

## HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

### HMC Standard for Record Repositories

#### Third edition, 2001

Adopted by Cambridgeshire County Council 28 October 2003

#### Interpretation

For the purposes of this document the following interpretations apply:

*Records* means all archives, records or documents, whether individual items, series or collections, and of whatever format or medium

*Record repository* means a record office, library, museum or other institution holding records which are open to public inspection.  
(It should be noted that in the British Standard 5454 ‘repository’ means the storage accommodation only.)

*Finding aids* means reference works (in manual or computerised form) such as general guides to, or lists, inventories or schedules of the records, describing them either collectively or as individual items, together with indexes to their contents

*Preservation* means the protection of records against damage or deterioration

*Conservation* means the application of technical treatment or repair to the physical form of damaged or deteriorated records.

*Professionally qualified archivists and conservators* means those having a professional qualification or specific training or equivalent experience recognised by the Society of Archivists

In the attached table the text of the **Standard** is set out in the **first column**, with comment as to Cambridgeshire Archives Service’s status measured against the Standard in the subsequent columns.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>In place</b>
<b>Section 1 Constitution and finance</b>		
1.1 In creating or maintaining a record repository the aim is to achieve a permanent establishment for the care and public inspection of records, based on sound management and firm financial guarantees.	Implied in the predecessor Councils' establishment of Record Offices, and the continued use of powers in the Local Government (Records) Act 1965	YES
1.2 A record repository's source of authority should be found in one of the following documents: (a) an Act of Parliament (b) a Royal Charter (c) a decision or resolution formally recorded in the minutes of the central council, board or committee of its overall governing body (d) a charitable trust deed approved by the Charity Commissioners, or a will or similar document establishing an endowment for the repository.	Powers (reserved save in special circumstances to a County Council) to provide archives services are contained in the Local Government (Records) Act 1965.  CCC adopted policy 1994	YES
1.3 The archivist in charge of the record repository should draw up, and the governing body or its appointed council, board or committee should approve, a statement of the objectives of the record repository and of the services which it aims to provide.	Contained in Policy	YES
1.4 The governing body should delegate to the archivist in charge powers to manage the record repository, to negotiate independently with all owners and transferors of records, and respond to enquirers, and to develop and implement policies concerning the record repository, under the governing body's general direction	Delegated through the Director of Education Libraries and Heritage to the Head of Heritage & County Archivist	YES
1.5 The archivist in charge should have an effective line of communication with the governing body and a position within the overall administrative structure which will enable the effective promotion of the record repository's declared objectives (see 1.3).	In place - through the Service Development Group, the Member(s) charged with responsibility for liaison with Heritage Services, and the Director ELH	YES
1.6 The archivist in charge should be responsible to the governing body for an identifiable annual budget	In place	YES

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>In place</b>
<b>Section 2 Staff</b>		
<p>2.1 In determining the staff complement of the record repository the governing body should take into account its declared objectives (see 1.3) and the following minimum requirements:</p> <p>(a) to keep the records safe and to make them available for public inspection (see section 4)</p> <p>(b) to advise the governing body and, where relevant, other owners of the records on their care, and to prepare adequate finding aids to the records (see 4.7)</p> <p>(c) to take all necessary practical steps for the preservation and conservation of the records.</p>	<p>(c) – in place</p> <p>(a), (b) The Service’s revenue budget is sufficient to employ only enough archivist and ancillary staff to ensure (a) and (b) at the most basic level.</p>	[YES]
<p>2.2 Beyond the very smallest, record repositories accordingly require the services of</p> <p>(a) one or more professionally qualified archivists with training or experience relevant to the kind of records held</p> <p>(b) one or more professionally qualified conservators</p> <p>(c) one or more non-professional archives or records assistants, and appropriate clerical staff</p> <p>(d) support staff, who may include typist(s), keyboard operator(s), porter(s) and cleaner(s).</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p>	YES
<p>2.3 In the case of a small repository where no appropriately qualified professional staff can be employed, the governing body should formally seek regular advice on such matters as acquisition, storage, conservation and cataloguing from a professionally qualified archivist or conservator in another repository or from the Historical Manuscripts Commission. In Scotland small repositories may seek advice from the National Archives of Scotland.</p>	NOT APPLICABLE	N/A
<p>2.4 The number and categories of staff employed in any record repository should be commensurate with the extent and nature of the records held and with the intensity of their use.</p>	See comment at 2.1 above	[YES]
<p>2.5 Allowance should be made for the need to maintain a service, including proper invigilation (see 4.9), during staff leave and other unavoidable absences.</p>	See comment at 2.1 above	[YES]

