



**HERITAGE
CENTRE**

ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

Collections Policy

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RCPI Heritage Centre Collection Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define the present state of the collections held by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), and to clearly set out the policy regarding future acquisitions of material. It will ensure that material is accepted into the collections in accordance with an agreed collection development strategy and will serve as a guide to decision making by staff.

The strength of RCPI's collections is due to donations from organisations and individuals and this policy is intended to encourage public confidence in RCPI as a suitable and responsible repository, and to encourage future donations to the Collections.

Background and collecting practice

RCPI was founded in 1654 as the Fraternity of Physicians, with the aim of improving standards of medical education. Two Royal Charters, awarded in 1667 and 1692, created the College of Physicians and gave the new organisation the power to award licences to practice medicine in Ireland.

In 1713 Sir Patrick Dun, former President of RCPI, died and left his library to RCPI. This forms the basis of RCPI's library, which continued to develop as a working medical library for the next 250 years. In 2014 a strategic review of the library holdings was undertaken to establish which material from the library should be retained for its historic and research value and added to the Heritage Collections.

RCPI's corporate archive dates to 1667 and covers the history of the College from that date. From the 19th century onwards archive material relating to hospitals, individual physicians and other medical societies has been deposited with RCPI for safe keeping.

Since its foundation RCPI has collected items, including silverware, artwork and ceremonial regalia, which form the core of the Heritage Items. In 1827 a Museum Committee was established to form a museum for RCPI, which would include artworks and *materia medica*¹ specimens. These collections have been added to since the 19th century by purchased, commissioned and donated items.

¹ *Materia medica* is a term for the body of knowledge about the therapeutic properties of any substance used for healing.

In 2010 the RCPI Heritage Centre was formed to bring together the various historical collections held in trust by RCPI.

The mission of the Heritage Centre is;

- To develop, preserve, catalogue and make accessible RCPI's historic collections
- To interpret and promote the collections to RCPI's Trainees, Members and Fellows, the research community and the general public.
- To become a centre of excellence for education, research and public engagement with the history of medicine and medical humanities in Ireland.

This Collection Policy covers the following collections;

- Dun's Library
- Corporate and deposited archives
- Heritage items
- Medical instruments and *materia medica* collection
- Genealogy collection

The following collections which are managed by the Heritage Centre are not covered by this policy;

- History of medicine reference library
- Antique furniture
- Modern artwork

Statement of type and quality of collections

The collections owned by RCPI have been developed since 1667. RCPI also holds some collections and items on loan which will be detailed below. The collections are of national importance, with some individual items which are of international importance. The collections fall into the following broad categories.

Dun's Library

Collected by RCPI between 1713 and the 1970s, this was the working medical library of RCPI. In 2014 a strategic review was undertaken to identify the sections of the library which were to be retained as heritage assets by RCPI. Dun's Library comprises c.20,000 items including books, journals, pamphlets and grey literature. The strategic review identified three areas of material to be retained in Dun's Library as part of the historic collections of RCPI;

Core Collection: The golden age of Irish medicine, c.1750-1900

This collection reflects the important developments which were taking place in medicine during this period, and Irish medics' place in the international culture of medical and scientific innovation and discovery. The collection also reflects the wider scientific, cultural, literary and artistic interest of medics.

Irish Medicine 1900-1950

A comprehensive collection of medical works published in Ireland or written by Irish medics during this period. The collection shows the development of Irish medicine in the first half of the twentieth century.

Special Collections

Donated during the 19th and 20th centuries, these collections formally belonged to important individuals.

The library of the Irish Cardiac Society, c. 450 items, is on loan to RCPI.

Archives

Collected by RCPI since 1667, the archive contains unpublished material created by RCPI, or donated to them. There is no chronological limitation on the archive collection.

Corporate archive

Consisting of over 160 boxes of records created by RCPI since 1667. The majority date from the 19th and 20th centuries and document the decisions of the Council and other committees. Other records document the College's building, library, examinations, membership, the administration of Sir Patrick Dun's trust and relationships with other organisations.

Deposited archives

Consisting of 38 collections and over 150 individual items donated to RCPI, filling over 250 boxes. These collections largely relate to Irish hospitals, medical organisations, eminent physicians or medical historians. The papers include administrative records, lecture and case notes, illustrations, correspondence, diaries and research papers. Material dates from the 17th to 21st centuries.

The archives of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland and the Royal Hospital Donnybrook are held on loan by RCPI.

