

Magdalen College Archive Collection Development and Acquisition Policy

Aim

To provide a clear statement on taking new records into the Magdalen College Archive and on its statutory/legal position.

Statement of Purpose

Magdalen College, founded by William Waynflete in 1458, is one of the largest of the 39 colleges of the University of Oxford. The College is a community of about 70 fellows, 600 postgraduate and undergraduate students, and a large number of administrative and support staff. See the College website for further information (<https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/>).

The principal objective of the Archive is to collect, preserve, and promote the use of records documenting the history of the College. This includes records of its administration and finances, land and property ownership, and individual members of College. It aims to support the College's educational, cultural, and charitable objectives, and to be a repository of evidence and information valuable to professional and private researchers alike.

Statutory Position

The Archive:

1. Is known as the Magdalen College Archive or Archives, located at Magdalen College, Oxford, OX1 4AU.
2. Reports to the Library and Archive Committee, responsible to the Governing Body of Magdalen College.
3. Fulfils the requirements of the College's statutes: "It shall be the duty of the Librarian to ensure the development, efficient organisation, smooth running and security of the libraries and archives." (Statute III (10), October 2010).
4. Seeks to abide by all current archive guidance, standards, and legislation, including Freedom of Information and data protection laws.

Scope of Collection

Magdalen's Archive is one of the most important in Oxford and Cambridge. It includes some 13,000 medieval deeds and manorial records acquired through land purchases when the College was being established; institutional archives and modern records dating from the foundation of the College in 1458 to the present time; a large collection of architectural drawings (including plans to remodel the college by Repton and Wyatt); and the personal papers of former Magdalen Presidents, Fellows and students. It also holds extensive collections of documents relating to and written by the College's old members, including Charles Daubeney, Oscar Wilde, A.J.P. Taylor, and several members of the Oxford Movement.

The Archive collects:

- Records produced by the College's departments in the course of their administration, its members, its societies, and the College's estates and other assets.

- Records relating to the College, its buildings, societies, estates, members and activities, which may not have been produced by the College itself, or which may not now be in the College's custody.
- Papers of members of the College, both junior and senior, where these contribute to an appreciation of the College and its history, or where these reflect significant work carried out by those members, providing that those papers should not more fittingly be in another repository.
- Items which illustrate a cross-section of College life, and which might not normally survive as part of the official record.
- Additional records relating to collections already in the College Archive.

In collecting such material, Magdalen College Archive will not seek to represent any particular historical viewpoint, but to reflect as objectively as possible all aspects of the College's past and present.

The Archive will seek to avoid a conflict of interest with any other archive. In the event of such a conflict arising, the Historical Manuscripts Commission at The National Archives will be referred to as the final arbiter.

The Archive does not accept:

- Material relating to individual members of the College unless it is of significance to the College's history.
- Material of local interest but not directly relevant to the objectives outlined above.

If refusing the offer of a collection which falls outside the scope of this policy, the College will seek to refer the individual to a more suitable repository.

Conditions of Deposit

The College Archive will act as a place of final deposit, and designated archives will be retained permanently.

The Archive will accept:

- Records regardless of date.
- Records in manuscript, printed, or digital format.
- Maps, plans, drawings, engravings, and photographic images; audio-visual and computer media.
- Printed newsletters, magazines, and other publications.
- Ephemera, including posters, menu cards, postcards, etc.
- Three-dimensional artefacts only if they relate to associated records.

Copies and transcripts are only acquired where the originals are not available and the material is of sufficient importance to our collections. Records will be retained in their original formats, to include born-digital records. Copies of dual or multiple format records will be retained in each format. Where feasible, digital copies of audio-visual material in obsolete formats will be made and retained in a digital archive.

Methods of Acquisition

Internal acquisitions:

- Institutional records will be transferred by arrangement with College departments. Only records judged to have an administrative, legal, and financial or research value will be transferred for permanent retention.
- Records management schedules will be drawn up and agreed with College departments, specifying disposal arrangements for records no longer required for current business, and identifying key records of continuing historical value and worthy of permanent retention.

External acquisitions:

- Records from external sources will be acquired as donations (*gifts*) where possible, providing the College with clear and valid title of ownership. Funding for cataloguing, preservation, and conservation may be sought along with the gift.
- Conditional deposits (*deposits*) will only be accepted in accordance with written agreement on terms of deposit and conditions for access and disposal.
- Purchases will only be made for records of outstanding importance to the College.
- Donors' wishes on the confidentiality and copyright status of material will be agreed in advance.

Acquisitions will be appraised at the point of accession, and during cataloguing, which may result in recommendations for disposal of some material. Disposals will be agreed with the depositor and approved by the Archivist and the Library and Archive Committee.

Accession Procedures

- No records will be accepted into the Archive without the approval of the Archivist.
- Internal transfer procedures will be agreed with College departments and periodic transfers will be arranged in accordance with agreed departmental retention schedules.
- Ad hoc offers of records to the Archives will be appraised to confirm that the records fall within the scope of this policy and do not duplicate existing holdings.
- All new acquisitions will be logged, and written agreement of terms of deposit and conditions for access and disposal issued with receipts for the records.
- Details of the depositor's name and address will be kept on file, and used by authorised College staff to identify ownership and actions that may be taken regarding the material deposited.

Preservation

- Records will be stored in secure conditions, conforming as far as possible to recognised archival standards.
- Records may be photographed or copied for preservation purposes, if appropriate.
- Records may be marked in pencil with a catalogue reference number, if necessary.
- Professional conservation work may be carried out on the records.
- The College may withhold access to documents that, in the opinion of Archive staff, are too fragile to be handled.

Access

- Records will be accepted into the Archive in the expectation that they will be available for bona fide research in accordance with Archive access policies and statutory requirements, including data protection and freedom of information legislation.
- Specific closed periods may be negotiated for particular records, but no permanently closed material will be accepted.
- All records may be used in talks and exhibitions by College staff subject to agreed closure periods.
- Records will be sorted, catalogued, and indexed in due course. No personal details of the depositor will be made available unless requested.

Approved: Library and Archive Committee Jan 2022

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