



Borthwick Institute for Archives

Archives 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 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 all the finding aids we have, in whatever format, freely available to researchers under open data licence. For the avoidance of doubt this includes information not in machine readable form.
- 1.7 We maintain an online, publicly searchable, aggregation finding aid.

- 1.8 We make our aggregation finding aid visible to larger finding aid aggregators, such as, but not limited to, The Archives Hub, Discovery, and Archives Portal Europe.
- 1.9 We use an aggregation finding aid platform that is visible to web crawlers.
- 1.10 We use non-archive specific internet-based platforms (such as Wikipedia) to enhance the internet presence of our finding aids.
- 1.11 We enhance finding aids with guides to and commentaries upon archives and records, such as, but not limited to, conventional physical publications and internet-based guides and commentaries.
- 1.12 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.
- 1.13 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 Archives Development Meeting.
- 1.14 The Archives Development Meeting 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:
- 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;
 - an estimate of the time it will take to catalogue them;
 - whether a full finding aid or an outline finding aid is needed to release research potential (more product, less process);
 - 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;
 - relationship with 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 Archives Development Meeting.
- 1.19 We create and apply name authority records to all finding aids contained in Borthcat using controlled vocabularies 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 aggregator finding aid. Every finding aid is ascribed at least one subject heading.
- 1.21 We work with other archives, here and abroad, to imagine and implement technical improvements to our aggregator finding aid.
- 1.22 Our aggregator finding aid 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 Assistant Director of Information (Keeper of Archives) is responsible for the oversight of this policy.
- 3.2 The Borthwick Senior 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
 - 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
 - Preservation and conservation procedures
 - Digital preservation plan and procedures
 - History of Archives Information Guide
 - University of York Data Protection Policy
 - University of York Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme
 - University of York Information Security Policy
 - Borthwick Institute standards information

Document history and status

April 2017	C Webb	First draft
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