Heritage items

Works of art, furniture, medals, silverware, glassware, ceramics and other items commissioned by or donated to RCPI since 1667. The items relate to the history of RCPI, its ceremonies, Licentiates, Members and Fellows, and the wider medical community. The majority of the collection dates from the 18th to 20th century, with some earlier and later items. There is no chronological limitation on the heritage items. The collection comprises about 300 items.

One portrait is held on loan by RCPI.

Medical instruments and *materia medica* collection

Containing historical medical instruments and *materia medica* specimens and examples collected by RCPI since 1667. The collection includes medical instruments or equipment owned by important Irish medics including William Stokes (1804-1878) and Fleetwood Churchill (1808-1878). The majority of the collection dates from the late 18th to mid-20th centuries and comprises about 500 items. There is no chronological limitation on the medical instrument and *materia medica* collection.

The Reads Collection of Medical Instruments are held on loan by RCPI.

Genealogy collection

Comprising two core elements; the annual published medical registers and directories (c.1840-1980) and the Kirkpatrick Index. The Index was compiled by Dr T P C Kirkpatrick between c.1910-1954 and contains biographical information on c.10,000 Irish born doctors from the mid-17th to the mid-20th century.

Statement of acquisition brief

RCPI is actively seeking to acquire items, library and archive material relating to the history of RCPI², and the history of medicine and medical education in Ireland³.

Criteria governing acquisitions

The following criteria will be taken into account when considering any potential acquisition to the collections.

1. Acquisition will only be undertaken if the material has potential use(s) in engagement, learning and/or research.
2. Acquisition may not be undertaken if the material duplicates items already held in the Collections.
3. In addition material must meet the collection specific criteria detailed below.
4. **Dun's Library** is subject to collecting in the following areas:
 - 4.1. Printed material relating to medicine, medical education or the history of medicine in Ireland, written by Irish authors, or with a strong Irish connection which were published before 1950 and which are not already held by Dun's Library.
 - 4.2. Key medical texts from the period c.1750-1900 which are not already held by Dun's Library.
 - 4.3. Non-medical works published by RCPI Members and Fellows, or which RCPI Members and Fellows had a substantial input into, from the foundation of the College to 1950, and which are not already held by Dun's Library.
 - 4.4. Printed material on the history of medicine in Ireland, institutional histories of Irish hospitals and medical organisations, and biographies of Irish medics published since 1900 will also be accepted. These will be added to History of Medicine Reference Library.
 - 4.5. Large bequests of personal or institutional collections will be considered. While any such bequest will be identified as such in the cataloguing, it may not be possible to store the collection together.
5. The **Corporate Archive** is subject to collecting unpublished material relating to the College's corporate history and activities. While much of this material will be created internally and transferred to the archive, Members and Fellows may have material which falls into this category.

² In the context of RCPI's Collection Policy, and throughout this document, 'RCPI' is taken to mean the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and its Faculties and Institutes.

³ In the context of RCPI's Collection Policy, and throughout this document 'Ireland' is taken to mean the whole island of Ireland.

6. Deposited Archives are currently being collected in the following areas:
 - 6.1. Material from, or relating to, hospitals and other medical institutions in Ireland, or with a strong Irish connection.
 - 6.2. Material from, or relating to, medical professional or public health organisations in Ireland, or with a strong Irish connection.
 - 6.3. Material relating to medical education in Ireland, or with a strong Irish connection.
 - 6.4. Professional and personal papers of Irish medics, or medics who have a strong association with Ireland, or who have practiced there.
 - 6.5. Material from, or relating to, medical businesses in Ireland, or with a strong Irish connection.
 - 6.6. Material relating to the social history of medicine in Ireland, the ordinary person's experience of the medical profession, and material relating to medicine in the home. This area has been identified as an area of weakness in the current holdings, which tend to be institutionally and professionally focused.
 - 6.7. Research papers of Irish medical historians, or historians who have researched into the history of medicine in Ireland.
 - 6.8. Any type of material will be considered for donation to the archive in addition to documents including, but not limited to, photographs, prints, drawings, film and slides.

