Collection Development and Management Policy

1. **Purpose and scope**

Special Collections & Archives (SC&A) cares for and makes available in perpetuity the unique and distinctive collections of the University of Liverpool in support of the University’s strategic priorities in teaching, research and public engagement.

The purpose and scope of this policy is to provide a framework for the development and management of the printed and archival collections held within SC&A. It does not cover collections which are held within the main sequences of the University Library, which are covered by the Library’s general Collection Development & Management Policy, nor does it include collections that are held elsewhere within the University. It is intended to provide both staff and users with a clear statement of the strengths of the collections, current collecting strategy, and the priorities which inform all acquisitions, whether by purchase or gift. It will assist potential donors in determining whether the University of Liverpool Library is the most appropriate place for their material.

The policy is a high level statement which is complemented by the following documents:

- SC&A Access Policy
- SC&A Collections Care & Conservation Policy
- SC&A Collections Information Policy
- SC&A Conditions of Donation/Deposit
- Library Collection Development & Management Policy
- University Records Management Policy
- University Records Retention Schedule

2. **Context and definition**

The University of Liverpool was established as University College Liverpool in 1881. Its Library collections initially grew mostly from donation and from the transfer of existing institutional and private libraries; these early donations were not housed separately but dispersed throughout the general collections. In 1900 the major bequest of the T.G. Rylands collection, including medieval printed books and manuscripts, established in principle and practice a separate Special Collections to keep together uniquely valuable items with a shared provenance. In 1968 the separate departments of ‘Special Collections’ and ‘Archives’ were created to house some of these rare books and archives that the University considered to be important and of institutional, historical and strategic relevance. In 1995 these two separate services were merged to form a single entity of Special Collections & Archives, which is housed within the Sydney Jones Library.
Special Collections are usually identified as being the printed material within SC&A, including books, pamphlets and journals, with associated ephemera, annotation and inserts. They can be classed as special because of their age, rarity, fragility, binding, provenance, association and/or financial value. Ranging in date from the 15th century to the present day, items include the unique productions of the hand-press period (mid-1400s to c.1830), and modern private presses, as well as mass-produced machine-press items. They may be expensively or cheaply produced, highly illustrated, and range widely in size and format. They document, both individually and collectively, the practical processes of book production and the book trade, and the intellectual history of collection formation, organization, and dispersal.

The Science Fiction collections are part of SC&A, but are treated separately here as a consequence of their provenance, content, and differing collecting policy.

Archives and manuscripts are defined as original items in a variety of media, including parchment, paper, photograph, sound or various born-digital formats. Manuscripts are generally taken to be individual, hand-written items, including bound codices (volumes), scrolls and single-sheet material. In common with hand-press printed books, all manuscripts can be regarded as unique, and range widely across subject-matter, format and level of embellishment. Archives consist of documents which were created or received, accumulated and used by an individual or institution in the course of their daily activities, and preserved for their continuing value. Archives provide us with primary evidence of the transactions, processes and events they record. They often have a complex structure, and can contain a huge variety of material.

3. Funding and budgeting

There is no specifically allocated budget for the purchase of special collections or archive collections. When appropriate material becomes available, various internal funding streams as well as external grant awarding bodies or fund-raising programmes will be considered. The Library will be held subject to the terms and conditions of grant awarding bodies.

4. General appraisal and selection criteria

All acquisitions are accessioned as soon as they are received.

In addition to any specific criteria outlined below, all material being considered for acquisition will be assessed for its long-term historical value. Typically, general assessment criteria include:

- Format: SC&A acquires material in print, manuscript and standard digital formats. We do not usually acquire material in formats that requires specialist equipment or knowledge, photocopies or facsimiles of original material, reprints of published articles, or duplicates. Film and sound recordings will normally be referred to an appropriate film or sound archive, unless they are otherwise part of a larger collection. Three dimensional artefacts will not normally be accepted, unless they have a particular relationship with SC&A material; advice will be sought from University Museums & Galleries staff.
- Potential of the material to enhance existing collections.
- Potential costs of cataloguing, conserving and storing the material.
- Physical condition of the material.
- Potential loss to scholarship and research if not acquired.
• Potential of the material to enhance the University’s reputation.
• Relevance of material to current, and potential future, teaching, learning and research interests, which will be determined in consultation with academic departments.

