

Information For Applicants

Acquisition and care of manuscripts and archives

- The **proposed purchase** must have good historical content and be relevant to the existing collections of the applicant. The Fund will not support the purchase of items bought for the autograph value alone.
- The **applicant institution** should be the most appropriate place in the general national interest for the item in question.
- Applicants should meet the general requirements expected from an eligible institution (see Information for Applicants: eligibility criteria). In addition:
 - **Record repositories and libraries** are expected to adopt **The National Archives' Standard for Record Repositories, 2004**.
 - **Museums** seeking to acquire manuscripts and archives are expected to follow the **Code of Practice for Museums in the United Kingdom**, issued by the Standing Conference on Archives and Museums, 1996.
- Applicants must be able to provide a high standard of care comparable to that of a repository approved against **The National Archives' Standard for Record Repositories** and should have:
- Facilities for the storage of documents in secure and climatically stable conditions in accordance with the guidelines set out in British Standard BS5454 Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents (2000). It is expected, for example, that documents would be systematically stored in strong room security and not subjected to significant fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity. Removal of documents from controlled conditions should only take place for bona fide research and temporary display purposes.
- Provision for public access to the collections through adequate recording and cataloguing. There should be a designated, supervised study area for examination of original material adjacent to the storage area.
- Temporary display facilities which can provide physical and environmental security in accordance with the British Standard BS5454. Display damages documents and the Purchase Grant Fund discourages their acquisition mainly for exhibition purposes.
- Suitably qualified professional staff. Where no qualified archivist, librarian or curator is employed, the Fund would expect the institution to make direct use of the advice of an approved record office or The National Archives in all matters concerning the care of archival material.

These criteria are intended as guidelines and Purchase Grant Fund staff are prepared to discuss individual points with prospective applicants.

Contact: Telephone 020 7942 2536 or e-mail purchasegrantfund@vam.ac.uk

Useful publications:

BS5454:Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents, British Standards Institution, 2000

The National Archives' Standard for Record Repositories, The National Archives, 2004

Code Of Practice On Archives For Museums In The United Kingdom, Standing Conference on Archives and Museums, 1996

Beyond the PRO: Public Records in Places of Deposit, Public Record Office, 1994

Public Services Quality Group, A Standard for Access to Archives, National Council on Archives, 2008

Collections Policy and Management, SCAM Information Sheet 1, 2000

Archival Listing and Arrangement, SCAM Information Sheet 2, 2000

Archival Preservation and Conservation, SCAM Information Sheet 3, 2000

Access to Archives, SCAM Information Sheet 4, 2000

Conservation of Archives and Ephemera, Museums and Galleries Commission Fact Sheet, 1999