



Library protocol: Criteria for inclusion in rare book and special collections

Purpose

This document outlines criteria for identifying items as rare books and/or special collection materials.

Overview

ANU Library acquires, maintains and preserves items that are valuable and/or vulnerable publications. Recognising the value, age, fragility, rarity and/or significance of the materials, this collection is housed separately for special treatment and security.

These materials support the research and teaching needs of the ANU community as well as visiting researchers and the international community.

Guideline

1. Rare monographs and serials

- All items printed or published before 1850.
- All items relevant to Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands published before 1900, including serial items in which the majority of articles refer to the above areas, regardless of the country of publication.
- First editions of important literary works.
- Certain items published in limited editions, especially if numbered.
- Items with exceptionally fine or rare bindings.
- Items issued by famous printers or by famous private presses.
- Material with unique or exceptionally rare information
- Works with significant monetary value.

2. Formed collections

- A collection formed on a particular topic that complements the ANU Library's Collection Development Policy
- A personal Library that must be kept together because of gift restrictions, e.g. Mortlake, L.J. Hume etc.

3. Special collection items

- Items whose intrinsic value lies in their illustrative content.
- Curiosités, e.g. miniature books.
- Pornography and erotica, or very offensive material.
- Realia
- Any other items that have special conditions attached which prohibits placement on the open shelves, e.g. copyright restrictions.
- Fragile art books, which could be subject to vandalism because of excellence of printed reproductions.
- Material with unique, special or ANU relevant information;
- Signed and/or annotated items by writers of significant repute or of outstanding importance in academic or public life. Signed books, in and of themselves, will not automatically be included unless deemed particularly significant for the reasons formerly cited.
- Items deemed to have exceptional importance to the ANU and/or the ANU Library.

Related documents

- [ANU digitisation policy](#)
- [ANU digitisation procedure](#)
- [Library collection development policy](#)
- [Library gift procedure](#)
- Local protocol: circulation of rare book and special collections
- Local protocol: rare book and special collections approval for inclusion
- Local protocol: rare book and special collections processing and cataloguing

Review date

This document will be reviewed three years from the date of authorisation.

Authorisation

Date: 01 May 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shane Blessy", is written over a light blue dotted grid background.

University Librarian