

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP NUMBER ZSD-002-01	DONATIONS & BEQUESTS PROCEDURES
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PART 1

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PART 2

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PART 3

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PART 4 (To be filled in by OOTS, QSU or RSSD)

<input type="checkbox"/> This procedure has been revised and is no longer valid as from: <div style="text-align: right;">(Write date)</div>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date of NEXT REVISION is extended until: <div style="text-align: right;">(Max. 4 years)</div>	<input type="checkbox"/> SOP rendered obsolete on: <div style="text-align: right;">(Write date)</div>
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1. Reason for revision

1.1. New SOP

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 An outline of the guidelines and procedures followed by the *Special Collections (SC) Department* with reference to donations, (be they single items or large collections), that are either presented or bequeathed to the University of Malta (UM) Library. Included are donations of 'artificial' collections that is of works intended to be held together by the Department.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Bequeath: Pass on or leave (something) to someone else by a will. Here it is also taken to mean collections received from the late owner's heirs even where it is not mentioned in the will and testament.

3.2 FB: Facebook

3.3 In situ: In the original place

3.4 JCL: Junior College Library

3.5 Mss: Manuscripts

3.6 Newspoint The news portal of the University of Malta which provides staff, students, alumni and the general public with information on news and activities at the University.

3.7 Nitrogen Anoxia: Treatment used in conservation whereby the material is placed in a nitrogen atmosphere to kill insects by way of oxygen deprivation (Pinniger p. 12). This treatment is free of chemicals and kinder on the material and, moreover, presents no health risks to staff and users.¹

3.8 SC: "The Special Collections is composed of library and archival materials that cover a kaleidoscope of subjects and material types. The material that makes up SC serves to enhance institutional prestige and imparts a distinct character to the Library that helps to distinguish its collections from those of its peers. Included among the works found

¹ Other modes of pest control treatment have been used in the past such as low temperature freezing, (carried out inhouse), which is also recommended but to be carried out professionally this requires the right type of freezer to reach appropriate low temperatures, space planning and setup to be truly effective. Fumigation was also favoured at one time but this involved the use of chemicals and, moreover, not all material could safely undergo this treatment. .

here is material of importance to Malta's "collective memory" (Samut-Tagliaferro, p. 7). The Departments of *Melitensia* and of Archives & Rare Books fall under the Special Collections of the UM Library.

3.9 UM: University of Malta

4. Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Legal Office:

- 4.1.1 Reviewing the donation agreement and carrying out any necessary amendments.
- 4.1.2 Responsible for safe-keeping a copy of the signed Agreement.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Collection Manager:

- 4.2.1 Dealing with the prospective donor and forming a good working relationship;
- 4.2.2 Assessing relevance of collection to Library's target audience and seeking advice if unsure;
- 4.3.3 Assessing condition of donation including any necessary short and long term conservation requirements;
- 4.3.4 Identifying appropriate shelf space for the donation that offers security and provides, if not ideal than at the very least "reasonable" preservation conditions, given the space constraints the Library currently finds itself under;
- 4.3.5 Preparing a donation agreement and liaising with the Legal Office;
- 4.3.6 Organising safe collection and transfer of the material to the Library;
- 4.3.7 Processing the donation according to international standards;
- 4.3.8 Marketing and promoting the donation;
- 4.3.9 Keeping in touch with the donors and informing them of progress in the processing of the donation and in its promotion to users;
- 4.3.10 Responsible for safe-keeping a copy of the signed Agreement.

5. Health and Safety Requirements

- 5.1 Evaluate risks to personnel and to the material itself prior to transporting material back to the Library in order to reduce the possibility of potential accidents.
- 5.2 This includes:
 - 5.2.1 Selection of appropriate personnel for physical roles.
 - 5.2.2 Training in all tasks to minimise risks with trained archive and library staff to do the actual packing so that the original order of collections of documents or 'records' is respected.
 - 5.2.3 Provision of appropriate equipment, (including protective safety equipment), to lighten task(s) and enhance health and safety issues.

