

Archive Collections Development Policy

VERSION CONTROL			
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Creation Date:	June 2018	Next review date:	June 2020
Signed off by:	Heritage Committee	Sign off Date:	June 2018

[In this document, mention of 'RCOG Archives' and 'the Archives' shall be taken to include the archive collections of the RCM which are under its care.]

Repository

RCOG Archive, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Name of governing body:

Heritage Committee

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed at least once every five years, sooner in the event of a major change.

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 The strategic aim of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) is *'to set standards to improve women's health and the clinical practice of obstetrics and gynaecology in the British Isles and across the world'*. Its charitable objectives are to *'encourage the study, and advance the science and practice, of obstetrics and gynaecology'*.

1.2 Archive Collections held at the RCOG support this by serving the College's staff, Membership and the public with a centre for resources for the history of women's healthcare, midwifery, obstetrics and gynaecology, as well as records of the work of the RCOG, its associated groups and bodies, and its historic Members.

1.3 The Research and Information Services team at the College is responsible for the management of this Heritage Collection, which supports the activities of the RCOG by documenting its administrative, educational and cultural history and preserving examples of its material culture, achievements and research.

1.4 The Archive Collections are primarily acquired through formal transfer from administrative departments within the RCOG, which is co-ordinated by the Records Manager with support from the Archivist. External deposits from the Membership, other institutions and the general public are also welcomed subject to fulfilling the criteria for acquisition below. These external deposits form the special collections of the RCOG Archive and are managed under the same policies as the permanent institutional collection.

1.5 The Research and Information Services team is also responsible for the management of the heritage collection of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM), which have been housed at the RCOG since 2011 through a Service Level Agreement.

Supporting Documents:

This policy is supported by the *Collections Management Policy* and the *Collections Information Policy*.

2. Statutory Position

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

The RCOG is a worldwide membership organisation and a registered charity. It was founded in 1929 as the British College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists with the aim to improve maternal health care and to develop the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology in Britain and the Commonwealth.

The College was granted a 'Royal' title in 1938 and its Royal Charter was awarded in 1947. The College is governed by the Royal Charter, from which the Regulations guiding the College's governance, management and business arrangements are derived.

The College's Board of Trustees is responsible for the financial, legal and business operations of the RCOG as a charitable business and gives authority to the Chief Executive and the executive team to manage the day-to-day affairs of the College.

The College Council is responsible for furthering the College's mission and for setting its long-term priorities and goals. This Council elects six Officers, including the College President, who each serve for a maximum of three years. The College's Committees advise on and implement the RCOG's various activities.

The Board of Trustees, Council and committees are supported by approximately 120 members of staff, organised into four operational directorates. The Archive sits within the Research and Information Services team, which is situated within the Membership Directorate.

3. Archive Accreditation

In 2015, RCOG Archive was one of the first archives to achieve accredited status under the Archive Service Accreditation standard. The standard is administered by the Archive Service Accreditation Committee in partnership with various UK archive bodies including the Archives and Records Association (UK), Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives and The National Archives.

This national standard defines good practice and agreed standards for archive services across the UK. The accreditation process evaluates an organisation's ability to develop, care for, and provide access to its archive collections, and those areas such as resources and planning which underpin those activities.

The accreditation process operates on a three-year review cycle, with full re-application carried out every six years.

4. Criteria for Acquisition

Material should only be accepted into the collections if it falls within the acquisition guidelines, as detailed below.

4.1 Administrative records

4.1.1 The Research and Information Services team selects for permanent retention administrative records of the RCOG as an historic account of its governance, strategic planning, policy decisions, organisational structure, and functions. The criteria for selecting this material is detailed in the College Retention Schedule.

4.1.2 It also selects records relating to standard-setting and quality improvement within the specialty and to the development of training and overseas initiatives, as evidence of its activities in the study and advancement of the science and practice of obstetrics and gynaecology.

4.1.3 A copy of each publication issued by the RCOG is retained in the College Archive.

4.2 Records of related organisations

4.2.1 The RCOG will consider acquiring the historical records of organisations with which it has a strong administrative or organisational link. Examples are organisations that are, or have been, based physically within the College, those that have shared its administrative systems, or are predecessor or successor bodies to functions of the College.

4.2.2 The RCOG may also consider the acquisition of the historical records of other organisations in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology. Priority will be given to material that builds closely on existing collection strengths and/or is in danger of neglect or destruction. Where the College cannot itself undertake physical custody of such collections, it will work in partnership with other organisations to encourage good collections management, and/or endeavour to find another suitable place of deposit.

4.2.3 The RCOG will not acquire organisational records that are still in current or semi-current use by their originator.

4.3 Personal papers

4.3.1 The RCOG will seek to acquire the personal papers of past Officers, Fellows and Members of the RCOG, where they have a strong relationship to the corporate history of the College or to the specialty, or where they illustrate representative careers in obstetrics and gynaecology.

4.3.2 Other personal papers will be collected where they show a close relationship to existing holdings, and priority will be given to those in danger of neglect or destruction.

4.3.3 The Archive will also seek to acquire the personal papers of midwives.

5. Terms and Conditions

5.1 The RCOG does not seek to compete for papers with other recognised archive repositories. It welcomes the strength and diversity to be found in national and international archival provision for the history of medicine, and will work co-operatively with other repositories in order to determine the most appropriate place of deposit for records relating to the history of obstetrics and gynaecology.

5.2 Records in any format will be considered for acquisition, including plans, drawings, photographs, and electronic records. Material will not, however, be acquired where adequate storage, preservation, cataloguing and access cannot be achieved with the RCOG's existing or foreseeable resources. This in particular applies to specific audio-visual material where equipment is unavailable and digitisation resources unavailable.

5.3 The RCOG will not acquire any item unless it is satisfied that the donor or depositor has the appropriate authority to give or transfer it to the College and, in the case of a donation, that the College can acquire a valid title to the item.

5.4 The RCOG will not acquire by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange any item unless it is satisfied that it has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin in violation of that country's laws.

5.5 The RCOG will generally require legal ownership of all accessions to the College. Long-term loan of archival and museum collections will be considered only under exceptional circumstances, and under terms formally agreed with the owners prior to transfer.

5.6 Donors of heritage items will be required to sign a formal deposit agreement, placing in writing the terms of the gift, as agreed with a member of the Research and Information Services Team.

5.7 The RCOG will formally assert title in all its heritage collections, agreeing terms of copyright and reproduction rights with donors, authors or makers where appropriate. The RCOG will require copyright access wherever possible.

6. De-accessioning Policy

6.1 The RCOG accepts the principle that there should be a strong presumption against the disposal of any documents in its custody. By definition the archive should possess collections intended for permanent acquisition.

Circumstances in which the RCOG might be required to de-accession heritage material could include:

- 6.1.1 The existence of duplicate or ephemeral material among collections
- 6.1.2 Knowledge that material belongs more properly in another recognised repository
- 6.1.3 The material is irrelevant to the College
- 6.1.4 Inability of the College to permanently provide proper care for heritage material.
- 6.1.5 The item has deteriorated beyond repair or use

6.2 See the Deaccession and disposal policy and procedures for further information.