Newcastle University Library Special Collections
Collection Development Policy

1. Purpose and Scope
The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear statement of the current collecting strategy of Newcastle University Library’s Special Collections department. These collecting priorities inform all acquisitions, whether by purchase or gift, and will assist potential donors in determining whether Newcastle University Library is the most appropriate home for material they may wish to donate.

1.1 Context
This collection development policy is a high-level statement, which is complemented by the following documents:
- Digital Preservation Policy
- Preservation Policy
- Loan Conditions (Exhibitions)

1.2 Special Collections Mission
Newcastle University Library supports the University’s learning and teaching, research, innovation and engagement by providing resources, high quality services, and professional expertise to enable the effective discovery and use of information, and the development and communication of knowledge. The Special Collections department accomplishes this by collecting, preserving, promoting and facilitating access to often rare or unique primary source material and historic secondary texts which it makes available to our own staff and students, to researchers from other institutions, and anyone in the wider community who is interested in the material.

It seeks recognition of the regional, national and international significance of important collections and its activities include collection development, exhibitions and outreach services.

1.3 Definitions
Rare books are those that are important, were produced in small quantity or survive in small numbers, and for which there is demand. A book might also become rare because it has a significant provenance, a fine binding, or contains some other form of significant additional information that renders it unique, such as manuscript annotations. Archives may comprise stand-alone items or, more commonly, are a series of documents that were created by an individual, family or business but which are no longer required for their daily business. They have been retained because they have continuing historic value or for the information they contain and include a full range of materials such as photographs, audio-visual materials, illustrations and maps. Manuscripts are hand-written documents but the term is commonly used to refer to any non-printed materials including typescripts and word-processed documents.
1.4 Roles and Responsibilities
The Archivist and Special Collections and Archives Librarian are responsible for selecting and maintaining the Reading Room Reference Collection.

The Special Collections and Archives Librarian will consult the appropriate Liaison Librarian and seek approval from the Head of Planning & Resources and Deputy Librarian for purchases and donations.

2. Printed Book Collections

2.1 Collection Profile
The printed book collections have been built up over many years through bequests, gifts, long-term deposits and purchases. The Arts and Humanities are most strongly represented, although the general collections are multi-disciplinary. Material ranges in date from the earliest printed books (incunabula) to the present day, with most of the material having been printed during the 18th and 19th centuries. For the most part, our collection strengths reflect current learning, teaching and research interests within Newcastle University.

2.2 Collecting Priorities
Printed published material will be acquired where:
- Items fill gaps in existing named collections
- Items build on existing collection strengths
- Works do not duplicate items that are already held in the collections
- Items have significant or local provenance
- Items provide significant additional information (e.g. ms annotations, grangerised / extra-illustrated copies, novels in parts, material that is tipped / pasted in, etc.)
- Few known copies survive
- Works that are in demand are not available at other local institutions
- Items support current and projected Newcastle University research and teaching interests
- Items support the work of the Education Outreach Officer

As one of the leading Special Collections libraries in the field, we are particularly keen to acquire material relating to children’s books, to create one of the foremost centres in the UK for the study of published Children’s Literature up to and including the early 20th Century.

We also wish to enhance our collections relating to the History of Medicine, Chapbooks, Local Ephemera printed during the 18th and 19th centuries, and 19th-century Novels.

Foreign language material will only be acquired very selectively.

3. Archive Collections

3.1 Collection Profile
The archive collections have been built up over many years through bequests, gifts, long-term deposits and purchases. Modern local literary archives, the papers of prominent
families and figures, and material relating to the History of Medicine dominate. Early manuscripts are scant, with archival holdings dating primarily from the 19th and 20th centuries.

3.2 Collecting Priorities
Archival material will be acquired where:
- Documents are of clear historical or regional importance
- Documents build on existing collection strengths
- Documents support current and projected Newcastle University research and teaching interests
- Documents support the work of the Education Outreach Officer
- Documents do not conflict with archival holdings at other regional institutions

We particularly wish to enhance our institutional archive, as well as our holdings of local literary archives (excepting original manuscripts by children’s authors which are collected by Seven Stories), holdings relating to political history, and holdings relating to local social history.

Foreign language material will only be acquired very selectively.

