

“Preserving the past, informing the future”

National Meteorological Library Collections Development and Management Policy

Policy or Standard Control	
Authority	Head Services Strategic Change
Version	1.2
Link to Controlled Document Register for validation: https://metoffice.sharepoint.com/sites/MetOfficeLibrary&ArchiveCommsSite/Lists/MODocumentRegiser/AllItems.aspx	

Introduction

The National Meteorological Library (Library) holds one of the country's most comprehensive collections of published meteorological texts and journals both in print and electronic form as well as the central repository for both hard copy and increasingly born digital Met Office publications (both published and unpublished). Our Digital Library and Archive is accessible to the public across the internet and is underpinned by a secure repository comprising surrogate copies of our key Met Office publications alongside increasing amounts of born digital content. Included in this is a digital image collection – a mixture of crown images and images transferred to the Met Office by the public with a keen interest in the weather. Digital preservation lies at the heart of our archive ensuring that content will be accessible not only today but also for the long term.

The library holdings are made directly available to the Met office, the wider scientific community, and the general public. The library resource not only supports and promotes the science and history of the Met Office it also provides the public with a learning resource to better understand the science and history of meteorology. The library resource adds value and understanding to those original records held in the archive.

The library and archive together provide one of the country's most comprehensive collections on meteorological not only serving the UK public but a much wider international community.

Aim

The library's collection policy ensures that we continue to maintain a comprehensive collection showing the development of the Met Office and more importantly the development of meteorology and its interaction with other related sciences. We maintain a core collection of the current journals and texts both in hard copy and increasingly in electronic form to enable our customers to keep abreast of the very latest research and gain a better understanding of the complex science of meteorology. Our collection is accessible for reference or loan to customers with varying levels of subject expertise and we produce a series of fact sheets aimed at the general public that cover a wide range of weather and climate related topics to provide greater learning and understanding of meteorology.

History

An early mention of the Library was in the Met Office Annual Report for 1870 and the first purpose-built Library was established when the Met Office moved from Victoria Street (which it outgrew) to a new office in South Kensington in 1910.

The Met Office moved its headquarters to Bracknell in 1961 where the library was located close to the entrance for ease of public access, and it was during this period that the archive records were finally brought together from a variety of locations to be housed together as a single collection separately from the library in a building close to HQ.

The Library moved to the new Met Office headquarters in Exeter in 2003 and the archive relocated to its first purpose build archive repositories at Great Moor House Exeter in 2005 – only a few minutes' walk from the Library.

The early Library existed largely to house the growing collection of observations (many of which were contained within ships logs) and to support for the work of the then "Meteorological Office".

Our collections chart the development of meteorology from its early days when it was classed as part of the science of astronomy when many of the early observations were carried out by astronomical observatories and aboard ships to its present position as an Earth Science.

We also chart the developing capabilities of the Met Office whose initial role

under Admiral FitzRoy quickly evolved from not only collecting actual observations to also providing forecasts at sea and on land. This was later followed by the move to numerical forecasting and the development of our climate research capability known as the Hadley Centre. Our climate research continues to make significant contribution to the scientific understanding of climate and climate change and helps to drive national and international governmental policies.

Core Subject Collections

Our core subject collections cover meteorology and climatology and our aim is to provide staff and public access to a comprehensive collection covering these topics. We achieve this aim by providing access to the following resources in both paper and increasingly in electronic format, free at the point of use:

- Main peer reviewed journals
- Books, both standard texts and topical texts, reflecting current trends and opinions of the time
- Conference proceedings
- Reports from other national meteorological services and organizations including the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC)
- Met Office observation data
- A selection of International data, including daily, weekly, monthly and as averages where supplied
- Met Office reports, annual and research and internal magazines showing the development of the Office
- Learning material including our Fact Sheet Series and Historical Events fact sheets produced by the library and archive staff in consultation with the relevant Met Office subject specialists

Related Subject Collections

Meteorology does not exist in isolation and the understanding of related sciences is vital to research, this is as true now as it was in the past. The collection reflects this changing research focus. Related subject collections include:

- Mathematics
- Computing
- Astronomy
- Fluid Mechanics
- Oceanography
- Hydrology
- Physics
- Ecological Studies
- Glaciology

The Library also holds a small collection on management and basic general and specialist reference publications such as dictionaries, encyclopedias and glossaries.

Collection Management

Selection Criteria

The collection is managed by the Library staff and material is selected by them and also in consultation with Met Office staff and external subject specialists. This keeps the collection current, as it constantly reflects ongoing research, both internal and collaborative. Selection is based upon:

- Content
- Published book reviews
- Met Office staff views
- Know authors - experts in their respective fields
- Audience i.e. does the item relate to expert professionals, amateurs or those with just a general interest in the subject and how well does it serve the respective audience
- Relation to collection i.e. does the item fill a gap in the collection or do we already have extensive holdings for this area. This is especially important when considering items for related subject collections
- Language, how useful will the item be if in a foreign language
- Cost - does the item represent good value for money given what already exists within the collection and does it fit with budgetary constraints

Duplicate Items

Duplicates of texts are kept only for those items used frequently or for items that are known to be rare as this helps to facilitate greater access by more remote users. Previous editions of some standard textbooks are kept for reference purposes as this helps to show the development of the subject concerned.

Donations

Donations are accepted, with the proviso that retention of all the material donated is at the discretion of the Library and that it fits with our selection criteria.

Cataloguing and Classification

All books, reports, journals, electronic resources and miscellaneous items are catalogued following RDA (Resource Description and Access) standards onto the Library and Archive collections management system currently hosted by Soutron.

Our hard copy book collections are catalogued using UDC (Universal Decimal Classification system).

The online catalogue provides a search and retrieval tool to access details about our collections and to link directly to our digital content. It also serves to promote Met Office science through personal publication lists and promoting key Met Office publication series'.

Work instructions covering library cataloguing are available to all staff on the team SharePoint drive and these are supported by training and ongoing support from the Cataloguing Supervisor.

Collection Reviews

Reviews of Library stock will be regularly undertaken. The assessment of items will be based upon:

- Currency - does the item reflect the current status of research in this area; would it be a useful text for showing the status of research/opinion at that time?
- Does it have historical value reflecting the development of the science even if has been replaced by a more recent edition or text on the topic?
- Does it have an electronic duplicate?
- Use - has the item proved to be a popular text on the subject and is still considered so, or has it been replaced by a more recent text?
- Relation to collection - does the item fill a gap in the collection or do we have extensive holdings for this area?
- Condition - what is the condition of the item? If it is to be retained should it be rebound or replaced with a new copy?

Some items will then be moved to the archive and kept for reference purposes only. Other items will be disposed of.

Any decisions following from Collection Review activities are subject to the approval of the Library and Archive Manager.

Related documentation:

1. National Meteorological Archive Acquisitions Policy
2. National Meteorological Archive Collections Information Policy

Document Control		
	Role Title	Name
Document Owner	Library & Archive Manager	Sarah Pankiewicz
Author	Library and Archive Specialist	Andrew Watt
Reviewer	Library & Archive Manager	Catherine Ross

Document location	Document identity and published location:
Controlled Document Register location	Link to Controlled Document Register for validation: https://metoffice.sharepoint.com/sites/MetOfficeLibrary&ArchiveCommsSite/Lists/MODocumentRegiser/AllItems.aspx

Version	Date published	Review due	Change description
1.00	07/2016	04/2021	First Publication
1.1	12/2021	04/2024	Reviewed & updated
1.2	08/2025	08/2030	Reviewed and updated