<b><u>Standard</u></b>	<b><u>Comment</u></b>	<b><u>In place</u></b>
<b>Section 3 Acquisition</b>		
3.1 In acquiring records every effort should be made to avoid conflict and duplication with the collecting policies of other record repositories.	This is our practice (see Collecting policy)	YES
3.2 The archivist in charge should draw up, and the governing body should approve, a clearly defined statement of collecting policy which indicates the subject areas within which records are sought and acquired, any geographical restrictions affecting the scope of material collected, and the various media for which appropriate storage and access facilities are provided (see 3.9).	See Annex 3, attached – to be approved together with acceptance of the Standard	[PLANNED] YES
3.3 The statement should be reviewed as necessary by the governing body to take account of any changed circumstances.	Suggest review at least every five years (see Collecting Policy)	YES
3.4 The statement should be made publicly available in the record repository, and a copy may be sent to the Historical Manuscripts Commission.	To be achieved immediately upon formal acceptance	[PLANNED] YES
3.5 Acquisition should not be attempted outside the terms of the statement of collecting policy.	This is our practice	YES
3.6 In seeking or acquiring records the archivist in charge should keep in mind the appropriateness of the record repository as a suitable place for their custody and consultation and respect the principles of archival integrity	This is our practice – see Collecting Policy	YES
3.7 No records may be acquired or disposed of in contravention of the terms of any current legislation and in particular the Public Records Acts, the Manorial and Tithe Documents Rules, the Parochial Registers and Records Measure, and corresponding legislation in Scotland and Northern Ireland.	This is our practice – see Collecting Policy	YES
3.8 No attempt should be made to secure the acquisition or removal of any records held in another record repository, except with the consent of the owner of the records and in consultation with the archivist in charge and governing body of that repository.	Included in current practice	YES
3.9 Records in a format or medium requiring special equipment for their consultation (such as microfilm, microfiche, audio-visual and machine-readable records) should not be acquired unless the record repository has, or plans soon to obtain, the necessary equipment, or is able to arrange facilities for appropriate public access elsewhere under proper invigilation.	We seek to identify third-party bodies to undertake specialist format conversion and storage of originals on our behalf, whilst we extend our ability to offer access to surrogates	YES
3.10 Before accepting records, the archivist in charge should be satisfied that the transferor has proper authority or title to transfer them.	This is our practice but in cases of difficulty, where records are in danger of from destruction if not accepted, risks will be assessed	YES
3.11 In the event of acquisition by gift or loan the governing body and the donor or owner of the records should fully inform each other in writing of any terms or conditions attaching to the transfer.	Current practice is acceptable at a basic level. Arrangements for provision of more detailed information will be in place by December 2003	[YES]
3.12 An accessions register (whether in manual or computerised form) should be kept, in which essential information on the nature and circumstances of each acquisition should be recorded. At a minimum it should include the date and terms of transfer, the name and address of the transferor, brief details of the records and any reference number necessary to allow the records themselves and any related documentation to be traced	In place	YES

3.13 Notice of every new acquisition and of any restrictions on access to it (see 4.5.4) should be made public at the earliest opportunity	Quarterly lists posted on website and information available in public search rooms	YES
3.14 If the archivist in charge intends to destroy or return to the owner or donor any duplicate or ephemeral material this should be made clear at the time of transfer.	Current practice, covered where necessary in correspondence	YES
3.15 In all other cases there is a strong presumption against the disposal, by any means, of records accepted into the record repository unless (a) it is found that they belong more properly with records in another repository, in which case they may be transferred there with the consent of the owner and the knowledge of both governing bodies (b) the repository becomes unable, either temporarily or permanently, to provide proper care for them, in which case they should be transferred, on such terms as may then be agreed in writing with the consent of the owner and of both governing bodies, to another appropriate repository with similar overall objectives (c) the owner requests their return.	Current practice	YES

