

SPECIAL & RARE COLLECTIONS
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA LIBRARY



UNIVERSITY *of*
TASMANIA

COLLECTION POLICY

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1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Special & Rare Collections, University of Tasmania (UTAS) Library, collects and preserves primary resource material on the culture and history of the University and Tasmania for the teaching and research needs of the University, and the research needs of local and global communities. It is committed to unlocking the potential of the collections through physical and/or digital discovery and access.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION POLICY

This Collection Policy will be used as the guiding document for the development and management of the Special & Rare Collections, and the management of The Royal Society of Tasmania collections.

The Australian Museums & Galleries Association's *Code of Museum Ethics* (1999) is currently under review, and Special & Rare Collections is guided by [ICOM's Code of Ethics for Museums](#)

3. HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

Assessed as nationally significant in 2015 by National Library of Australia, the Special & Rare Collections (housed in the Morris Miller Library) is a set of legacy collections that have been donated and acquired since the University's inception in 1890, comprising:

- Rare book collection of over 8,500 books and journals from a range of sub-collections including Christ College, Dunbabin and Baikie
- The Royal Society of Tasmania's library, housed with Special & Rare since 1968, including books, scientific journals, early maps and many 19th century family deposits
- The Quaker collection, transferred in 1971, estimated to be the finest collection of Quaker materials in the southern hemisphere. It consists of books, early Quaker family letters, photographs, diaries, Society of Friends' minutes and other materials on religious and social matters by and of interest to Quakers
- Private deposit collections including materials from private individuals, families, charities, organisations and local business records relating to the intellectual, cultural and commercial life of early Tasmania
- The University of Tasmania collection, including an extensive staff and student photograph collection; architectural drawings and campus photographs, calendars and other records and ephemeral materials of a non-business or non-administrative nature.

4. WHAT THE LIBRARY WILL COLLECT FOR THE SPECIAL & RARE COLLECTIONS

Material relating to the key themes of the Special & Rare Collections including:

- Colonial history of Tasmania
- Tasmanian social history
- Rural life in Tasmania
- Christ College, the first academic library in Tasmania
- Rare books and manuscripts
- Significant Tasmanian individuals, families and businesses
- Natural history and exploration
- Maritime history of Tasmania
- University of Tasmania
- Quakers in Tasmania

Items in the Special & Rare Collections date from 1472 to the present. The collection has the oldest book in Tasmania - *Expositio Decalogi, sive Praeceptorium Divinae Legis* by Johannes Nider, as well as significant holdings of rare books and manuscripts. However, most of the collection dates from 1804 to 1900.

Geographically, the major part of the collection relates to Tasmania – particularly Hobart, the East Coast, and southern Tasmania. Many of the published items in the collection – the rare books and manuscripts; the Royal Society’s natural history and exploration books – are of European origin: from England, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

The collection consists of books, manuscripts, maps, diaries, letters, photographs, digital images, paintings, private papers, business records, non-business University records, and collectable ephemera.

The physical storage space is currently almost at capacity which means that:

- Any proposed physical donation must be highly significant and/or relevant to be incorporated into the current collection,
- Large objects (such as furniture) cannot be acquired.

Special & Rare accepts highly significant and relevant digital and digitised collections according to acquisition criteria (Section 5.2) as digital storage requirements are not limited.

The Royal Society of Tasmania (TRST) develops its Library in accordance with their own policy, taking into consideration storage requirements and in consultation with the Associate Director, Collections and Senior Librarian, Collections. TRST and UTAS have signed a Deed of Agreement that details the responsibilities of UTAS Library to this collection. (see document [TRST Deed of Agreement PDF 412KB](#)).

The Special & Rare Collections does not collect University business or administrative records. The University’s Record Management Unit manages administrative and business records. These are archived, after 25 years, to the State Archive, as there is a legal requirement for these records to be managed by an archivist. University administrative records with permanent retention value, previously located in Special & Rare Collection, are located at Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office repository (TAHO). Listings of all records that the University has transferred are available from TAHO.

5. HOW THE LIBRARY WILL COLLECT

Special & Rare Collections acquires objects, both digital and physical, for its permanent collection by donation, bequest, purchase or transfer.