6. Procedure

- 6.1 Potential donors generally approach either the Director of Library Services or the SC Manager directly. Donations can be from UM academics, *alumni*, and also from outside researchers. The number of outside donors has, in recent years, increased. Examples include: E.g. *The Paul Cassar Bequest*, *The Guido Lanfranco Collection*, and *The MMDNA Archive*.
- 6.2 As soon as contact is made the SC Manager opens up a dialogue with the potential donor and asks for a listing of the material and, if this is not forthcoming, then may settle for a brief description of the collection. A request for a site visit is also made. The SC Manager keeps the Director of Library Services informed and copies him in to all correspondence. On occasions, (as occurred with the *Victor Pasmore Bequest*), the SC Manager may proactively chase the collection by approaching the potential donor(s) if it is felt that the material is of sufficient importance to the Library's target audience.
- 6.3 Collection Development Policy: A potential donation is carefully appraised by the SC Manager in order to ascertain whether it fits within the Library's collection approach and to ensure that there is no duplication with material already housed in our Library. A set of *unwritten* policies, (recently broadly described in a publication by the author), addresses various aspects of special collections management and serves to guide the decision-making process:

The Department of SC is particularly strong in local studies content as material of importance to the Maltese Islands' collective memory falls within the Collection Management Policy for the Department. Apart from Melitensia material, only material considered relevant to our target audience composed of students and academic staff is acquired either through donations, bequests or purchase. In recent years, under the SC Manager's guidance, the type of material included in donations has broadened to include electronic, audio-visual, visual arts, etc. Much

of SC is, in fact, characterised by a strong Malta content but material unrelated to local studies is also gratefully accepted, provided that it falls within the Department's unwritten collection management policy, which has as its abiding principle the need to support UM's academic mission, namely its teaching and research programmes. In this regard when developing special collections, serious consideration is given to material judged to complement and enrich existing collections; and/or material that will serve to strengthen weak areas, and/or material that will fill lacunæ in the collections".

(Samut-Tagliaferro p. 7-8)

- 6.3.1 When in doubt as to the material's relevancy to our target audience, the SC Manager will seek out the advice of the appropriate academic teaching staff member/s to learn how relevant the material is to their teaching curricula.
- 6.3.2 Even if the donation fits within the institution's acquisition policy the SC Manager may on occasion still need to consider whether it is necessary to preserve every piece of paper and a selection might need to be made and in the case of books there is a need to avoid duplication. In other words, which material within the potential acquisition is worth keeping. Ideally, this exercise should be carried out before the donation leaves the premises but if for practical reasons this is not possible the donor will need to be informed and will need to be consulted as to what s/he would like done with the material the Library is not keeping.
- 6.4 The SC Manager having carried out the necessary research and assured herself of the material's relevance reports back to the Director of Library Services prior to requesting the 'go-ahead' to contact the donor and to accept/reject on behalf of the UM Library the donation. The SC Manager is responsible for ensuring that accessions not only strengthen the SC Department but can be properly cared for, stored and consulted. The SC Manager is responsible for ensuring that the institution's collections make sense and that there is "logic to what is acquired and why (Millar p. 116)".
- 6.5 Should some of the books in the donation relating to *Melitensia* already be available, (generally in several copies), in our holdings and should these works be judged not to have a bearing on the integrity of the collection, the SC Manager may reach an understanding with the donor whereby this material will still be accepted provided the SC Manager will be given the liberty to transfer these works to the branch libraries.
 - 6.5.1 In this way, the *Melitensia* content of branch libraries such as JCL has been greatly enriched. We have also started to create a small collection of *Melitensia* works for the Valletta Campus Library in order to make the collection there more relevant to users. This material is not included in the donation contract where the Library is legally obliged to hold the material together but a donation label recording the generosity of the donor/s is added to the works and it is also recorded electronically in the bibliographic record.