7. **Heritage Items** are currently being collected in the following areas:
 - 7.1. Commissioned portraits of RCPI Presidents, or other important figures in Irish medicine.
 - 7.2. Existing portraits representing key figures in the history or current practice of medicine in Ireland, or associated with the work of RCPI.
 - 7.3. Representations of physicians at work; of RCPI's building and professional work; and of patients, where these are relevant to the history or current practice of medicine in Ireland.
 - 7.4. Commissioned items for the ceremonial use of RCPI.
 - 7.5. Objects relating or belonging to Irish doctors, or doctors with a strong Irish connection.
 - 7.6. Objects relating to the history of RCPI, the history of medicine and medical education in Ireland, or with a strong Irish connection.

8. The **Medical instruments and *materia medica* collections** are subject to collecting in the following areas:
 - 8.1. Medical instruments and devices associated with RCPI's activities as a medical education institution.

- 8.2. Medical instruments and devices associated with the history and development of medical practice in Ireland, or with a strong Irish connection.
 - 8.3. Medical instruments and devices associated with important figures in the history of RCPI and/or the development of medicine in Ireland.
 - 8.4. *Materia medica* specimens or items associated with RCPI's role in the regulation and classification of pharmacy in Ireland.
 - 8.5. *Materia medica* specimens or items associated with the development of therapeutics or pharmacology in Ireland.
9. The **Genealogy collection** is subject to collecting in the following areas;
- 9.1. Published Medical Registers or Directories covering Ireland which are not already held by RCPI, or which replace damaged volumes held by RCPI.
 - 9.2. Published articles or unpublished biographical information on Irish medics, or medics who have a strong association with Ireland, or who have practiced there. These will be included in an extension to the Kirkpatrick Index.

Acquisition principles and procedures

1. RCPI recognises its responsibility in acquiring additions to its collection to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and the use of collections will meet the requirement of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.
2. The Keeper of Collections will have authority and responsibility for accepting or rejecting potential gifts or bequests to RCPI, soliciting gifts of material for the collections within the terms of this policy and making recommendations and taking action on the purchase of material in accordance with this Policy.
3. In the case of acquisitions of large quantities of material, or high cost items, the recommendations of the Keeper of Collections will be submitted to the RCPI Executive for approval.
4. The Keeper of Collections will assess all objects left with the Heritage Centre as a proposed donation(s) to RCPI. The decision to accept or reject an offer of a donation is reached by taking into account a number of considerations laid out in this policy. Once a decision is reached the Heritage Centre will contact the potential donor to inform them of the decision. Objects not acquired will be returned to the owner. Efforts will be made with the permission of the potential donor to locate an institution who may be more suitable and/or in a position to acquire the object(s).
5. The Heritage Centre will ask all donors and vendors to sign a Donation Agreement and/or Transfer of Title form, which transfers all rights and titles they may have, including intellectual property rights to RCPI.
6. RCPI will not acquire material with any prohibitive preconditions or access embargoes.
7. The acceptance of items on loan, for a finite period for display or study may be authorised by the Keeper of Collections.
8. In exceptional cases a privately owned object of major importance to the collection may be accepted on a finite long-term loan. No object will be accepted on 'Permanent Loan'. The period of all loans will be agreed in writing between the Keeper of Collections and the owner of the object at the time of deposit. At the expiry of the term of loan, it may be renewed for a further finite period, at the discretion of both the owner and the Keeper of Collections.

9. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances and after proper consideration by RCPI's Executive, for example in an emergency situation where the preservation of the item is at risk. Such material is acquired on the understanding that it may be transferred to another institution at a future time.
10. RCPI works on the general principle of not purchasing items for the collections, as this would undermine the many generous donations of material made to the collections. In very exceptional circumstances applications may be made to the RCPI Executive for funding for a purchase.

Archival and supporting documentation

1. The Heritage Centre will create a file for archival and supporting documentation for all new accessions. This will contain supporting documentation relating to the provenance, history and condition of the item.
2. Over time additions may be made to these files with additional information, details of conservation work on the item, or research carried out on the item.
3. These files will be accessible to researchers, although personal and financial information will be withheld.

