

Harris Manchester College Collections Development Policy

1. Mission statement

The chief purpose of the Harris Manchester College (HMC) Archive is to support the College and its aims and objectives by acting as an institutional repository. To this end, it preserves the documentary evidence of the history and life of the College, its members, and its students. This includes records of College administration and finances, property, academic activity, and clubs and societies. The Archive preserves certain personal papers of former students and staff, where these help document the history of the College.

The Archive is also a collecting repository with a second important aim of bringing together unique material that contextualises the rationale for the College's creation, as a place of learning for Nonconformists, and its historical links with Unitarianism in particular.

Only material that compliments existing collections, or that fills significant gaps in the College's institutional memory, is retained permanently.

2. Aim and scope of this policy

The purpose of this Collections Development Policy is to set an effective framework for:

- ensuring that the records in the HMC Archive collections accurately reflect the development of the College as an educational institution through the retention of institutional material
- guiding the selection of external acquisitions, including personal papers of individuals and records of organisations, so that that collections growth reflects the Archive's mission
- allowing the Archivist to maintain an appropriate balance between HMC Archive's resources and its commitments
- maintaining consistency in dealing with internal and external depositors

Archive collections are intended to be retained permanently. This has long-term financial, legal and managerial implications and so the decision to add new material is not taken lightly.

3. Collection Priorities

The Archivist seeks to develop the existing collections on an ongoing basis by focusing on the following key areas:

- Papers of prominent figures involved in the development and management of the College, including College Principals
- Records relating to College governance, including official records and also related material, such as correspondence
- Records reflecting the activities of key functions of College administration, including admissions, development, finance, personnel, housekeeping, and estates
- Records relating to teaching and research activity undertaken by College members
- Papers of certain external individuals or organisations which are judged to be of exceptional value in contextualising the rationale for the College's creation, as a place of learning for Protestant Nonconformists

The Archivist seeks to collect in these areas primarily through working with College staff and members to manage the process of internal transfer. It is envisaged that this will dovetail with the College's Records Retention Policy when a policy is finalised.

In the case of external deposits, the Archivist seeks to collect through donation or, in extraordinary cases, purchase. Loans will not normally be accepted. Donors are required to sign a donor agreement, which sets out the conditions of acceptance.

4. Developing weaker areas

The Archivist also seeks to address comparatively weak areas of the collections by collecting selected:

- Records relating to student experience and College life, including material concerning clubs and societies
- Personal papers documenting the wider intellectual contribution made by notable College members

The Archive seeks to develop these areas by actively encouraging donations from College members, staff and former students.

5. Formats

Material in the following formats is accepted: paper documents, including bound manuscripts; maps; plans; drawings; engravings; photographic prints; posters and leaflets; audio-visual material such as VHS tapes, DVDs, and CDs; born-digital records in various formats; artefacts and textiles.

Multiple copies (more than two) of any item will generally be discarded.

6. Exemptions

The HMC Archive is, first and foremost, the repository for the College's own documentary heritage. Therefore the Archive will, only in exceptional circumstances, acquire material that is not created by members of the College or does not have its provenance in the College (see section 3 above).

The HMC Archive collects only material deemed to be archival in nature. This means unique material that is deemed to be worth keeping permanently to support the functioning of the College or for the purposes of research.

Copies of archive items held elsewhere will not normally be accepted unless these are integral to a broader collection.

Items will not be accepted if their poor physical condition, their format, or their size makes public access via College premises impossible.

The Archivist reserves the right to judge which items are of sufficient quality and content for permanent preservation. Material which does not meet the requirements will not be accepted.

7. Unsolicited donations

Unsolicited donations, including unsolicited accruals to existing collections, are accepted only if they fit with this collections policy.

8. Collections audits

The Archivist reserves the right to re-evaluate and reappraise HMC's holdings on a periodic basis. Such collections audits aim to confirm that only material of enduring historical or legal value are selected for permanent preservation.

9. De-accessioning

The Archivist may de-accession any material identified as either non-archival and/or not meeting HMC Archive's collecting criteria. Where possible, donors will be notified and unwanted material will be offered back to the donor. De-accessioned material may otherwise be offered to another collecting organisation or destroyed. De-accessioned material will not be sold.

Date of Policy: September 2024