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>In place</b>
<b>Section 4 Access</b>		
4.1 The governing body should provide a designated study area sufficient to satisfy normal demand for public access to the records and suitable for their inspection under constant invigilation.	It is accepted by the National Archives that the planned Historical Resource and Cultural Centre will amend the present deficiencies at County Record Office Cambridge. Huntingdon deemed basically sufficient at last inspection (see 4.3).	[YES]
4.2 The health and safety of the public must be provided for.	Regular inspections carried out	YES
4.3 Reasonable measures must be taken to meet the needs of people with disabilities. It is also desirable to make known what assistance or services are available to them.	Reasonable measures are taken and advertised. The Historical Resource and Cultural Centre and the replacement office at Huntingdon are being planned to incorporate such measures	[YES]
4.4 The governing body should provide, and ensure the proper maintenance of, any technical facilities necessary for consulting the records and appropriate to their types and quantity (see 3.9).	In place	YES
4.5 The governing body should make public the regulations for access to the records. These should conform with any statutory or official requirements concerning records for which the repository is officially approved 4.5.1 Details should be given of regular opening hours. In setting these, archive services should endeavour to take account of the needs of their users. 4.5.2 Conditions for the issue of readers' tickets (if applicable) should be stated 4.5.3 It is highly desirable that readers be required to produce written evidence of identity before being given access to unique archival documents. 4.5.4 General restrictions on access, such as any statutory or customary time-limited closure of	Regular customer surveys are carried out. Details of opening hours are published on the County Council website and made widely available. The office is a member of the County Archives Research Network which provides for registration of identity	YES

<p>the records, or any applicable derogations of closure (for example with regard to Freedom of Information or Data Protection), should also be explained in the regulations. Variations to the general rule in the case of certain categories of records or individual items may more conveniently be noted in the relevant finding aids.</p> <p>4.5.5 Readers should not take coats and bags to their study places.</p> <p>4.5.6 Readers should write with pencils only, and not write on or trace directly from any records.</p> <p>4.5.7 Provisions for the protection of the records from theft or damage during public inspection and for the prevention of unauthorised access to the records should be laid down.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place – invigilation and registered production system</p>	
<p>4.6 The governing body should, through such visitor registration processes as are in operation, make users aware of rules, regulations and other codes of conduct which apply to the use of the archive service.</p>	<p>In place</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>4.7 All records which are open to inspection by the public should be clearly described, in publicly-available finding aids. All newly created finding aids should be compatible with approved national and international standards. A copy should be filed in the National Register of Archives maintained by HMC and, in Scotland, the National Register of Archives (Scotland). Interim lists are welcome where more detailed finding aids are likely to be long deferred. It may also be helpful to provide further copies for other record repositories and libraries. The NRAs should also be informed where an electronic version of a finding aid is made publicly available to remote users over a computer network. Copies of lists of Public Records in England and Wales should be sent to the PRO.</p>	<p>See comment at 2.1 above as to finding aid creation. Systems for filing copy lists etc are in place</p>	<p>[YES]</p>
<p>4.8 The governing body should provide efficient means of delivering records for public inspection in the designated study area without undue delay and without damage to the records.</p>	<p>Systems are in place, including warnings about need to give notice for records in outstore</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>4.9 When in use the study area should be constantly supervised by enough staff to provide an effective level of invigilation of the whole area, under the direction of a professionally qualified archivist.</p>	<p>In place</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>4.10 It is desirable, and in the case of Public Records mandatory, that facilities be provided, either in the repository or by appropriate arrangement elsewhere, for making photographic or other copies of the records, with due regard to copyright. Copying should not, however, be carried out if in the opinion of the professional staff the records in question are too fragile to withstand copying. Suitable arrangements should also be made for the authentication of copies for legal and other purposes.</p>	<p>In place</p>	<p>YES</p>

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>In place</b>
<p><b>Section 5 Storage and preservation: guidelines for repositories seeking accreditation</b></p>		
<p><b>5.1 General</b></p> <p>5.1.1 These guidelines set out the conditions which record repositories, ie the whole building or those parts of a shared building used for the storage, conservation, administration and consultation of the records, are expected to meet if they are to gain official accreditation. In respect of storage accommodation they must conform broadly with the current edition of British</p>	<p>The planned Historical Resource and Cultural Centre is specified to meet the required standard. The National Archives accepts that we at present are taking all possible measures to approximate</p>	<p>[YES]</p>

