

GREATER MANCHESTER ARCHIVES LOCAL STUDIES AND ARCHIVES PARTNERSHIP

DE-ACCESSIONING AND REAPPRAISAL POLICY

Version		
V.0.02 (22 Nov 2012)		

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy and covers the district archive and local studies services for the following local authority archive services in Greater Manchester:

- Bolton Archives and Local Studies
- Bury Archives and Local & Family History Service
- Greater Manchester County Record Office
- Manchester Archives and Local Studies
- Oldham Local Studies and Archives
- Stockport Local Heritage Library
- Tameside Local Studies and Archives
- Trafford Local Studies
- Rochdale Local Studies and Archives
- Salford City Archives and Local History Library
- Wigan Archives and Local Studies

The services aims to locate, collect, preserve and make as widely available as possible archive and local studies collections for the benefit of present and future generations. All services contribute to the aims and objectives of their parent organisations.

1.2 The policy only covers archive collections. It does not include museum / object collections, book collections (including local studies) or special collections.

1.3 Archive services have acquired many hundreds of archive collections since establishment, comprising deposited collections, donated collections and purchased collections.

1.4 In order to provide the best level of care for the archives in our custody, and the best level of service to the public these services reserves the right to re-evaluate our holdings on a periodic basis.

1.5 Records identified for de-accessioning as part of reappraisal will largely have been acquired many years ago, at a time when some archive services had very broad collection policies and storage space was readily available.

1.6 No records will be de-accessioned without careful research and consideration.

1.7 Appraisal is a quality control mechanism. It is a desirable and positive activity not a necessary evil.

1.8 This policy covers both traditional paper records and born digital records.

1.9 The criteria in section 2 can also be used to help inform decisions about collecting new archives.

1.10 This policy will help support archive services meet the Archives Accreditation Standard.

2. Reappraisal criteria

- 2.1 **Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Collections Development Policy and Strategy.** Do the records meet the collecting policy?
- 2.2 **Freedom of Information.** All appraisal decisions should be made in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. This is particularly important for donated collections, public records and local government records.
- 2.3 **Public Records.** Appraisal should be carried out in accordance with the Public Records Acts and guidelines produced by National Archives.
- 2.4 **Local Government .** Please use 'Guide for identifying and preserving Greater Manchester Local Government records with historical and research value' (Sep 2006) to inform appraisal decisions.
- 2.5 **Approval.** Each archive service should set out the approval process for de-accessioning and reappraisal here

EXAMPLE

Appraisal decisions can be made by the Archivists. Any complex decisions should be referred to the Collections Manager or Archives+ Manager. If material is to be transferred to a more appropriate repository or returned to a depositor then approval must be sought from a member of the Libraries, Information and Archives Leadership Team.

- 2.6 **Relevance.** Are the records still relevant to the archive service.
- 2.7 **Duplication.** Are the records duplicates or do they duplicate information that is already held in another format or context?
- 2.8 **Condition.** Have the records deteriorated beyond real usefulness? Is there a danger that we can't care for the records?
- 2.9 **Restrictions.** Are there any externally imposed restrictions such as donor agreements or other legal issues that apply to this material?
- 2.10 **Accessibility.** How would de-accessioning the material effect public access to information?
- 2.11 **Suitability.** Are the records better suited to another archive or library?
- 2.12 **Significance.** Assess the historical significance of the collection. This requires knowledge and understanding of customers' potential research needs. Beware of patterns of usage.
- 2.13 **Consultation.** For community collections please consult with the community about what they want to be kept. We need to be responsive to community needs. Consider consulting with academics or local experts on collections on specialist collections.
- 2.14 **Guidelines.** Are there any local or national guidelines on the records. For example Manchester Archives have produced guidelines on the selection of Building Control records.

3. De-accessioning

- 3.1 Records to be de-accessioned may be returned to the depositor, transferred to other archives or libraries, offered for sale or destroyed, subject to the following considerations:
 - 3.1.1 Records must be free of any legal impediments.
 - 3.1.2 Records will not be de-accessioned if this is contrary to any written agreement between the archive service and the depositor.
 - 3.1.3 Reasonable attempts will be made to contact the donor when records are considered for de-accession.
 - 3.1.4 Reasonable attempts will be made to determine if other archives or libraries have an interest in the records.
 - 3.1.5 No private sale or gifts of records will be made to staff at the archive services or their immediate families.
 - 3.1.6 Any proceeds from the sale of records will be used solely to further the preservation and development of collections.
- 3.2 If the acquisition of the records had been reported to the Historical Manuscripts Commission the archive service will notify the HMC of subsequent changes.
- 3.3 Methods of disposal will be decided by the Collections Manager or Archives+ Manager. All material identified for destruction that contains personal and sensitive information must be confidentially destroyed.
- 3.4 The reappraisal and de-accessioning process is thoroughly documented and these records can be inspected upon request to the Collections Manager or Archives+ Manager. Staff will use the 'Appraisal' field in their Collections Management System where appropriate to record decisions.
- 3.5 Any objects to be de-accessioned in an archive collection should follow this procedure:
 - 3.5.1 Inform the donor or depositor and offer to transfer the object to them.
 - 3.5.2 Identify potential accredited museum recipients, and approach them directly.
 - 3.5.3 Place a note in the Museums Association website and in the Museums Journal, allow two months for a response.
 - 3.5.4 If a new location can be found, agree terms and conditions of transfer.
 - 3.5.5 Ensure transfer of legal title to recipient (if the item was donated).
 - 3.5.6 Document the process.

DE-ACCESSIONING CHECKLIST

- De-accessioning applies to entire accessions only – this checklist does not apply to routine weeding within accessions.
- We need to create a paper trail to fully document reappraisal and de-accessioning decisions.
- These records will be made available to the public upon request – bear this in mind and make sure that the information you record is clear and accurate.
- Use the de-accessioning form as a guide, to make sure that you are taking everything into consideration.
- The de-accessioning form must show:
 - A unique number for the specific de-accessioning decision
 - the accession number and description of the records
 - reasons for de-accessioning
 - name of person making de-accessioning recommendations and dates
 - that searches of donor/depositor records have been made to establish who donated/deposited the records
 - whether the archive service is entitled to de-accession
 - that we have tried to contact the donor/depositor for permission
 - the signature of the manager giving approval for de-accessioning and the date this was given
 - how records were disposed of (transferred to another repository, returned to depositor, destroyed, put up for sale).
- If you haven't been able to establish provenance or depositor details, make this clear.
- Keep any correspondence relating to the de-accessioning process (e.g. letters to/from the depositor) with the De-accessioning Form.
- Cross-reference from your original accession record (whether on your Collections Management System and/or the Accessions Register) to the de-accessioning information and vice versa.
- If the accession was originally reported to the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) the de-accessioning archivist should notify the HMC of any changes.
- If details of the accession appear elsewhere (e.g. Past Finder, A2A or on-line catalogue), you will need to change these. Follow the usual Past Finder editing guidelines.

DE-ACCESSIONING RECORD

No. 2012/

Accession number	Description of records	
Donor/depositor		Status of Donation/Deposit
Permission given for de-accessioning?		Date received
Still relevant to Collection Policy?		
Information available elsewhere?		
Condition of records?		
Any legal restrictions/considerations?		
Relevant to another repository? (Complete a transfer form for accessions going to another repository)		
Return to donor/depositor?		
Destroy?		
De-accessioning archivist / staff member	Approved by <i>Insert Manager Name</i> (signature/date)	