

Library UTS Library Special Collections Guidelines

Issued by: UTS Library
Dated: 25/05/25

1. Purpose

The UTS Library maintains a small number of special collections significant to the UTS community. The special collections preserve, protect, and provide access to unique materials that support and advance teaching, learning, and research at UTS. These guidelines ensure that the collections are managed responsibly and made accessible while preserving their integrity. The Special Collections Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the broader UTS Library Collections Guidelines.

2. Scope

These guidelines apply to all staff and Library clients as per Student Rule 18 who interact with or manage materials within the special collections. They cover acquisition, access, usage, description and discovery, and preservation.

3. Acquisition of Materials

UTS Library does not typically seek to develop its special collections. Existing collections are closed by default and will not accept additional items. The University Librarian must approve open collections.

New collections will be considered only if there is significant justification, and they meet the specified selection criteria. Acquisitions may result from purchase, donation, bequest, or exchange. Special collections are established by approval from the University Librarian.

a) Selection Criteria

A special collection at UTS Library is defined as a discrete, finite group of items which must be kept together due to a significant provenance or subject strength.

Special collections will only be acquired based on one or more of the following criteria:

i. Aligns with UTS Mission and Vision:

Collections reflect and support the University's mission, vision, history, and academic goals, contributing to the institution's distinctive identity.

ii. Supports UTS Teaching and Research:

Collections are relevant to the University's research interests and learning priorities, offering clients unique knowledge in key academic areas.

iii. Connects to the UTS Region:

Collections have a strong and significant link to the University's region or its development within the region, strengthening the institution's reputation and partnerships and community engagement.

b) Donations

Donations are accepted according to the UTS Library's Collections Guidelines and are subject to approval by the University Librarian or their delegate. The Library reserves the right to decline materials that do not meet the selection criteria or are deemed unsuitable.

c) Deselection (Withdrawals)

Deselection (withdrawal) of items from the Library's special collections is rare. It may occur if an item's condition has deteriorated beyond repair or is no longer suitable for the UTS Library. Such withdrawal will only occur under exceptional circumstances and on the authority of the Manager, Collections and Discovery. The withdrawal of a full collection requires approval from the University Librarian.

4. Description and Discovery

a) Cataloguing and Metadata

All items are catalogued according to national and international standards. Consistent metadata is used to ensure discoverability and ease of access for clients, identifying all items that belong to each collection.

b) Digital Access and Digitisation

Special collections items may be digitised and added to the Library's or other digital platforms to increase visibility and accessibility for clients. This will only occur when it is deemed necessary and feasible, in accordance with the UTS Library Collections Guidelines [see Section 5. Digitised Collections].

5. Access to Special Collections

a) Appointments

Access to special collections materials is by appointment only. Clients must request items and nominate a viewing date at least 2 days in advance. Items can be viewed Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, for up to 4 hours at a time, unless prior arrangement has been made.

b) Access Restrictions:

Special collection items are for use in the Library only. Some materials, including items not belonging to a special collection, may have additional restrictions due to their fragility, rarity, cultural sensitivity, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) concerns or copyright requirements. Staff will guide clients regarding any such restrictions.

c) Conditions of Use

Clients must agree to the following:

- i. No pens, food, or drink are allowed when viewing special collections material.
- ii. Materials must be handled with clean, washed hands, or with gloves provided by the Library.
- iii. Materials must be handled with care and are not to be marked in any way.
- iv. Photocopying or scanning is not permitted unless approved by staff and may be limited to preserve the materials.
- v. Photographing material is only permitted without using a flash and with the approval of staff.
- vi. Items must be viewed in the location designated by Library staff.
- vii. Items are not to be left unsupervised and must be returned to Library staff when leaving the designated location.

6. Preservation and Conservation

a) Storage

Special collections materials will be stored in a climate-controlled environment, with measures in place to manage temperature, humidity, light exposure, environmental hazards (e.g. mould), and unnecessary movement or excessive handling. Storage is in accordance with the National Archives of Australia standard.

b) Conservation

The Library will regularly assess the physical condition of materials. Conservation treatments will be undertaken as needed and external assistance may be sought if required. The Library

will not write on or affix identification markers (e.g. barcodes, call numbers, item labels, etc.) to any part of special collections items.

c) Digital Preservation:

Wherever feasible, high-risk or frequently requested materials will be digitised to preserve the originals and enhance access.

7. Reproduction and Copyright

a) Photocopying and Scanning

Photocopying, scanning, or photographing is not permitted unless approved by Library staff. Reproduction is limited by the condition of the material, copyright and ICIP restrictions, and donor agreements.

b) Copyright and ICIP Compliance

Clients are responsible for obtaining copyright clearance for any use of reproduced materials. Where material includes culturally sensitive ICIP, clients are responsible for obtaining permission of the creator or the First Nation peoples that own the material.

8. Ethical Considerations

a) Cultural Sensitivity

Special collections materials may include items of cultural significance to specific communities. The Library will engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure respectful handling, display, and access.

b) Historically Sensitive Material

Special collections may include items that reflect views, language, or attitudes considered inappropriate or offensive by today's standards. These items are preserved as part of the historical record and to provide insight into the context in which they were created. The Library will engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure appropriate and considered display.

Notes

Date adopted: 15/05/25

Date commenced: 15/05/25

Administrator: Simon Cootes

Review date: 15/05/26

Amendment History

Section/clause	Changes	Date approved