

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Archive Collection Development Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) is dedicated to the encouragement of the study and the advancement of the science and practice of obstetrics and gynaecology. It was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1947 and is a registered charity (No. 13280). The College is governed by an elected Council. It

- improves and maintains proper standards in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology for the benefit of the public.
- educates medical practitioners in all aspects of obstetrics and gynaecology.
- promotes study and research into obstetrics and gynaecology and publishes the results.
- conducts examinations for doctors wishing to specialise.
- maintains a register of its Fellows and Members and those undertaking its continuing professional development programme.
- reviews the suitability of training programmes for membership, specialist registration and subspecialties.
- advises the government and other public bodies on matters of healthcare relating to the specialty.
- provides statements and publishes reports on issues of public importance relevant to obstetrics and gynaecology.
- organises scientific meetings, congresses and courses in the UK and overseas.
- maintains a library and historical collection of records.
- produces evidence based guidelines for appropriate practice and procedures.
- publishes patient information.

1.2 The College selects, maintains and preserves an archive collection in order to meet the long-term business, accountability, historical and cultural needs of the College, its main stakeholders, and the wider public.

1.3 This collection development policy was approved by the College Council on in November 2005.

1.4 The College reserves the right to modify this policy at any stage. It will be reviewed in 2010.

2. RCOG Records

2.1 The College's main priority is to document its own corporate history. The vast majority of records preserved in the archive are the product of the College's business and administrative activities. They are selected for permanent preservation in accordance with a series of retention and disposal agreements made between the Archivist and responsible members of staff. Records are assessed in order to determine their long-term evidential and informational value for business purposes, governance, decision-making and accountability.

2.2. In addition, the College recognises that its records form part of the cultural and heritage assets of the specialty, of medicine as a whole, and of the wider community, and takes this into account when selecting records for permanent preservation.

2.3 The College actively seeks to complement its official historical record, and welcomes donations of material (photographs, memorabilia, etc.) relating to its corporate history, where these do not duplicate existing holdings.

3. Records of related organisations

3.1 The RCOG will consider acquiring the historical records of organisations with which it has a strong administrative or organisational link. Examples are organisations that are, or have been, based physically within the College, those that have shared its administrative systems, or are predecessor or successor bodies to functions of the College.

3.2 The College may also consider the acquisition of the historical records of other organisations in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology. Priority will be given to material that builds closely on existing collection strengths and/or is in danger of neglect or destruction. Where the College cannot itself undertake physical custody of such collections, it will work in partnership with other organisations to encourage good stewardship, and/or endeavour to find another suitable place of deposit.

3.3 The College will not acquire organisational records that are still in current or semi-current use by their originator(s).

4. Personal papers

4.1 The College will consider acquiring the personal papers of past Officers, Fellows and Members of the RCOG, where these have a strong relationship to the corporate history of the College, of the specialty, or where they illustrate representative careers in obstetrics and gynaecology. If it considers that the papers of a particular individual meet these criteria, the College may actively seek their acquisition.

4.2 Other personal papers will be collected only under exceptional circumstances. Priority will be given to those closely related to existing holdings and/or those that are in danger of neglect or destruction.

5. General considerations: acquisition

5.1 The College will not seek to compete for papers with other recognised archive repositories. It welcomes the strength and diversity to be found in national and international archival provision for the history of medicine, and will work co-operatively with other repositories in order to determine the most appropriate place of deposit for records relating to the history of obstetrics and gynaecology.

5.2 The RCOG will collect material from, and/or relating to, the United Kingdom, and also from other countries where it has had a significant influence. It will also, when appropriate, document the international character of the careers of Officers, Fellows and Members.

5.3 Records in any format will be considered for acquisition (e.g. hand-written, typescript, published and electronic records, plans, drawings, paintings, photographs, film, sound and video recordings). Material will not, however, be acquired where adequate storage, preservation, cataloguing and access cannot be achieved with the College's existing or foreseeable resources.

5.4 The following will not normally be considered for acquisition: records which are closely associated by provenance with those already housed in another recognised archive repository; collections of reproduction or duplicate documents, the originals of which are already housed in another recognised archive repository; the institutional records of central or local government departments, educational institutions, hospitals or health authorities.

5.5 The College will not acquire any item unless it is satisfied that the donor or depositor has the appropriate authority to give or transfer it to the College and, in the case of a donation, that the College can acquire a valid title to the item.

5.6 The College will not acquire by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange any item unless it is satisfied that it has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws.

5.7 The College will generally require legal ownership of all acquisitions to be transferred to the College. Long-term loan of archival collections will be considered only under exceptional circumstances, and under terms formally agreed with the owners prior to transfer

5.8 Donors of records will also be required to sign a formal deposit agreement and/or place in writing the terms of the gift, as agreed with the College Archivist, prior to transfer.

5.9 Purchases will be made only of documents of outstanding importance.

5.10 The College will assert title in all its collections. It will formally agree terms of copyright and reproduction rights with donors, authors or makers where appropriate.

6. General considerations: disposal

6.1 The College accepts the principle that there should be a strong presumption against the disposal of any documents in its custody.

6.2 It may, however, evaluate and select for destruction those deemed not to be worthy of permanent preservation, such as duplicate or ephemeral material. Formal transfer agreements will include the right of the College to dispose of such items.

6.3 If it is found that any records belong more properly in another recognised archive repository, the College reserves the right to transfer them there, wherever possible with the consent of the owner, and with the knowledge of both governing bodies.

6.4 If the College becomes unable, either temporarily or permanently, to provide proper care for any records, it reserves the right to transfer them, wherever possible with the consent of the owner, and with the knowledge of both governing bodies, to another appropriate archive repository.