The Accessions to Repositories programme: Guidance Notes

The programme annually surveys records received by collecting archives during the calendar year. Participating archives are asked to report all new accessions. This allows for accurate analysis of trends and collecting practices. To enable more comprehensive analysis of this data, we ask participating repositories to use the **updated template** and read the guidance below. Please see the section 'what will happen to the information you send us' for more details on how we use accessions data.

**Taking Part**

Invitations to participate are sent out in early December to repositories known to be actively collecting beyond their own institutional records. If you usually participate but have not received an invitation by the middle of December 2019, please contact us.

The template is set up to aid us in the analysis of the data. Please use the template attached to your invitation email.


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**The deadline**

Archives need to complete the updated Accessions return template and send it to asd@nationalarchives.gov.uk by **03 February 2020**.

This deadline allows for sufficient time to process and analyse the information gathered.

**Taking part in Accessions to Repositories**

**What information is collected for the Accessions to Repositories survey?**

The survey aims to collect information on all newly accessioned manuscript material, photographic and audio-visual records, as well as born digital documents. We want to gather a full snapshot of collecting patterns across the sector.

Please mark newly accessioned records that you believe to have the strongest evidential, cultural and societal impact in the **collections highlight** column in the template. We would also like to hear of major deaccessioned collections so that we can understand any changes in custody.

**The template**

We ask all repositories to **use the template provided**. Please contact us if this is a problem. Please do not add to or change the order of columns in the template, as this will affect our ability to analyse the data accurately. The methods we use to analyse accessions data rely on the format being as uniform as possible.
We recognise that as newly accessioned material is often uncatalogued, not all details about the creator or nature of the records may be known. If exact details or dates have not been identified, please give an approximation (e.g. personal records, 20th century).

All returns must include the following details:

**ARCHON number**
This can be found by searching Discovery, via [http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-home](http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-home)

**Creator of records**
This should include full name, dates, epithet (e.g. occupation), descriptor and/or function for any entities (corporate bodies, families or individuals) that created the records. The more detail we have will help us to disambiguate creators, verify and add information to our resources and link between related collections. Please note the creator is not necessarily the same as the depositor.

**Summary description**
Brief information about the records; can include types of records, e.g. minutes and correspondence, and format.

**Covering dates**
The covering dates for the whole collection, preferably in the format yyyy-yyyy (e.g. 1858-1957).

**ISAD (G) reference number and/or accession reference**
The collection reference number and/or accession reference.

**Quantity**
The extent of the collection being accessioned in this year. Please use linear metres where possible or give a general sense of the material (e.g. “1 box”). Try not to mix units. For digital collections, please give the quantity in Mb or Gb.

**Additional deposit?**
Is the deposit an addition to an existing collection in your repository? If yes, please provide the reference number.

Returns should include the following additional details:

**Collection highlight?**
This is your opportunity to let us know the highlights of your collecting over the past year. These may be the records that you believe to have the strongest evidential, cultural and societal impact. Please also use this field to flag records you would like us to highlight in our communications with researchers and the sector. You can also supply images and links to relevant news stories, blogs etc. about your accessions in the body of your email to us.

**Catalogue link**
A permanent URL. This is a web address that will consistently point to your specific information resource such as an entry in an online catalogue.

**Keywords**
A handful of words reflecting the main themes covered by the content of the documents comprising the collection. This will enable us to surface themes and trends when analysing the data.

**Mark up**
For internal use only, please leave blank.
We only send out one template to all contributing archives. If your archive service is not a Place of Deposit, please ignore the blue ‘Fields for public records only’ section of the template.

After submitting your return

Your return will be acknowledged by a member of our team within five working days. If you have not received a response within this time, please contact us.

Please let us know as soon as possible if your archive service has not received any deposits during 2019, or does not have the capacity to complete a return.

What will happen to the information you send us?

- The data will primarily be used to analyse and develop a national picture of collecting patterns, and identify gaps in collecting practices.
- It will be used to update Discovery and will be made available for researchers online.
- Highlights will be published in our report with the analysis, and may also be publicised on The National Archives' social media outlets.
- Data will also be analysed to track records identified as part of our Sales Monitoring Service and monitor public records and manorial document transfers.

We will analyse the data collected, allowing us to better understand patterns or trends in thematic collecting. The results of this analysis will be shared with the archive sector.

Please note that accessions data will be published on data.gov.uk. This will aid transparency and allow researchers access to the entire set of reported accessions.

For more information or assistance with completing the survey, please contact Archives Sector Development at asd@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

For information about contributing to Discovery please visit our website: http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/advice-and-guidance/managing-your-collection/developing-collections/contributing-to-our-resources/.

Information about contacting the team can also be found on our website: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/ask-question.htm.

Updated November 2019