SC&A usually only acquires material by gift, bequest, or purchase, whether from private individuals or organisations. In general, we do not collect items which do not align with our collection strengths or the profile of existing collections.

Archival material concerning primarily the City of Liverpool and the historic county areas will be offered to Liverpool Record Office, or other relevant local and regional record offices. Exceptions to this may be cases where the material relates directly to the University, or to prominent individuals or institutions who feature in SC&A holdings.

The collecting policy may alter as appropriate in response to internal and external influences. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, new collections will only be considered if appropriate resources for the maintenance and support of the collection are also offered. Any decisions regarding this will be taken by the Special Collections & Archives Manager and the Deputy Director, Libraries, Museums & Galleries.

SC&A will exercise due diligence, and will not acquire any item or collection if queries regarding ownership and provenance cannot be fully addressed.

General collection strengths & priorities are listed below, with more detail provided in the subsequent section:

• University of Liverpool archive (institutional history; papers of former staff & students)
• Cunard Archive
• Science Fiction collections (printed and archival)
• Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts
• Modern Literary manuscripts, especially those with a connection to Merseyside
• Incunables and early printed books
• Gypsy Lore Society collections
• Children’s Literature and the history of education
• Social & political history, e.g. papers of Rathbone family, Josephine Butler and Lord Owen.
• 18th-19th century printed collections related to Liverpool.

5. Cataloguing

The collections are catalogued according to the internationally agreed appropriate standards for printed, manuscript and archival material, DCRM and ISAD(G) respectively. Once catalogued, material will be publically searchable via the Library website. Timescales will vary depending on the size of the acquisition and are determined by available resources and institutional priorities. Further information is contained within the SC&A Collections Information Policy.
6. Collections

6.1 Archives and Manuscript collections

6.1.1 University Archive

The archives of the University of Liverpool, which are held within SC&A, include formal records of University boards and committees; selective administrative records; personal papers of former staff and students; and photographs and objects relating to the history and function of the University of Liverpool since its formation in 1881.

These records not only provide an insight into the history of the University which official administrative records may not convey, but also allow the life of the University to be placed in a broader social context. They include the papers of internationally important architects and town planners Baron William Graham Holford and Gordon Stephenson; renowned physicist Sir Oliver Lodge; and influential literary scholars Kenneth and Miriam Allott. The University archives also house extensive material relating to student life and activities.

Material is regularly transferred to the archive from the University Records Centre, according to the Records Retention schedule agreed by the University Archivist and the University Records Manager. Some material is transferred directly from departments to SC&A, as agreed in the Retention Schedule.

SC&A seeks to acquire material which supports the official records of the University. The following categories are collected:

- **Records of University staff** including selected official, professional and personal correspondence, biographical material, photographs, recordings, class lecture notes, research files, diaries, notebooks and memorabilia.
- **Records of individual University students** including selected lecture notes, diaries, biographical material, photographs, personal correspondence, memoirs, and memorabilia.
- **Records of University staff or student societies** including minute books, publicity material and membership lists.
- **Records of associated and affiliated organisations** such as the University Women’s Club.

Due to resource constraints, the following criteria are applied when appraising the personal and professional papers of staff members:

- National or international academic reputation
- Record of service with University of Liverpool or affiliated institution and contribution to its growth and development
- Service and contribution in local or national affairs.

6.1.2 Archives & Manuscripts

Collection strengths include: a fine collection of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, including literary, liturgical and legal texts, and portolan charts - many retain their contemporary bindings and are extensively decorated; family and estate collections (the Rathbone family of Liverpool, 1721-1991; deeds of the Norris family of Speke Hall, c. 1220-1637, and of the Aston family of Cheshire, 16th 19th centuries); records of local, educational and cultural societies (papers of the Liverpool Royal Institution, 1813-1942; the Liverpool Philomathic Society, 1825-1929; the Gypsy Lore Society, 1896-1974); literary papers (ranging from a medieval English manuscript of Piers Plowman to acquisitions of 20th-century writers, most notably the Liverpool Poets Roger McGough, Brian Patten and Adrian Henri). Other major collections are the collected papers of the Rt Hon the Lord Owen, former Foreign
Secretary, founder of the SDP and Chancellor of the University of Liverpool; and the Cunard Archive, which contains most of the surviving business records produced by the Cunard shipping company since 1878.