<p>respect of storage accommodation they must conform broadly with the current edition of British Standard 5454, <i>Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents</i>. Copies of the British Standard, and of a Guide to its interpretation, (PD 0024:2001) are obtainable from Customer Services, BSI, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W 4 4AL (Telephone 020 8996 9001, Fax 020 8996 7001). Although most of the recommendations below are directly based on BS 5454, they should not be taken as a substitute for the fuller range of recommendations given in that Standard.</p>	<p>are taking all possible measures to approximate to the standard at Cambridge.</p> <p>The current deficiencies at Huntingdon are not as yet so serious that we are unable to meet the basic requirements of the standard. Any new build/replacement building will be planned to meet the standards to the full.</p>	
<p><b>5.2 Situation</b></p> <p>5.2.1 The repository must be free-standing or, if in a shared building, be capable of being completely isolated from other activities.</p> <p>5.2.2 Potential hazards from external sources including neighbouring properties or other parts of a shared building must be carefully assessed and appropriate defensive measures taken. BS 5454 identifies particular hazards against which precautions must be taken.</p>	<p>See 5.1 above</p>	<p>[YES]</p>
<p><b>5.3 Construction</b></p> <p>5.3.1 The repository and most especially its storage accommodation must be of robust construction of brick, stone or concrete, with adequate protection for all roofs, walls, floors, ceilings and openings against unauthorised entry, fire, flood and damp. The building should also offer effective protection against dust, pollutants and pests.</p> <p>5.3.2 Floors must be capable of bearing the weight of the records to be stored. This will vary according to the use of static or mobile racking.</p> <p>5.3.3 Plumbing, plant and drains in, above or adjacent to the strongrooms should be avoided, and services should not pass through a strongroom unless required within it.</p> <p>5.3.4 There should be a minimum of flammable finishes and fixtures.</p> <p>5.3.5 In the case of all but the newest buildings (which should provide for 15 to 20 years of accruals), a long-term storage strategy should be in place which makes provision for expansion, either on site or elsewhere, once the present storage accommodation is full.</p>	<p>see 5.1 above</p>	<p>[YES]</p>
<p><b>5.4 Security</b></p> <p>5.4.1 The perimeter and all parts of the repository must be secure against unauthorised entry and vandalism.</p> <p>5.4.2 External and strongroom doors must be of strong construction and fitted with mortice deadlocks or security locks.</p> <p>5.4.3 Access to keys must be strictly controlled by archival staff.</p> <p>5.4.4 If the strongrooms have any windows at ground floor level, or at any other level easily reached from the exterior, they should either be blocked or protected by bars or strong mesh and fitted with suitable intruder detectors and alarms.</p> <p>5.4.5 When staff are not on duty the repository and more particularly the strongrooms should be protected by intruder alarms linked to a police station or security agency.</p> <p>5.4.6 Access to the strongrooms should be restricted to archival staff and other authorised persons accompanied by them.</p>	<p>mainly in place – see 5.1 above</p>	<p>YES</p>

5.4.7 The search room must be constantly invigilated when the public are present.		
<p><b>5.5 Fire protection</b></p> <p>5.5.1 Strongrooms, including their doors, walls and ceilings, should offer 4-hour fire resistance. This requirement can only be abated if a full fire risk assessment has been conducted, in consultation with the appropriate fire safety officer or local fire service, and the overall strategy for fire protection offers a corresponding (or greater) degree of assurance</p> <p>5.5.2 Smoke detectors, preferably capable of detecting a fire in its incipient phase, with automatic fire alarms linked to the fire station or security agency should be fitted to strongrooms, plant rooms, and adjacent areas and preferably throughout the repository.</p> <p>5.5.3 No matter on which level( s) of the building the records are stored, provision should be made for the drainage of any water generated during fire-fighting, and for the extraction of any smoke resulting from a fire.</p> <p>5.5.4 Whether or not automatic fire extinction systems are fitted an adequate number of suitable aqueous and non-aqueous portable fire extinguishers must be provided in accordance with the advice of the fire prevention officer on their type and location.</p> <p>5.5.5 Electrical plant and main switches should be located outside the storage accommodation. Electrical wiring should be of recent construction and run within metal conduits. Lighting should be by fluorescent tube fitted with diffusers. Power points for necessary equipment such as vacuum cleaners or dehumidifiers may be provided within the strongroom</p> <p>5.5.6 Lifts and bookhoists should have fire-resistant doors.</p> <p>5.5.7 Flammable and hazardous chemicals must be stored in properly secure conditions according to the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive.</p> <p>5.5.8 Smoking must be strictly prohibited in the strongrooms and elsewhere throughout the repository except in areas designated and equipped for the purpose.</p>	Mainly in place – see 5.1 above	YES
<p><b>5.6 Environment and Storage: parchment and paper</b></p> <p>5.6.1 For new buildings, or those with new environmental controls, the targets throughout the strong rooms should be a constant temperature (i.e. <math>\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}</math>) within the range <math>16^{\circ}\text{C}</math>-<math>19^{\circ}\text{C}</math> for frequently used material, or [where such distinctions are possible] <math>13^{\circ}\text{C}</math>-<math>16^{\circ}\text{C}</math> for infrequently used materials (which, however, should then be allowed to acclimatize before and after use), and constant relative humidity (i.e. <math>\pm 5\%</math>) within the range 45% - 60%.</p> <p>5.6.2 In the case of buildings fitted out prior to the publication of BS 5454:2000, if a stable environment can be maintained with constant temperature and relative humidity within the range <math>13</math>-<math>18^{\circ}\text{C}</math> and 55%-65%, this will continue to be acceptable provided that no adverse effects to the records themselves are observed.</p> <p>5.6.3 Regular, and preferably continuous, recordings of temperature and relative humidity should be in all storage areas, and closely monitored. Remedial action must be taken if the conditions fall outside the recommendations of BS 5454.</p> <p>5.6.4 Sufficient air movement should be achieved to avoid pockets of stagnant air and to remove offgassing of organic materials.</p>	Mainly in place – see 5.1 above	YES

