



RCS

MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES

ADVANCING SURGICAL STANDARDS

Museums and Archives Research Policy

Collections: The Museums and Archives of The Royal College of Surgeons of England, including Deposited and Corporate Archives; the Hunterian Collection; the College Museum; the Wellcome Museum of Anatomy and Pathology; the Odontological Collection; the Historical Instrument 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

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

Date approved by College Council: 8 March 2012

Date for review: March 2017

1. Scope and purpose of the policy

- 1.1. The College plays a vital role in stimulating research in surgery 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.
- 1.3. 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 and Archives.
- 1.4. The purpose of this policy is therefore to encourage and foster excellent research into the College's Museums and Archives 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 and Archives 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).

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. 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 and Archives research enquires will be responded to within five working days. Detailed feedback may take longer, and will depend on staff resources.
- 2.4. A number of the College's significant paintings 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 two working days for archival material, and ten working days for museum objects (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 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 and Archives material must sign and abide by stated handling procedures; those applying to access stored museum material must complete a risk assessment before commencing on-site research.
- 2.9. Invasive research will require the permission of the Museums and Archives Committee ('MAAC'), 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 the MAAC (and the Board) via the Director of Museums and Archives. The précis should include research objectives, evidence that there is no alternative source for the data, size of sample(s), 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 Archives in the first instance. All costs will be borne by the borrowing institution. See also the College's loans policy for museums.
- 2.11. Major research projects will require the permission of the MAAC. A précis of the research, including timescale, resource implications, and planned outputs, should be submitted to the MAAC via the Director of Museums and Archives. 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 the MAAC 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, Museums and Archives 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. 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. Document scanning facilities and access to the internet are available in the College library by prior arrangement.
- 3.3. Laptops can be brought into the Museums and Archives but not logged into the College's network. Other 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. College will not be liable for loss or damage to external users' possessions.
- 3.4. Users may apply to the Director of Museums and Archives to undertake photography or filming of stored collections for research and education. 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 Archives.
- 3.5. Archive users may pay a fee for daily or weekly permission to photograph material if there are no copyright or other restrictions; advance arrangements should be made.

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. Museums and Archives 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 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 and Archives, College does not assume any responsibility from 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. Museums and Archives will not support research that is deemed in its process or outputs to risk the College’s reputation.