arabia, Iraq and the Near East), Newcastle University Archives, the Robinson (Marjorie and Philip) Collection (incunabula, medieval manuscripts and books dating from the 14th-19th century).

#### University of Liverpool-

Some of the collections include manuscripts and archives, medieval to modern; early and finely printed books, and science fiction collections, University Archive

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## Trinity College Dublin-

Some of the collections include the records of Trinity College Dublin from its foundation in the late 16th century to the present day, Deeds and statutes, Estate papers, Financial records, Student records.

## University of Bristol-

Some of the collections include the Brunel Collection, Feminist Archive South, Historical and topographical sources, Penguin and related archives, Pinney Papers and the West Indies, University of Bristol and University College.

## Swansea University-

Some of the collections include the Richard Burton Archives (over 1.6 kilometres of material relating to the rich industrial, cultural and social heritage of Wales).

## Kings College London-

Some of the collections include items from the Foyle Special Collections Library (which holds over 200,000 items-printed books, pamphlets and periodicals, as well as maps, slides, manuscripts, typescripts and photographs – ranging in date from the 15th century to the present day).

## Goldsmiths University of London-

Some of the collections include the Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths Textile Collection and Constance Howard Gallery and the Daphne Oram Archive.



Image from Woman's Art Library, Goldsmiths University of London

## Travelling to use the archive?

If you are a student check with members in your faculty to see if you may be able to get your train ticket or hotel expended by the university, college or governing body. They may do this if the trip is vital to your work.

## Referencing Your Research

Accurate referencing is crucial for maintaining academic integrity and acknowledging the sources you have consulted in your research. When using materials from a university or college archive, follow these guidelines for referencing:

**Citation Style:** Determine the appropriate citation style recommended by your academic institution or your discipline.

**Documenting Archival Sources:** When citing archival materials, include the following elements:

- **Creator or Author:** Include the name of the person or organisation responsible for creating/donating the material
- **Title:** Include the title or description of the specific item or collection you are referencing.
- **Date:** Include the date(s) associated with the material, such as the creation date or the date range of the collection.
- **Box and Folder Numbers:** If applicable, include the box and folder numbers where the

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item is located within the collection.

- **Repository Name:** Provide the name of the university or college archive where the material is housed.
- **URL or Location:** If the material is accessible online, include the URL or the physical location of the archive.

**Permission and Copyright:** If you plan to include reproductions or quotations from archival materials in your research publication or presentation, ensure you understand the copyright restrictions and obtain permission if required. Some archives may have specific guidelines or forms for requesting permission to use their materials.

**Acknowledgment:** It is considered good practice to acknowledge the archive or institution in your research work's acknowledgments section. Express your gratitude for the assistance and resources provided by the archive staff and mention the name of the archive. Remember, always consult the specific guidelines and requirements of your academic institution or your research project for accurate referencing practices.