

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Archive Collections Management Policy

VERSION CONTROL			
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[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.]

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1. Scope and Purpose

1.1 The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Archive is the custodian of the records created by the RCOG since its foundation in 1929 to the activities of the present day. The College Archive also holds donated or deposited collections of personal or private records related to the specialty.

1.1.2 The records of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) are also held at the RCOG.

1.2 The College recognises the importance of its Archive Collections and is committed to supporting its management according to professional heritage standards and guidelines.

1.3 The College seeks to provide access to the collection both internally and externally.

1.4 This document provides an overview of all the archive policies which support the management of the archive, including collections development, information, access and conservation and preservation.

2. Collections Information and Development

2.1 The College is committed to enhancing its collections and associated information, ensuring this information is securely held and made accessible to its users.

2.2 Cataloguing

2.2.1 All archive material will be catalogued to ISAD(G) standards

2.2.2 Born-digital material is currently catalogued to the same standard and principle carried out for paper records; further training is planned on specific cataloguing needs for born-digital material.

2.3 Collections information is stored on Adlib, the Collections Management System.

2.4 An audit of the collections was carried out in 2010 which highlighted legacy cataloguing issues and location issues. Unfortunately due to time constraints there are still a large number of cataloguing backlogs. A complete audit of the collections is taking place in 2018 including location and condition checking.

2.5 All records entering the RCOG Archive are accessioned using the Adlib database.

2.6 See also *Collections Development Policy*, the *Collections Information Policy* and associated procedures for further details.

3. Collections Access

3.1 The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists recognises that public access to archives is essential for an informed society. Although there is no legal obligation to open the archives of the RCOG to external users, the College recognises that its institutional records and personal papers, as well as other aspects of the heritage collections, have significant value for understanding social, community and personal history, specifically in the area of women's healthcare.

3.2 The RCOG recognises that allowing public access to its institutional records helps maintain institutional transparency and improve public understanding of its unique history and contributions to the healthcare profession. Most College records older than twenty years are available for consultation by external researchers, with other files made available on application to College senior members of staff via the heritage team. All College records are available for consultation by College Officers, Fellows and Members.

3.3 Restrictions on collections will be shown in catalogues to the collections available in the RCOG Library and online. These restrictions will take into consideration Data Protection issues and conditions imposed by external donors of special collections, and will follow national guidance in terms of closed periods. All restrictions will be subject to regular reviews.

3.4 Material from the heritage collections may be subject to temporary closure for conservation and cataloguing work, and the heritage team will provide information regarding such closures.

3.5 The RCOG will commit to promoting material from the heritage collections to widen access to stakeholders, using social media and online tools.

3.6 Further details regarding physical access to the archives and appeal processes can be found in the *Archives Access Policy, Loans Policy and Access Procedures*.

4. Preservation and Conservation

4.1 The RCOG strives to provide an appropriate climate of temperature, relative humidity and light levels in a pollution and pest-free environment that achieves a satisfactory balance between the long-term preservation of the objects and specimens, and accessibility to staff and external users. The standard PD 5454:2012 *Guidance for the storage and exhibition of archival materials* will be the benchmark to all conservation and preservation measures.

4.2 Details of the principles of collections care can be found in the *Archive Collections Care Policy*.

4.3 Plans for response to disasters and emergencies can be found in the *Heritage Disaster Plan*.

5. Review of RCOG Policies

This policy and those related to it will be reviewed and assessed after a maximum of five years, or if any of the following occur:

- A change in legislation or code of practice
- A change in user demand
- Loss of or damage to an item
- An increase in the level of threat of theft, vandalism or terrorism
- An increase in the level of risk of damage from the environment
- A change in the level of financial support
- A significant addition to the Collection
- A change in paid and unpaid employee levels or responsibilities
- New research affecting the conservation of items in the collection



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As the College is due to move location late in 2019 the policy should be reviewed soon after this, with a current review date given as June 2020.