

# **Oxford University Archives Access Policy**

## **Introduction**

1. The University Archives is obliged to meet the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and any other relevant legislation. Access to information in the Archives is provided in accordance with these Acts and related guidance issued by the Information Commissioner and other appropriate authorities. In the following, 'records' is used to mean both the records in the Archives and the information contained therein.

2. The provisions in clauses 3-6 below apply to use of records in the Archives for research purposes. Where information is required for administrative purposes, access will be given to records of any age to persons acting on behalf of the University department or section of the central administration which created them or its successor; if appropriate, records may be returned temporarily to that department or section. Those given access to records for administrative purposes must comply with relevant legislation, as specified above, as well as any University requirements relating to confidentiality.

## **Access for research purposes**

3. All records more than 80 years old are open to public access without restriction.

4. Records less than 80 but more than 30 years old are open to public access, subject to the following: applications for access to records will be considered on a case by case basis by the Archives which will, if appropriate, consult the team in the Council Secretariat responsible for data protection and freedom of information. Information that is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act may be withheld.

5. Access to departmental records in the Archives less than 30 years old will require the permission of the head or administrator of the University department or sub-department which created them or its successor in consultation, if necessary, with the team in the Council Secretariat responsible for data protection and freedom of information. Access to records of the University Administration and Services (UAS) and its predecessors which are less than 30 years old will require the permission of the team in the Council Secretariat responsible for data protection and freedom of information. Application in both cases should be made in the first instance to the Keeper of the Archives.

6. All users of the Archives are required to sign a form of undertaking prior to consultation of records that they will comply with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

In particular, they must agree:

- to respect the confidentiality of the data subject (assuming a lifespan of 100 years);
- not to identify data subjects without their permission;
- not to use personal data in such a way as to cause substantial damage or substantial distress to the data subject; and
- not to use personal data to support measures or decisions in respect of living people.

### **Access to an applicant's own personal data**

7. Access to an applicant's own personal data will be provided in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Application should be made to the team responsible for data protection in the Council Secretariat (data.protection@admin.ox.ac.uk).

### **Review of this policy**

8. This policy was approved by the Curators of the University Libraries in January 2015. It will be reviewed no later than January 2020

*Oxford University Archives*  
*April 2015*