



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Centre for Research Collections

USER GUIDE

CRC

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What is the Centre for Research Collections?

Located on the 6th floor of the Main Library, the CRC provides access to the University of Edinburgh's cultural and heritage collections, including Rare Books, Manuscripts, Archives, Art and Musical Instruments.

Rare Books & Manuscripts

We have about 400,000 rare books and manuscripts, many found nowhere else. Our earliest handwritten book is the 11th century Celtic Psalter; the earliest printed book is a woodblock Chinese commentary produced in 1440. The collection includes the libraries of Enlightenment economist Adam Smith and modern Scottish writer Hugh MacDiarmid.

Archives

Archives are the unique documentary sources which are essential for understanding a wide range of people, places, knowledge and learning. Our collections have a range of strengths including Scottish culture, the research and business of the University of Edinburgh, and literary, scientific and medical work from across the world.

Art

The Art Collection contains over 8,000 items which reflect the history of the University, the city and Scotland and also supports world-leading research and teaching at Edinburgh. The collection comprises an astonishing range of objects, spanning two millennia and a multitude of artistic periods.

Musical Instruments

The Musical Instrument Collection contains over 5,500 items, covering the history of musical instruments from c.1550 to the present day. Instruments of all types and traditions can be found, including some of the world's most iconic and rare examples.

Who can **use** the CRC collections?

The CRC is open to all researchers, including staff, students, visiting academics and members of the public.

If you are not a member of the University of Edinburgh, you can register as a reference reader of the university library. Please see our webpages (www.ed.ac.uk/is/crc) for details of how to do this.

How can I **find** these collections online?

The CRC webpages, www.ed.ac.uk/is/crc contain links to the relevant catalogues, including:

Rare Books:

<http://discovered.ed.ac.uk>

Archives:

<http://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk>

Lothian Health Services Archive:

<http://www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk>

Museum Collections:

<http://collections.ed.ac.uk>

Some of our collections are still being catalogued so please do contact us to find out more.

Are any of your collections **digitised**?

We have over 40,000 high quality images of items in our collections, photographed by the Digital Imaging Unit.

<http://images.is.ed.ac.uk>

Can I **browse** the shelves?

The majority of our collections are unique and irreplaceable and require a specialist environment for their care. To preserve them, we look after them in secure stores and they are retrieved by staff for you to look at in our purpose built reading room.

How do I **request** an item?

Catalogued rare books, manuscripts and archives can be requested either in person, by email or by telephone. You can request up to 4 items. Once you have made a request, your item will be collected by CRC staff from the stores at the next collection time, either on the same day or the following morning. Please see the webpages for up to date collection times.

Some of our collection items are stored offsite. Staff will advise you if the item you request is offsite and when it will be delivered. For collections that are uncatalogued, please get in touch and staff can advise you if the collection is accessible and when you can visit to view an item.

Please provide the following information:

- **Reference / Shelfmark**
- **Author / Creator**
- **Title / Description**
- **Year**

Access to some archive collections is restricted due to the Data Protection Act – please get in touch in advance if you wish to see archive material created within the last 75 years. Staff can advise you on access procedures or if a collection is closed.

Please make requests in advance to see items in the art or musical instrument collections.

What if I **request** an item then can't come to consult it?

If you have requested material but are then unable to visit, please let us know so we can rearrange for you to view the item.

Where do I **consult** collections material?

Most material in CRC collections is consulted in our Reading Room. We allow you to take the following into the reading room:

- **pencils**
- **notebooks**
- **reference books**
- **laptop / tablet / camera**

Please place all other personal belongings in the lockers provided. This is to ensure that any potential damage to collections is avoided. The Reading Room has electrical points at each desk and wifi.

Can I take **photographs** in the reading room?

You are welcome to take photographs of many of our items and make use of the self-service book scanner in the reading room. However, please ask permission from the invigilator before taking photographs or scans. Some parts of collections may not be photographed due to copyright, fragility or the Data Protection Act.

You are welcome to get in touch before your visit to ask for advice on taking photographs of the items you wish to view.

How can I make sure I **handle** the material correctly?

The invigilator in the reading room can provide advice and assistance about how to handle material. Please watch our handling video online before you visit: <https://vimeo.com/diumovingimage>

What other **services** do you provide?

- **Digital Imaging**
- **Seminar Facilities**
- **Volunteer and Intern Opportunities**
- **Exhibitions**
- **Enquiries Service**
- **Tours and Talks**
- **Teaching and Research Support**

Opening Hours

For up to date opening hours, please refer to our website.

Location & Contact Details

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