Limitations on collection policy and acquisition brief

1. Relevant legal frameworks will guide the RCPI's practices in collection development, information, access and care, especially
 - 1.1. The Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977, 1984 and 2015 and subsequent amendments.
 - 1.2. The General Data Protection Regulations and, where relevant, the Data Protection Acts 1988-2003
 - 1.3. The provisions of the Human Tissue Bill, until such an Act is in place, with except advice from the Faculty of Pathology, RCPI.
2. RCPI will take account of the collecting policies of other organisations collecting in the same or related areas. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialist interest. Specific reference will be made to the following:
 - Other medical Royal Colleges in Ireland and the United Kingdom
 - National Archives of Ireland and Public Records Office of Northern Ireland
 - The National Library of Ireland

- The main medical teaching universities in Ireland (National University of Ireland Galway, Queen's University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Limerick)
 - The Worth Library
3. RCPI will exercise due diligence and make every reasonable effort not to acquire any item unless they are satisfied that a valid title to the item in question can be acquired.
 4. When an object is offered as a gift, in good faith, and the prospective donor is uncertain of the identity of the legal owner(s) and the Heritage Centre is unable to find this out as a result of its own reasonable efforts, the Keeper of Collections shall be permitted to accept the object, provided a permanent and detailed record of the circumstances and known facts is made at the time of its acceptance.
 5. The acquisition of material will to a certain extent be determined by the availability of storage space in the Heritage Centre.
 6. RCPI may not be able to acquisition material in certain formats if the Heritage Centre does not have the appropriate storage facilities.

Commitments and responsibilities in respect of collections

This mission of the Heritage Centre is to develop, preserve, catalogue and make accessible RCPI's historic collections. This section articulates the principles on which the collections are documented, protected and made accessible. It acts as a summary for the policies which cover each area in more detail.

Documentation

1. The Heritage Centre acknowledges that the collection and management of information about the items within the collection is essential for all aspects of museum work.
2. Documentation regarding the collections will be created and stored in compliance with the guidelines laid down by the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI).
3. In addition to meeting the guidelines for MSPI archive documentation will comply with the General International Standard Archival Description ISAD(G), library documentation will comply with RDA and RBMS standards for the descriptive cataloguing of rare materials, and item documentation will comply with SPECTRUM.

4. The Heritage Centre is committed to complete documentation of its collections; the Heritage Centre Strategic Plan outlines how this is to be achieved.
5. Collection information will be stored in the collection management software CALM (archive and items) and KOHA (library), and will be freely available via the online catalogue, except in the following circumstances:
 - 5.1. Where records contain personal information less than 100 years old
 - 5.2. Where access would breach copyright and other intellectual property rights.
 - 5.3. Where images are of a graphic nature.

Conservation

1. The Heritage Centre will strive to store and exhibit the collections in appropriate temperature, relative humidity and light levels and in a pollution and pest-free environment that achieve a satisfactory balance between the long-term preservation of the collections, accessibility to staff and users, and the other uses of the building.
2. The Heritage Centre only employs trusted conservators, who are members of the Institute of Conservator-Restorers of Ireland.

Security

1. The safety and security of the collections is a central responsibility of the Heritage Centre, with procedures in place to ensure the collections are secure at all times.

Access to the public

1. The Heritage Centre operates an open access policy to all its collections, except:
 - 1.1. Where records contain personal information less than 100 years old (exceptions are made for accessing records of next of kin and for ethically approved academic research)
 - 1.2. Where access would breach copyright and other intellectual property rights.
 - 1.3. Where access is requested to unprocessed, extremely fragile or otherwise unstable material.
2. Items from the collections will be made available to researchers by appointment; access will be dependent on resource availability, staff time and space.
3. All users requiring physical access to the collections must complete a reader's registration form and must sign and abide by stated access and handling procedures.

4. Where possible collections will also be made available online and via social media.

Interpretation and display

1. The Heritage Centre is committed to providing interpretative displays, both physical and virtual, based on its collections, and participating in events to promote access to the collections.
2. The Heritage Centre is also committed to the wider access to its collections through loan(s) of item(s) to other institution(s) for display and exhibition.

Research and publication

1. The Heritage Centre is committed to making its collections accessible to researchers, and actively encourages dissemination of research through presentations, exhibitions and publications.
2. The Heritage Centre will require copies of data gleaned from research on its collections to be made available to future researchers, and for inclusion in the collections management database where appropriate.
3. The Heritage Centre will require a copy of all publications resulting in part or entirely from research on its collections.
4. All outputs are subject to compliance with all intellectual property rights resting in the material used.
5. "The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland" should be acknowledged in all outputs.
6. In providing permission to reproduce material the Heritage Centre does not assume any responsibility for infringement of copyright in the material which may be held by others. The publisher assumes all responsibility for any claims made under copyright legislation.
7. The Heritage Centre will not support research that is deemed in its process or outputs to risk RCPI's reputation.