



Terms of access to archives, biographical collections, manuscripts, museum collections in storage and rare books

Access to archives, deceased fellows' biographical records, museum items in storage, rare books and special collections of the Royal College of Physicians is by prior appointment only.

Access to archives

- Records of official RCP committees* are available to fellows after 10 years and the public after 20 years
- All other institutional archives are available after 20 years
- Non institutional archives in good physical condition are available without restriction, unless they contain confidential information
- Records containing confidential information may be restricted for varying time periods
- Records containing medical information on identifiable individuals are closed for 100 years
- Records in poor physical condition may be restricted or unavailable

* Annual General Meeting, Comitia, Council, Finance & General Purposes Board, Trustees Board

Access to deceased fellows' biographical records

Deceased fellows' biographical records are available once the obituary entries are published in full on the Munk's Roll online database, unless they contain confidential information.

Access to rare books and special collections

- Printed items in good physical condition are available without restriction
- Printed items in poor physical condition may be restricted or unavailable

Access to museum items in storage

Items in good physical condition and which can be easily transported will be made available in the library reading room. Depending on the location and staff resources, items which cannot be moved may be viewed in situ. Visitors are not permitted to handle museum items, except in exceptional circumstances. Staff instructions must be followed at all times.

Registration process

Researchers must register before accessing historical collection items, providing proof of identity and address. Registration must be renewed annually but records of research visitors will be retained as a long term record, within the collection management systems.

Reading room regulations

Visitors are required to comply with all reading room regulations. A copy is available on request.

Handling items

- All bags must be placed in the lockers provided, and coats hung up on the hooks provided
- Pencils or electronic devices may be used for notetaking when consulting archives, deceased fellows' biographical records, museum items, rare books and special collections – pens are not permitted
- Care must be taken in handling items and staff instructions followed at all times
- No marks should be made on items for any reason
- Items must not be folded or leant upon
- Book rests etc. must be used when supplied by staff

Reproduction services

- Photocopies may be made from items under 100 years old in good physical condition, subject to copyright regulations
- Photocopies may not be made from items over 100 years old or in poor physical condition
- Photographic images can be provided from items over 100 years old in good physical condition, subject to copyright regulations

Permission to take photographs

On application to supervising staff, researchers may be granted permission to take photographic images of items in good physical condition, under the following provisos:

- Non flash photography is used
- Ownership of all copyright in the images remains the property of the Royal College of Physicians
- Future usage has been agreed by staff, as specified in appropriate additional documents.

Please ask staff for further details.

Reproduction in published work

Many items are in copyright and the researcher retains liability under copyright law to ascertain whether copyright subsists in any reproduction or extract which they publish in any format and to identify and secure prior permission to publish from the copyright owner or make all efforts to do so as required by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Where items are in the copyright of the RCP, permission to publish in any format must be sought in writing from Library, archive and museum services staff.

Where no verbatim extracts are quoted, RCP items may be used as source references without special permission. Authors should acknowledge the Royal College of Physicians, quoting details and reference numbers for the items used.