

Bodleian Libraries' Preservation Policy

GLAM's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 is to provide excellent care, curation and scholarship of the University of Oxford collections, including the preservation, storage, presentation and the provision of access to the collections, together with the skills and intellectual capacity for understanding, interpretation and development.

Considering GLAM's Strategic Plan, this Preservation Policy sits within Bodleian's suite of collection management and digital policy documents, alongside Bodleian's [Special Collections Collection Development Policy](#). It focuses primarily on the care of our physical collections, and acknowledges that Digital preservation is also essential to the Libraries' ability to support current and future research, teaching and learning (see [Bodleian's Digital Preservation Policy](#)).

Activities undertaken by the Bodleian Libraries are diverse and, therefore, create a wide range of different preservation needs. This policy sets out the principles according to which the Bodleian Libraries will preserve these collections, taking into account relevant national and international standards and frameworks, such as BSI PAS 198 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections, BS EN 16893:2018 (which replaces BS5454), and BS4971:2017 *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*. The UK also works with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) via its BSI Committee B/560: Conservation of tangible cultural heritage, on which are represented the main UK heritage, museum and conservation bodies, including the UK's Institute of Conservation (Icon). All of these are supported by the Icon.

The Bodleian Libraries' Conservation & Collection Care Department (C&CC) aims to protect and preserve collections, and to enable and optimise access to them. This department also supports Bodleian's exhibitions, loans, public engagement, and digitisation programmes, amongst other operations. With the purpose of meeting our goals, C&CC apply preventive measures and conservation treatments, carry out original research, share our expertise with various fora, and produce accurate records of our work to inform current and future preservation approaches.

In order to ensure that the collections are preserved as set out by the above policies, standards, and strategies, it is the policy of the Bodleian Libraries to:

1. Foster and maintain a protective ethos of care for all our library assets.
2. Promote a common high standard of care across all Bodleian Libraries and their collections.
3. Preserve collections, where possible, by reducing the potential for deterioration and damage rather than through treatment and repair, with an understanding that conservation treatment will be necessary to allow some objects to be used.
4. Provide guidelines for Bodleian staff and other collection users, for the appropriate handling, display, study and transport of collections, and the recommended environmental conditions.
5. Take measures to prevent damage and minimise the risk of deterioration of objects wherever they are stored, handled, displayed, exhibited or loaned, in compliance with appropriate sectoral standards and meeting the appropriate loan agreements.
6. Reduce the risk of damage to the collections by pests by implementing and maintaining a comprehensive integrated pest management (IPM) programme across all Bodleian Libraries.
7. Provide systems to monitor, and to put measures in place to maintain and improve the state of the collections and the environments and spaces in which they are stored or displayed.
8. Preventive conservation requirements seek to balance, as far as possible, access and use of the collections with the need to preserve objects.

9. Assess the state of conservation of all objects required for study, display, exhibition or loan and to carry out condition assessments of the collections in storage periodically, the frequency depending on the vulnerability of the materials they contain.
10. Conservation treatments should be conducted by qualified conservators (or Conservation students under supervision) in accordance with the Icon's and international best practice and ethical guidelines.
11. Document all treatments carried out on the collection with clear and accessible records.
12. Use treatment methods that are safe, stable, and use tested materials that, where possible, do not compromise either future conservation treatment or scientific examination, nor the authenticity, nor the integrity of the object.
13. Use scientific and technical examination, and instrumental analysis in order to maintain and improve the preservation and treatment of the collections.
14. Reconcile Conservation guidelines and measures with Bodleian's strategy to minimise the unnecessary use of energy.
15. Use materials that are not believed to pose a current or future health hazard and that can be re-used or disposed of in a sustainable manner.

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