5.1. ACQUISITIONS

Donations are assessed according to the criteria in 5.2 (below) by members of the Special & Rare Collections staff, Associate Director, Collections, Senior Librarians, Collections in collaboration with College discipline experts as required. The decisions are documented and retained. (see document [Donation Form PDF 388KB](#))

5.2. ACQUISITION CRITERIA

Special & Rare Collections considers the following criteria before approving the acquisition of an item:

- Relevance: physical and digital items which relate to its purpose and key collecting areas (section 4).
- Significance: priority is given to items which are significant for their historic, aesthetic, scientific/research or social/spiritual value.
- Provenance and documentation: priority is given to items where the history of the item is known, and associated documentation and support material can be provided.
- Condition, intactness, integrity: the condition of the item is a consideration when acquiring material. Badly damaged material will not normally be accepted into the collection.
- Interpretive potential: items will be prioritised that are suitable for exhibitions and displays, and potential for use in teaching areas.
- Rarity: items may be prioritised if they are an excellent representative example of a particular kind of item.
- Duplications: duplicate items are accessioned only if they are of superior condition and/or historic value to those already held. In such a case, the original copy may be considered for deaccessioning.
- Legal requirements: items are only accepted where the donor/vendor has legal title to the object.
- Where possible, permission from donors to digitise donated material and publish online is obtained and documented, or alternatively copyright is transferred to the University to Tasmania.

6. LEGAL / ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS

6.1. ABORIGINAL ARTEFACTS

Special & Rare Collections does not own or have in its possession any Aboriginal artefacts.

However, it does house genealogies compiled by Bill Mollison in the 1970s as part of his studies for the Psychology Department, University of Tasmania. After liaison with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Aboriginal Research and Leadership) the following guidelines have been established for access:

- The Mollison genealogies were not written for public access, and this restriction is noted on the library catalogue and each item.
- The genealogies are not available for access by researchers.
- As stated on the last page of each edition “the family trees are restricted to genuine descendants and approved institutions”.
- Only those people of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent, or wishing to establish that descent, can access the genealogies.
- Permissible users must physically come into Special & Rare to access the genealogies in print or digital copy; and sign for access.
- The digital copy is locked down and cannot be downloaded.

Special & Rare Collections is cognisant of the guidelines embodied in Arts Tasmania’s document *Respecting cultures: working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and Aboriginal artists* (updated 2009).

7. COLLECTION CARE: DOCUMENTATION, CONSERVATION AND STORAGE

7.1. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING

Special & Rare Collections aims to maintain an effective documentation system of its holdings – through donation information, loans forms, indexes to the legacy private papers, published material listed in the library catalogue, and recent donations entered into the Library's online archive.

Special & Rare Collections follows the guidelines below when acquiring material:

1. The owner or agent (donor) contacts Special & Rare Collections staff regarding the proposed donation.
2. Donations are assessed as per acquisition criteria in Section 5.2.
3. If accepted, the donation is collected/delivered/posted to Special & Rare Collections.
4. Donors sign two copies of the donation form – one for Special & Rare Collections, and one to keep. A letter/email of thanks is sent to the donor.
5. The item is stored temporarily in the quarantine area with copies of all documentation.
6. The item is accessioned, listing all pertinent information such as provenance and descriptive details.
7. Declined items are returned to the owner with an explanatory letter/email.

Special & Rare Collections uses the following documentation to establish copyright ownership, communicate understanding of copyright and to regulate re-use of content from Special & Rare Collections:

- Donors use the Donation form to clarify copyright ownership.
- Visitors to the Special & Rare Reading Room are required to fill out a consultation form (see [Consultation Form PDF 253KB](#)) to communicate copyright considerations.
- Researchers obtain copyright clearance through Application for Permission to Publish or Reproduce material form. (see [Permission to Publish or Reproduce Material Form PDF 224KB](#))

7.2. STORAGE AND CONSERVATION

Special & Rare Collections aims to achieve high standards of collection care and storage

for physical and digital collections.

- Storage areas are clean, secure and sealed against the weather.
- Temperature and relative humidity are kept as stable as possible – at 20 degrees and 50% humidity.
- Access to the storage area is controlled, with access available only to Special & Rare Collections staff.
- There is no ultra-violet light in the storage area.
- Lights are turned off when the storage area is not use.
- The storage area is fumigated regularly.
- Archival quality storage materials are used for new acquisitions and a program of rehousing has been established for legacy material according to significance, usage and condition.
- Objects are not stored on the floor.
- Items are cleaned, treated or restored only by trained personnel.
- A separate quarantine room has been established to examine and treat new collections before moving into the Special & Rare Collections.
- Digital preservation best practice is understood and is being implemented through pilot projects using Archivemata, a system designed to maintain standards-based long-term access to collections of digital objects.
- Visitors to the Special and Rare Reading Room are required to abide by the Reading Room Rules (see [Reading Room Rules PDF 612KB](#)) to ensure best practice in handling materials.
- Visitors to the Special and Rare Reading Room are required to fill out a consultation form (see [Consultation Form PDF 253KB](#)) as a security measure and to communicate copyright considerations.

8. DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

8.1. CRITERIA FOR DEACCESSIONING

An object can be deaccessioned from the Special & Rare Collections if

- It does not comply with the current collection policy.
- It is damaged beyond repair.
- The conservation and storage costs for it are beyond the means of Special & Rare Collections.
- It is a lesser quality duplicate of an object already owned.
- It lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the collection.
- A substantiated request for the return of the object to its original owner/donor is received.
- It is part of a split donation which might be better housed in another cultural institution.

8.2. DEACCESSION PROCEDURES

The object identified for removal from the collection must be considered by all members of the Special & Rare Collections staff, in collaboration with a College discipline expert as required with reference to the criteria stated above, Section 8.1.

Staff of the University of Tasmania, the University Library, Special & Rare Collections, volunteers and their families are prohibited from purchasing, or otherwise obtaining, a de-accessioned object.

8.3. DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

If an object is removed from the Special & Rare Collections, it must be returned to the donor or family. If, after a thorough search, this is impossible, the object should be:

- Transferred to another appropriate institution
- Used as an educative/interpretive tool
- Destroyed or recycled if appropriate
- Sold by public auction.

9. WINDING-UP PROCEDURES

In the unlikely event that the Special & Rare Collections ceased to exist under its current conditions and structure:

- The Royal Society holdings would revert to The Royal Society of Tasmania
- All other items in the collections would be absorbed into the University of Tasmania's Cultural Collections.

10. LOANS

10.1. LOAN PROCEDURES

- Permanent and long-term loans will not be offered by Special & Rare Collections.
- Special & Rare Collections will lend and borrow material to help meet its purpose as in Section 1.
- Separate forms are held for inward and outward loans.
- The maximum loan period is 12 months.

10.2. INWARD LOANS

Inward loans shall only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research, and for fixed periods of time.

A representative of both the Special & Rare Collections and the lender will be required to sign an agreed loan form. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement.

Special & Rare Collections agrees to abide by lenders' conditions of loans. Loans shall remain in the possession of Special & Rare Collections for the time specified on the form.

Special & Rare Collections can request to renew loans if required. Documentation recording the renewal must be signed by both parties.

10.3. OUTWARD LOANS

Special & Rare Collections will lend objects to other cultural institutions. It will not lend to private collectors.

Borrowers and a representative from Special & Rare Collections are each required to sign the loan agreement form, which records the period of the loan. (see [Outward loan agreement PDF 873KB](#)) Each party holds a copy of this agreement. A condition report will be attached to the loan agreement form. (see [Condition Check Form - Bound PDF 576KB](#) and [Condition Check Form - Flat PDF 287KB](#))

The borrower must exercise care in the handling, storage and display of the loan object and must be prepared to meet the conditions outlined in the outward loan agreement.

The borrower must provide a secure display and/or storage area.

The maximum loan period is 12 months. Applications for extension of this period must be made in a timely manner prior to the loan expiry date.

Items cannot be treated or altered in any way without the written permission of Special & Rare Collections staff.

Loans will remain in the possession of the borrower until returned.

11. ORAL HISTORY POLICY

Special & Rare Collections does not have an oral history program but will accept donated oral histories as per criteria in Section 5.2.

Special & Rare Collections hold an historic collection of over 50 cassette recordings of interviews with staff, former staff and old students for the University Centenary Committee Oral History Project c1978-1983.

12. ACCESS

Access to the Special & Rare Collections is available to all, online and in person, unless exceptions are stated elsewhere in this document.

Special & Rare Collections is accessible in person to all during opening hours and by appointment. Material can be viewed and used in the Reading Room.

The University Library catalogue lists all published items held in the collections.

Online and paper indexes are available for all non-published items in the collections.

Images and descriptions of selected digitised collection items are available through the Library web site.

Items from the collections regularly feature in UTAS exhibitions.

Tours are arranged for special interest groups.

Visitors to the Special and Rare Reading Room are required to abide by the Reading Room Rules (see [Reading Room Rules PDF 612KB](#)) and to fill out a consultation form (see [Consultation Form PDF 253KB](#))

13. COLLECTION POLICY REVIEW

Special & Rare Collections reviews the Collection Policy and associated forms every three years. The next review will be in April 4, 2022.

14. DATE OF ENDORSEMENT

Endorsed by Library Executive April 2019