

National Library of Scotland

Statement on collaborative research partnerships and projects

The National Library of Scotland welcomes anyone who wishes to engage in research using any part of our collections, of all ages, countries and backgrounds. We are committed to the principle of the library as an egalitarian place of research, open to all, and support research carried out by individuals and groups, including:

- Creators, particularly those who work in text, sound and moving image, and people working in the creative industries
- People investigating their own family or local history, whether for publication or for private enjoyment
- Businesses and educators
- Students, academics and independent researchers using our collections and resources as primary or secondary sources for scholarly research and the investigation of original ideas.

We also actively seek to engage collaboratively with researchers who want to work with us in the development of larger projects, and who in most cases will be affiliated to academic and other research institutions. We have identified particular topics and foci which will be our priorities for collaborative research projects during the period 2015-20, to help us meet our strategic objectives. We expect that the outputs of these collaborative research projects will deliver clearly identifiable benefits to the Library as well as advancing knowledge.

We request that proposals for Library involvement in research projects be raised at an early stage of the planning process so that staff can advise about possible directions for collaboration. In particular, exhibition programmes are usually agreed several years in advance.

Research Foci

- **Collection-based research:** the objects in our collections, their creation, history and use; their physical or digital nature; the care and preservation of them, including:
 - The history of discrete parts of our collections, such as individual archives, inside or outside the National Library of Scotland
 - Scientific research which will provide information about the materials and techniques used to manufacture the items in our collections, the causes and mechanisms of deterioration of collection items, and the impact of various conservation approaches

- Research into any aspect of the intellectual content of the collections which explores their historical, cultural or other significance and has practical application for the Library
- Research which draws on our collections in the context of or as examples of a wider field, for instance bookbindings or the development of publishing over time, including digital publishing and web archiving.
- **Research into institutional and professional issues**
 - The history of the Advocates Library and the National Library of Scotland and their contexts
 - The history and role of national, research, and/or legal deposit libraries and practice, with particular reference to the National Library of Scotland and the Advocates Library
 - Research which explores the history of, evaluates or innovates in the areas of professional practice which form the work of the Library, such as library estate management; reference librarianship; cataloguing and metadata standards and practices; displaying and interpreting sound, moving image and text; conservation and collections care.

Research priorities

- **Collection-based research:**
 - Research which contributes to our strategic goals, in particular:
 - Making visible of all of the Library's collections by 2025 – we particularly welcome research which increases the accessibility of all or part of our collections
 - Developing innovative opportunities for us to engage with our audiences as partners and collaborators, providing opportunities for them to reuse our content and participate – we particularly welcome research which includes freely available published outputs beyond the traditional modes of scholarly communication, including the development of educational resources, the publication of data sets and engagement with open access publishing
 - Ensuring the long-term preservation of our physical and digital collections, for example by improving our knowledge of the effects of the environment upon the collections, and investigating how we can provide an appropriate environment in a sustainable manner.
 - Research which contributes to the development and understanding of the national bibliography of Scotland and the history of the country's recorded memory, in particular:
 - Research into the creation and dissemination of texts in Scotland between 1400 and 1700
 - Research which uses our collections for the creation of corpora or datasets and makes this data freely available
 - Scientific research into the materials and techniques used in Scotland to create and manufacture manuscripts, printed books and other items

including photographic collections, films etc., combined with research to understand the deterioration mechanisms of these items.

- **Institutional and professional issues:**

- Research which contributes to the development of the conservation profession and connects the UK to the global conservation movement
- Research which advances the usability of orphan work collections or develops ways and means of providing access to these collections
- Research which explores, challenges or investigates library funding models
- Research on the role of the library as a physical space
- Research developing impact assessment and metrics for libraries.

This statement was produced by the Collections and Research Department, October 2015.