



# Big Ten Academic Alliance

## PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS

### for Interlibrary Loan of Special Collections Materials

Prepared by the Big Ten Academic Alliance Interlibrary Loan – Special Collections Task Force, February 2018  
Approved by the Big Ten Academic Alliance Library Directors, April 2018

The Big Ten Academic Alliance Heads of Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and Heads of Special Collections encourage the borrowing, lending, and digitization of appropriate selective special collections materials among our libraries in order to:

1. Optimize student and faculty **access** to these special research materials;
2. Support the long-term stewardship and **preservation** of these materials entrusted to our libraries;
3. Promote **collaboration** where library staff within and across our institutions work together to find resource sharing solutions.

We support the principles and protocols outlined below which are informed and inspired by the [ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for Interlibrary and Exhibition Loan of Special Collections Materials](#) (2012) as well as OCLC Research's [Tiers for Fears: Sensible, Streamlined Sharing of Special Collections](#) (2013).

The principles and protocols below pertain only to interlibrary loans for research use and not to exhibition loans which are governed by separate protocols at each member library.

## I. Principles

### a. Access

- i. Special collections and interlibrary loan offices of Big Ten Academic Alliance member institutions are highly encouraged to develop local policies and practices that create and sustain the borrowing, lending, and/or digitization of selective special collections items. These policies should serve to enhance access, support research, and promote awareness of distinctive library holdings within our Big Ten consortial community.
- ii. While preservation of materials is paramount, the guiding principle when receiving an interlibrary loan request for a special collection item is to **look for ways to say yes**.
  1. Requests for special collections items should be considered on a case-by-case basis and independent of format rather than having a blanket rejection policy.
  2. Materials that are easily replaceable and even easier to copy should be considered for sharing.

3. Negotiations between institutions about shipping methods, packaging, and use restrictions with the borrowing institution are appropriate and common in interlibrary loan offices.
4. Borrowing institutions should be willing and able to restrict usage of special collections materials they receive to supervised reading rooms as directed.
5. Often a patron does not realize that a requested item is held in a special collection. At the borrowing institution, a discussion with the requesting patron will often clarify the extent of the patron's need and what can be arranged: is it critical to see the original material? Is there a tight deadline? Is the patron willing to use the item with specific use restrictions? Will a digital surrogate, microform copy, or scan of a portion of the material suffice?

## **b. Preservation**

- i. Borrowing physical items from special collections should be a last resort after having exhausted all other attempts to borrow from general circulating collections at other domestic libraries.
- ii. When possible, it is preferred to digitize the requested material in lieu of a physical loan. In determining the feasibility of digitization versus a physical loan, library staff will consider copyright, physical condition, local staffing and equipment resources, donor restrictions, value and rarity of the material, and the end user's needs.
- iii. If it is determined that a digital surrogate will not suffice, and if after careful consideration library staff believe that they should not loan the original, it is appropriate for library staff to state that they cannot fill the request.

## **c. Collaboration**

- i. Borrowing and lending institutions are encouraged to adopt a collaborative mindset and actively seek ways to maximize access via appropriate means.
  1. Special Collections staff are very knowledgeable of what can be loaned, what can be scanned, and deciding why, in some cases, neither is possible.
  2. Interlibrary loan staff are very experienced with the logistics required to loan items safely and securely. This includes an acute awareness of shipping options as well as a thorough understanding of the Big Ten Academic Alliance Resource Sharing Agreement and the Interlibrary Loan Code of the United States which serve as implied contracts for all of our consortial ILL transactions.
- ii. Lending from special collections should be accommodated with existing resources and current staffing available at the borrowing and lending libraries.
- iii. The appropriate care, handling, storage, and usage of loaned materials are responsibilities shared by both the borrowing and lending institutions.