SC&A seeks to build on established strengths while avoiding conflict and duplication with the collecting policies of other archive services such as the Liverpool Record office. The subject range is potentially very broad, but the following categories of material may be sought or accepted:

- **Collections of local and institutional relevance**
- **Literary papers:** Since the early 1980s the focus for collecting has been the work of Merseyside writers, principally poets.
- **Material with a research relevance to the University of Liverpool:** Where areas of significant academic interest are identified, collections with no obvious local relevance are also acquired, provided no alternative repository is clearly more appropriate. In addition, the Library also liaises with the University's academic departments to secure material to support teaching and research.
- **Cunard:** Records are sought to complement the deposited archive of the Cunard company.

### 6.2 Special Collections

The book collections contain c.70,000 volumes in the full range of classical and European languages taught by the University and include many of the landmark texts in Classical and English literature, history, architecture, medicine, science and travel. There are more than 270 incunables, nearly 400 works printed 1501-1539 and more than 20,000 pre-1801 English books (nearly 900 later 16th century works, c.5,500 17th century and c.14,500 18th century) of which c. 10 000 are recorded in the international ESTC database. The collections are strong in limited editions and private press books (1880s-1950s), with many examples of Liverpool printers and authors. Since the transfer of the former Education Library in 1998, children’s literature has been a major strength of the collections. They also incorporate the former libraries of historic Liverpool learned societies, notably the Liverpool Royal Institution, and the earliest and most valuable parts of the University’s former departmental libraries. More modern items include the books acquired alongside archival collections, notably the Liverpool Poets and Cunard Archives.

In this area the aim is to enhance and expand the existing strengths of the Special Collections. To this end items may be acquired for or accepted by SC&A if they fulfil one or more of the criteria:

- A publication or creation date of 1851 or earlier
- A significant provenance
- The physical format demands special storage conditions or care in handling
- Special bibliographic significance (e.g. it is a private press item or a first edition of a notable literary work)
- Special local significance to the University or to Liverpool
- Material complementing manuscript or archival holdings.

Particular subject areas of interest include:

- Material that has relevance to the city of Liverpool and its surrounding areas
- Material that has relevance to the history of the University of Liverpool
- Children’s literature
- Private press books
• Early Liverpool imprints.

6.3 Science Fiction Collections

The science fiction collections held by SC&A comprise Europe’s largest catalogued collection of science fiction material. The most significant part of the collection is that belonging to the Science Fiction Foundation. In addition to the Science Fiction Foundation collection, there is a small collection of science fiction archives owned by the University of Liverpool. These include the Olaf Stapledon, John Wyndham, Eric Frank Russell and Brian Aldiss archives, and the research materials of Professor I. F. Clarke.

The Science Fiction Foundation collection is the research library of the Science Fiction Foundation and as such its aim is to provide resources for researchers and scholars of the field, and to develop an archive collection of science fiction, the material written about it, and related literatures. It contains over 35,000 books - from the earliest examples of speculative fiction to the present day - accompanied by 2,500 critical works. Holdings are comprehensive for many English-language writers but geographical coverage is wide-ranging with French, German and Eastern European writers featuring strongly. 2,500 periodical titles represent one of the most extensive collections of critical journals, fanzines & fiction magazines in the world. The collection of fanzines and sf convention material forms a unique history of the field from the 1930s to the present day. The Collection receives regular donations of the works of Terry Pratchett, through his agent, Colin Smythe.

The extensive archival collections held include the papers and manuscripts of some of the most important writers in the genre, including Stephen Baxter, John Brunner, Ramsey Campbell, and many other leading authors. Both University of Liverpool and Science Fiction Foundation archival holdings include major Liverpool authors in the field: Baxter, Campbell, Stapledon.

Our collecting aim for the science fiction collections is:

• To possess a copy of each of the significant works of science fiction. Where significant differences between editions exists, multiple editions may be acquired.
• To continue the development of critical, biographical and bibliographical material.
• To continue the acquisition of relevant periodicals: critical journals, fiction magazines, and fanzines.