<p>5.6.5 Shelving should be strong and adequately braced. The records should be stored on the shelving in archive boxes made of undyed and acid-free materials. Separate protection should be given to volumes, outsize documents and maps.</p> <p>5.6.6 BS 5454 provides specific guidance on packing and storage.</p>		
<p><b>5.7 Environment and storage: photographs</b></p> <p>5.7.1 Photographs should be stored in accordance with the recommendations given in BS 5454 (Annex A and Section 11) which cover temperature and relative humidity, and protection against dust, dirt and pollutant gases.</p>	Largely in place – see 5.1 above	YES
<p><b>5.8 Environment and storage: film</b></p> <p>5.8.1 Films should not be stored in a general-purpose repository unless appropriate environmental conditions can be provided, if necessary in a separate room or compartment. Films should be stored in dust-free metal or inert plastic cans, placed horizontally on metal shelves. Annex A to BS 5454 gives guidance on the recommended temperature and relative humidity for storage of different types of films.</p> <p>5.8.2 Films on a cellulose nitrate base, which are inherently unstable, must not be stored in the repository but deposited in a specialist store whose conditions satisfy the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive.</p>	<p>An arrangement for film storage is being negotiated with the East Anglia Film Archive, in conjunction with the development of the Historical Resource and Cultural Centre. Adequate protection offered meanwhile</p> <p>Processes in place to ensure that specific emergency arrangements made as necessary</p>	[YES]
<p><b>5.9 Environment and storage: magnetic tape</b></p> <p>5.9.1 Magnetic tape should be stored in an environment as close as possible to that in which it will be consulted. An annex to BS 5454 gives guidance on the recommended temperature and relative humidity of storage of gramophone discs, magnetic tapes, video tapes and electric media of different file types.</p> <p>5.9.2 No electric or electronic apparatus producing magnetic currents that could cause the erasure of recorded materials should be permitted in the storage area, nor should tapes be brought within the vicinity of such apparatus or of lightning conductors.</p> <p>5.9.3 Tapes should be stored in containers made from aluminum, acid-free board or inert plastic, placed vertically on metal shelving.</p>	Adequate measures taken in the small number of instances it is necessary. Work being pursued through East of England Regional Archives Council to ensure preservation of ‘born-digital’ archival records	YES
<p><b>5.10 Disaster plan</b></p> <p>5.10.1 An up-to-date plan should be accessible to archival staff.</p>	Accessible	YES
<p><b>5.11 Conservation</b></p> <p>5.11.1 Suitable provision must be made either within the repository or by appropriate arrangement elsewhere for such conservation as the records may require.</p> <p>5.11.2 Conservation involving remedial treatment to stabilise or improve the physical or chemical condition of archives should only be carried out by suitably qualified and/or accredited conservators.</p>	<p>In place within the service</p> <p>In place</p>	YES