## II. Protocols

### **a. Common Expectations for all Borrowing/Lending Libraries**

- i. Develop and maintain written local policies and procedures governing the borrowing and lending of special collections materials through interlibrary loan.
- ii. **Standard usage and shipping conditions for special collections loans:**
  1. Special Collections Reading Room Use Only;
  2. Photocopying or other reproduction of loaned materials is permitted, unless the borrowing institution receives explicit instructions from the lending institution that the materials may not be reproduced;
  3. Loan period of at least 30 days, excluding shipping time;
  4. Return trackable and insured in a box;
    - a. Padded envelopes are prohibited.
    - b. Insure for amount specified by lending library.
  5. No adhesive label, tape, or sticky note may be applied to the item.
  6. The borrowing institution's rules for usage in their special collections reading room will be followed unless additional special instructions are included from the lender as a condition of the loan.
  7. The borrowing institution shall initiate and maintain communication with and, when permitted by the lending institution, act on behalf of, the lending institution to address certain patron requests including, for example, those for high-resolution scans.

### **b. Responsibilities of the Borrowing Library**

- i. When a lending library sends a conditional response that a title requested for a physical loan is in a special collection, the borrowing library should:
  1. Exhaust general circulating collections at other potential domestic libraries first and re-request the special collections item as a last resort;
  2. Discuss with the requesting patron the extent of the need and how it can be met: Is it critical to see the original material? Is there a tight deadline? Is the patron willing to use the item with specific use restrictions? Will a digital surrogate, microform copy, or a scan of a portion of the material suffice?
  3. Place the potential lending library's symbol at least three times in the lending string of a new request, and;
  4. Indicate in the ILL request's Borrowing Note that this is a known special collections item with usage and shipping restrictions.
- ii. Follow carefully all usage, packaging, and shipping instructions as stipulated by the lending institution upon receipt of the loan.

- iii. Handle all materials gently in a manner that avoids any damage. Materials must be returned in the condition as received. Issues of concern or potential concern should be documented upon receipt.
- iv. Borrowed materials once received in special collections will be kept in an appropriate, reasonably secure storage environment.
- v. Report any damage suffered during the time the loaned materials are in transit or held by the borrowing library. If damage or loss occurs at any time while an item is in transit to or from the borrowing library, while in their possession, or while being used by their patron, the borrowing library must meet all costs of replacement, repair, or appropriate compensation as determined by the lending library. Special collections materials are not part of the routine ILL billing exemption pilot.

### **c. Responsibilities of the Lending Library**

- i. Review requests to borrow special collection materials with due regard for the access, security, and preservation needs of the requested items.
- ii. Respond to all requests in a timely and professional manner while allowing time for those with curatorial responsibility to adequately review the request and material.
- iii. For **copy requests**, the lending library should:
  - 1. Accept and fill scanning requests for short portions (e.g. article, chapter, etc.) of works in special collections.
  - 2. Offer to provide an appropriate substitute for a loan -- such as a digitized reproduction of the work, or related materials (i.e. scanned table of contents, audio transcripts, etc) -- if the original material cannot be physically lent, or if it is out-of-copyright and not already online in a digitized collection (e.g. Hathi, Internet Archive, etc).
  - 3. When digitizing a small portion or an entire work, provide a scan that closely resembles the original in appearance, legibility, and completeness with appropriate attention paid to image color and clarity, margins, page orientation, and any accompanying references, plates, or appendices.
- iv. For **physical loans**, the lending library should:
  - 1. Send a conditional response to the requesting library to indicate the item is in a special collection.
  - 2. Document and communicate to the borrowing library any concerns regarding the condition of the material before shipment. Include a return shipping label as well as paperwork with the item that clearly identifies the piece as a special collections item, denotes any pre-existing defects/damage, and provides instruction concerning any special usage, shipping, and/or packaging restrictions.
  - 3. Upon item's return, immediately inspect piece for any damage and notify the borrowing library of any irregularities encountered as well as any replacement, repair, or other appropriate compensation required.