Material is usually only acquired by gift, bequest, or purchase, whether from private individuals or organisations. In general, we do not collect items which do not align with our collection strengths or the profile of existing collections. However, we welcome donations in areas where we have identified gaps where the Science Fiction Foundation collection is significantly lacking in relevant material. These include:

• Early (pre-1914) English-language science fiction and fantasy, particularly in magazine form.
• British pre-1945 science fiction.
• Current (i.e. within the past ten years) American science fiction.
• Small-press fiction magazines, especially from the USA.
• Science fiction for young people.
• Audio-visual material, including tapes of author talks.
While the Science Fiction Foundation collection includes some donated film material in VHS/DVD format, and artefacts in the form of awards (to, e.g., John Brunner, and Joel Lane) the main focus is upon print and the written word.

7. **Transfers from the main library collection**

Material held in the main library collection which is identified as being appropriate for transfer to SC&A will be moved to ensure that it receives special treatment in terms of housing and security, management, cataloguing, handling, consultation and preservation. An item or collection is normally designated as, added to, or acquired by SC&A, if it fulfils one or more of the following criteria:

- Created earlier than 1851
- It complements, enriches or builds on the subject strengths of existing special collections
- Significant provenance
- Special bibliographic significance (a first edition, scarce, limited or special edition, significant binding, privately published or small press items)
- Significant cultural or historical value (e.g. association items, inscribed items, items of known scarcity value)
- It enhances the reputation of, or is of special local or historical significance to the University of Liverpool
- Its physical format, fragility or vulnerability requires special storage conditions and care in handling.

8. **Duplication**

It is not the policy of SC&A to retain duplicates of printed books unless they have significant provenance, provide additional information (e.g. manuscript annotations), form part of a named individual’s library, or are especially scarce. Any exceptions to this policy are highlighted above under the relevant section.

9. **Retention & disposal**

Once a decision has been taken for material to be deposited and accessioned within SC&A, it is usually the case that items will be retained and preserved in perpetuity. However, SC&A regularly reviews its collections and the department reserves the right to make exceptions using criteria consistent with its acquisition policy.

In circumstances where a decision has been taken to withdraw material, it is likely that a recommendation will be made to transfer items to a more appropriate collection or repository, or where appropriate, to sell or exchange. Any items deaccessioned from the collections will be clearly marked as withdrawn.

All decisions regarding de-accessioning and disposal will be made by the Special Collections & Archives Manager and the Deputy Director, Libraries, Museums & Galleries.
10. Digital
SC&A recognises the importance of maintaining access to digital and other electronic items, and is in the process of working with the wider Library, Computing Services and the University’s Records Management service on establishing digital preservation policies and procedures.

SC&A does accept born digital archives in standard digital formats, including central University committee papers, and it is acknowledged that digital objects will become a major component of the University archive and of deposited collections.

11. Access
SC&A is located within the Sydney Jones Library at the University of Liverpool. We endeavour to ensure that the collections held are available for learning & teaching, research and, where appropriate, for outreach activities. Staff, students and members of the public are welcome to consult the collections free of charge in the supervised reading room located within SC&A.

Material is also made available for University teaching, in a designated teaching room within SC&A, and with appropriate monitoring and guidance from a member of staff. Use of some vulnerable material may be restricted, or use of a surrogate suggested where available.

Full details of how to access the collections are provided on the Library website. Further information is contained in the SC&A Access Policy.

12. Partnerships
SC&A liaises with other institutions locally and nationally to ensure collection management decisions are taken with a view to collaborative professional practice. Informal partnerships with external organisations currently exist with:

- Merseyside Archives Liaison Group (MALG)
- Liverpool Libraries Together
- The Northern Collaboration - Archives & Special Collections group
- Northern Special Collections Network
- Group for Archives and Literary Manuscripts (GLAM)
- TNA Higher Education Archive Programme (HEAP)

13. Loans
The loan of material for exhibition, in their original form, or as surrogates, must be approved by the Special Collections & Archives Manager and Deputy Director, Libraries, Museums & Galleries. Loan for exhibition will normally only be approved if compliance with the standards of care set out in the Exhibition loan conditions can be satisfied and the application form is completed.

Extended loan periods will be considered, but will be subject to review. Alternative items may be suggested for longer term exhibitions.

It may be appropriate for SC&A staff to accompany materials in transit to the borrowing institution for insurance purposes.
14. Monitoring and review of policy

This policy was approved in May 2017 and will be reviewed annually. Revisions will be approved by the Library Leadership Team and the University’s Heritage, Arts and Culture Committee.