- 6.6 In the interests of responsible collection management, the SC Manager requests to view the collection *in situ* in order to assess the condition and the extent of the donation for subsequent re-housing in the Department. In certain instances where the donor is of sufficient stature, as in the case of the *Godfrey Wettinger Bequest*, photographs recording the original location of the material are also taken as a permanent record. A site visit also allows us to see if there is other material, not included in the donation/bequest, that would also be relevant to our users and to diplomatically broach the subject and discover whether the heirs would also be willing to present this material to the Library. Eg. Portrait of Prof Godfrey Wettinger by artist Dr Carole Jaccarini, Prof. Wettinger's Desk.
- 6.7 Space issues in the Library create a challenge when attempting to find space to house new material. The SC Manager must assure herself that the necessary space is available and that the packing and housing material necessary to enable safe transfer of the donation are available and that the appropriate housing material once the donation is deposited in the Library is available. Stamps with the name of the donor/s are ordered and in the case of books donation labels recording the generosity of the donor/s are printed.
- 6.8 Should any of the donated material be suffering from insect infestation the SC Manager will in consultation with the Director take the decision to have the donated material taken directly for anoxia treatment bypassing the Library in order to avoid the risk of cross-contamination with our existing collections.
- 6.9 The SC Manager then works with the donor to arrange the physical transfer of the material as well as to answer any questions the donor might pose both in relation to the transfer of the material and to the donation agreement which the SC Manager prepares concurrently.
- 6.10 A team of packers, under the supervision of the SC Manager, is organised and they visit the premises on the agreed date. Generally speaking, the Department prefers to pack the material itself for the various reasons outlined below, but this may not always be possible for reasons beyond our control:
- 6.10.1 Trained staff with the experience and the necessary 'know-how' to carry out the packing professionally and according to 'good practice' so that provenance and original order are respected. Professional staff is also trained to handle fragile documents carefully to ensure that no damage comes to them.
- 6.10.2 Boxes are carefully numbered and labelled and the right-size boxes and strength of box used.
- 6.10.3 In the case of documents it is very important to respect the original order in which they were created and used, which can so easily be lost through poor handling or 're-sorting'. Protecting the authenticity of the records ensures that essential information not only on their creation, but also on how they were kept and used is preserved and is a fundamental principle of archives management.

- 6.10.4 We are in control of what material is being packed as donors will sometimes, (especially if they are under pressure to vacate a premises), want to pack certain material which is not relevant to the Library.
- 6.10.5 Through handling the material while packing we are in the best position to assess its condition and segregate the boxes that will need to be quarantined and sent for disinfestation.
- 6.11 Concurrently, the SC Manager prepares an instrument of donation outlining the terms and conditions of the donation, which will be sent to the donor for approval and signature, along with a letter on a UM letterhead acknowledging the gift and thanking the donor(s) for his generosity. A donation agreement template exists but this needs to be adjusted according to the type of donated material and the conditions placed by the donor. With digitisation in mind, the donor will also be asked whether he would like to transfer copyright to UM; in which case this will also need to be included in the donation agreement. The following steps are followed:
- 6.11.1 SC Manager prepares the donation agreement and on completion sends it via attached mail, (with Director of Library Services copied in), to UM Legal Services Office for approval.
- 6.11.2 Any amendments suggested by Legal Office are made by the SC Manager and the amended document is sent back to the Legal Office for their *written* approval to send to client.
- 6.11.3 When the written 'go-ahead' is received the SC Manager asks the Director of Library Services for his *written* approval to send the agreement.
- 6.11.4 On receipt of this the SC Manager sends the contract to the Donor, with a covering letter outlining what needs to be done.
- 6.12 When the donation happens to be a particularly prestigious one, the SC Department normally organises a formal 'handing over' of the material. This normally takes place in the Library Boardroom in the presence of the Rector or Pro-Rector or both. The SC Manager handles its organisation (e.g. sending out invitations, photographer, preparing text for press release, etc.) and together with her team is responsible for creating a display with captions of some choice items from the collection on the day.
- 6.13 The SC Manager is responsible for marketing the collection and prepares the necessary 'write-up' which she sends to the Outreach Department for uploading on the following media:
- 6.13.1 Library's webpage under 'Notices' (<www.um.edu.mt/library>);
- 6.13.2 Library's fb page (<www.facebook.com/um.libraryservices>);
- 6.13.3 Library "Newspoint Extra: Library newsletter"

6.13.4 UM's news portal *Newspoint* (www.um.edu.mt/newspoint)

Also sometimes placed on the:

6.13.5 Campus electronic billboard

6.13.6 In local newspapers

6.13.7 An article on the donation published on the Junior College Library rag, "BOOKmark".

6.14 The SC Department is responsible for processing the material and for keeping the donor(s) informed on their progress. At this stage some choice items from the collection are also digitised and uploaded on the Library's institutional repository OAR@UM in order to excite interest among researchers by giving the material maximum exposure.

7. REFERENCES

- 7.1 Millar, Laura A. *Archives principles and practice*. Principles and practice in records management and archives series. London: Facet, 2010.
- 7.2 Pinniger, David. *Managing pests in paper-based collections*. *British Library Preservation Advisory Centre*. May 2012. 16 Jan. 2019. www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/managing_pests_in_paper-based_collections.pdf.
- 7.3 Samut-Tagliaferro, Mary. *About Special Collections and Archives at the University of Malta Library*. *BookMark* : University of Malta, Junior College Library. 12 (Apr/May) 2017. 7-8 p. 9 Nov. 2017. < <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/17965>>.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES/WORKSHEETS

8.1 N/A