4. Reading Room Reference Collection
New material is purchased to provide an open-access reference collection to support the work of Special Collections Staff and assist researchers in the Reading Room. Limited space means that unsolicited donations are generally not accepted but researchers are invited to contact the Special Collections department with recommendations.

5. Acquisitions
All acquisitions will be recorded in the accessions database. Information on the nature of each acquisition will be recorded.

We will not normally acquire material that requires specialist knowledge or equipment, material that comprises photocopies or facsimiles of original items; or collections that have significant closure periods. Material being considered for addition to Special Collections holdings will be assessed for its long-term historical value, its potential to enhance existing collections, and its relevance to current teaching, learning and research interests. Where significant collections are concerned, consideration will also be given to the cost of cataloguing, conserving and storing the material.

5.1 Purchase
In the current climate, there is limited funding available for the purchase of Special Collections. When relevant material becomes available, the Library will consider various avenues of funding, such as the Robinson Bequest, the Friends of The University Library, or other grant awarding bodies. Where appropriate, we would also co-ordinate a fund-raising programme. Acquisitions purchased with external funding will be held subject to the terms and conditions of grant awarding bodies.
5.2 Donation
We prefer that, when donating archival documents to Special Collections, legal ownership and any associated rights and responsibilities are transferred to the library. (N.B. Donors must be empowered to assign these rights.) A Donor Agreement for the Gift of Archives & Published Material form must be completed.

5.3 Deposit
Material that is deposited in Special Collections on long term loan is managed by the department, but the depositor retains ownership. This arrangement will only be considered in special circumstances. A Deposit on Loan Agreement form must be completed.

6. Retention and disposal
Once selected and accessioned, archives and rare books will normally be preserved. However, the department reserves the right to review its collections and, where strategically desirable, to recommend that items be transferred to a more appropriate repository, withdrawn, or where appropriate, sold. This may be for the following reasons:

- Incomplete or partial collections, which would be more appropriately housed with comparable or complementary material in another repository
- Material is in a poor physical state which is unsuitable for permanent preservation
- The owner requests the return of a collection that is on deposit or loan
- Material poses a threat to other collections (e.g. nitrate film)
- Duplicate items are not in demand
- Material is of an age and quality which makes it suitable for storage in the Team Valley Research Repository (TVRR)
- Items no longer support Newcastle University learning, teaching and research interests

Special Collections will honour the terms and conditions attached to individual donor / depositor agreements or the terms set out by grant awarding bodies where purchases have been externally-funded. Where a collection is to be evaluated and items selected for disposal that are not deemed to be worthy of permanent preservation, this intention will have been made clear at the time of acquisition.

6.1 Duplication
It is not Special Collections policy to retain duplicates of printed books unless items have significant provenance, provide additional information (e.g. MS annotations, grangerised / extra-illustrated copies), form part of a named individual’s library, or are especially scarce.

7. Access
We will ensure, as far as possible, that collections are made available for mainstream use in learning and teaching, research and education outreach: staff, students and members of the public may consult the collections free of charge. Original collection items will be made available to researchers in the invigilated Reading Room, subject to collection closure periods, the Data Protection Act 1998 and any other legal restrictions. Researchers may be offered surrogates of heavily-used, fragile items.
8. Collaborative working
The Special Collections department liaises closely with other regional libraries and archive repositories to ensure there is clarity over our respective collecting strategies and wherever possible, will avoid duplication. Where necessary, we will act collectively, particularly if joint action diminishes the risk of significant local material being lost to the region.

8.1 Partnerships
Co-operative agreements, that we may wish to formalise in time, currently exist with:
- Seven Stories (The National Centre for Children’s Books)
- The Library of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle

8.2 Loans for Exhibition
The loan of original material for exhibition must be approved by the Librarian or Deputy Librarian, in consultation with the Special Collections and Archives Librarian. Loan for exhibition will usually be approved only if it can be demonstrated that the standards of care in the temporary location satisfy the terms set out in the Loan Conditions (Exhibitions) document and on satisfactory completion of the Application for Exhibition Loan form.

Dr Melanie Wood (Special Collections and Archives Librarian), June 2012, amended Aug 2012
Approved by the Library Strategy Group, 03/08/2012.
To be reviewed annually.