



## **Borthwick Institute for Archives**

### **Collections Information Policy**



This policy sets out what researchers can expect in relation to the information we provide about the archives in our care.

#### **1. Policy**

1.1 The Borthwick exists to preserve archives in order to make them available for all who wish to use them.

1.2 We create information about the archives in our care and make that information publicly available, subject to any contractual or statutory restrictions.

1.3 We capture high level descriptive and management information from the point a new archive is offered to us and keep this information permanently.

1.4 We publish fonds-level descriptions of new archives within 3 months of receiving them.

1.5 We share fonds-level descriptions with the National Register of Archives at least annually, participating in the annual Accessions to Repositories survey.

1.6 We make the finding aids we have, in whatever format, freely available to researchers under open data licence.

1.7 We maintain an online, publicly searchable catalogue.

1.8 We make our catalogue visible to national and international aggregators, such as, but not limited to, The Archives Hub and Archives Portal Europe.

1.9 We use an online catalogue (AtoM) that is visible to web crawlers.

1.10 We use controlled vocabularies, international metadata standards and non-archive specific internet-based platforms (such as Wikipedia) to enhance the internet presence of our finding aids.

1.11 We enhance finding aids by providing information about other sources of information about the nature and use of the archives, such as, but not limited to, secondary texts using the archives.

1.12 We undertake an ongoing, iterative review of our descriptive practices, revisiting and revising catalogue descriptions where appropriate. We may preserve outmoded language where it is necessary to facilitate discovery and retrieval while flagging oppressive or harmful language and seeking to remediate past silences and omissions, in order to provide an appropriately contextual, equitable, and representative archive.

1.13 We maintain a regular programme of identification, arrangement and description using permanent staff, staff on short term contracts and volunteers. The programme is overseen by the Collections Development Group.

1.14 The Collections Development Group prioritises archives for arrangement and description (including archives that do not have finding aids that meet mandatory standards), and decides on the level of description to be applied, using the following criteria:

- contribution to University research themes and aims.
- complexity and technical demands, which can include language, the technical nature of the records, the size and nature of the archive, and the media (digital, hybrid) of the records;
- whether a full finding aid or an outline finding aid is needed to release research potential;
- research significance (in relation to University needs as well as public needs, international, national and local);
- research and/or teaching demand (evidence of actual, latent or unfulfilled demand for access, which is drawn from a number of places, including requests for access to uncatalogued archives);
- their potential to attract external funding;
- needs of the owner/depositor;
- relationship to the interests and skills of volunteers;
- potential to lead or influence national collecting or cataloguing;
- potential to realise partnership or collaborative working opportunities.

1.15 We seek, use and apply information from experts in relevant fields to enhance and improve our finding aids. Such information is always mediated through an archivist before being included in finding aids.

1.16 We adopt and observe international and national standards for the management,

identification, arrangement and description of the archives in our care and publish information about the standards we adopt.

1.17 We observe the mandatory requirements of ISAD(G) in creating new finding aids.

1.18 We upgrade existing finding aids to the mandatory requirements of ISAD(G) on a regular basis, prioritised by the Collections Development Group.

1.19 We create and apply name authority records to all finding aids contained in Borthcat using controlled vocabularies access terms and observing the minimum requirements of ISAAR(CPF).

1.20 We apply subject index terms, using controlled subject headings and recognised thesauri, to all finding aids in our catalogue. Every finding aid is ascribed at least one subject heading at fonds level.

1.21 We work with other archives, here and abroad, to imagine and implement technical improvements to our catalogue.

1.22 Our catalogue represents archives in the custody of the Borthwick. Archives held elsewhere (through transfer from the Borthwick or some other reason) may be represented with the prior consent of the holder and owner of such archives.

## **2. Scope**

2.1 This policy applies to all the information about the archives in the Borthwick created or received by the Borthwick and to all archives in our custody, unless that information is restricted by the owner, the law, contractual obligations or security requirements.

## **3. Oversight**

3.1 The Keeper of Archives and Research Collections is responsible for the oversight of this policy.

3.2 The Archives and Research Collections Leadership Team is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

## **4. Implementation**

4.1 This policy is supported by these policies and procedures:

- Borthwick Institute policy and terms definitions guide
- Archives and Research Collections Forward plan
- Access Policy
- Access plan and procedures
- Accessioning Procedures
- Appraisal Procedures
- Arrangement and Description Procedures

- Digitisation policy, plan and procedures
- Collections care and conservation policy, plan and procedures
- Harmful Language Statement
- Preservation and conservation procedures
- Digital Preservation policy, plan and procedures
- University of York Data Protection Policy
- University of York Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- Borthwick Institute standards information

**Document history and status**

August 2017	Information Services SMT	First approved
July 2022	Archives and Research Collections Leadership Team	Updates agreed

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