

RCSEng Museums Research Policy

Collections: The Museums of The Royal College of Surgeons of England, including the Hunterian Collection; the College Museum; the Anatomy Collection; Pathology Collection; the Odontological Collection; the Historical Instrument Collection; the Microscope Slide Collection; the Special Collections and associated reserve collections.

Governing body: The Council of Royal College of Surgeons of England ('the College') / Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection

Previously approved by Trustees of the Hunterian Collection: 1 February 2012

Previously approved by College Council: 8 March 2012

Date approved by Trustees of the Hunterian Collection: 9 February 2022

Date approved by Library, Museums and Archive Committee: 24 March 2022

Date approved by College Council: 14 April 2022

Date for review: March 2027

1. Scope and purpose of the policy

- 1.1. The College plays a vital role in stimulating research in surgery, medical humanities and allied fields.
- 1.2. The College holds collections of outstanding medical, scientific, historical and cultural significance. Its aim is to use these collections:
 - 1.2.1. To enhance the College's reputation by raising awareness of surgeons and their work in society.
 - 1.2.2. To aid the professional work of the College by providing training resources.
 - 1.2.3. To facilitate and generate excellent medical, scientific, historical and other research.
 - 1.2.4. To support public engagement with, and understanding of, surgery, its history and practice and related arts and sciences.
- 1.3. Research enhances collections knowledge, and thereby increases the value of the collections by supporting the engagement, professional support and collection development functions of the Museums.
- 1.4. The purpose of this policy is therefore to encourage and foster excellent research into the College's Museums' collections and practice, and to lay out procedures to ensure such research is undertaken in a sustainable way.
- 1.5. This policy does not cover the use of Museums collections for teaching; research activity relating to Library and Surgical Information Services material; nor surgical/clinical research or fellowships undertaken by or for other areas of the College.
- 1.6. Research may be based on collections, texts, objects or practices. The College actively encourages research from and between a wide range of disciplines, including:

- 1.6.1. Biomedical (especially anatomical, pathological and dental, and work that benefits patients).
- 1.6.2. Biological (especially zoological and taxonomical).
- 1.6.3. Historical (especially medical history and genealogy).
- 1.6.4. Museological (including conservation, education and audience evaluation)
- 1.6.5. Medical Humanities.

2. Access

- 2.1. Research may be carried out by College staff, external users, or both: research partnerships and collaboration are actively encouraged.
- 2.2. External users should be bona fide researchers, broadly defined. This includes Fellows and Members of the College; staff and students from higher education and other research institutes; and independent scholars with specific research questions.
- 2.3. The College is committed to providing an excellent service to remote users, and potential researchers are encouraged to use the free online resources before making an approach (especially <http://surgicat.rcseng.ac.uk>). All Museums research enquires will be responded to within five working days, unless otherwise advertised. Detailed feedback may take longer, and will depend on staff resources.
- 2.4. A number of the College's significant paintings will be/are displayed in the Hunterian Museum and can be studied on the wall or in the showcases during opening hours. Paintings in store or elsewhere may be viewed upon request. Paintings will neither be taken down nor removed from frames.
- 2.5. Physical access to collections will be dependent on resources available: space and staff time.
- 2.6. Users should apply for access to material in good time: usually a minimum of ten working days for museum objects, collections stored off site will take longer (although see 2.9 and 2.11 below for extra notice required for invasive and prolonged work).
- 2.7. The benefits of access should be balanced with the long-term integrity and rarity of the collections, which must be safeguarded for future users. All material will be assessed for conservation needs, and the College reserves the right to refuse access to material that is unprocessed, fragile or otherwise unstable.
- 2.8. All users requiring physical access to Museums material must sign and abide by stated handling procedures; those applying to access stored museum material must complete a method statement and risk assessment before commencing on-site research.
- 2.9. Invasive research will require the permission of the Library Museums and Archives Committee (LMAC), and in the case of the Hunterian Collection, the Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection. A précis of the research should be submitted to LMAC (and the Board) via the Director of Museums and Special Collections. The précis should include research objectives, evidence that there is no alternative source for the data, size of sample(s), method statement, impact upon the specimen(s), resource implications and planned outputs. Invasive procedures will be undertaken or supervised by College staff. This process may take up to four months.

- 2.10. Loans of museums material for research purposes may be considered, where resources and the integrity/rarity of the material permit. Applications should be made to the Director of Museums and Special Collections in the first instance. All costs will be borne by the borrower. See also the College's loans policy for museums.
- 2.11. Major research projects will require the permission of the LMAC. A précis of the research, including timescale, resource implications, and planned outputs, should be submitted to the LMAC via the Director of Museums and Special Collections. College staff will be credited as members of the research team. This process may take up to four months.
- 2.12. Any ethical issues will be addressed by LMAC before the research commences. In particular material and information will be supplied in compliance with data protection and freedom of information legislation and regulations. (See also 4.3 below on human remains.)

3. Resources and photography

- 3.1. While fostering research excellence, RCSEng Museums will seek to ensure that such activity is cost neutral, and will charge for space and staff time accordingly. As far as possible Fellows, Members and Affiliates of the College will not be charged.
- 3.2. The College offers various items of equipment for use by museum collection researchers including microscopes, measuring instruments and protective equipment. Charges will apply, and users are liable for loss or damage.
- 3.3. Laptops can be brought into the Museums but not logged into the College's network. Electronic equipment that requires mains connection must be checked and approved. It is therefore recommended that only essential electronic equipment is brought, and details should be submitted in advance. The College will not be liable for loss or damage to external users' possessions. Public lockers are available for personal possessions
- 3.4. Users may apply to the Director of Museums and Special Collections to undertake photography or filming of stored collections for research and education. Copyright of such images would be assigned to RCSEng which would in turn assign reproduction permission to the researcher. A further application must be made to reproduce for publication, broadcast, or other purposes. As far as possible College object photography images will be supplied (charges will apply). In the case of Hunterian Collection material, permission must be obtained for photography or filming from the Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection, via the Director of Museums and Special Collections.

4. Human remains

- 4.1. Research on human remains less than 100 years old must be undertaken in accordance with the Human Tissue Act (2004) and Human Tissue Authority guidance.
- 4.2. UK Government Guidance on the use of human remains will be followed.
- 4.3. External users will only be granted permission to undertake human remains research once ethical clearance from their own institution is demonstrated.

5. Outputs

- 5.1. RCSEng Museums actively encourage dissemination of research through presentations, exhibitions and publications.
- 5.2. The College will require copies of data gleaned from research on its collections or practice to be made available to future researchers, included in the Collection Management Database and where appropriate made available in the online catalogue.
- 5.3. The College will require a copy (virtual or physical) of all publications resulting in part or entirely from research on its collections or practice.
- 5.4. All outputs are subject to compliance with all intellectual property rights resting in the material used. Where these lie with the College, researchers will be advised as to any associated restrictions and obligations.
- 5.5. "The Royal College of Surgeons of England" (and/or if appropriate the "Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection") should be acknowledged in all outputs.
- 5.6. In providing permission to reproduce material obtained from the Museums the College does not assume any responsibility for infringement of copyright in the material which may be held by others, and the publisher assumes all responsibility for any claims made under copyright legislation.
- 5.7. RCSEng Museums will not support research that is deemed in its process or outputs to risk the College's reputation.