

OCLC SHARES

Principles and Protocols for Sharing Special Collections through Interlibrary Loan

July 2021 (Revised October 2022)

OCLC SHARES supports the Big Ten Academic Alliance's [Principles and Protocols for Interlibrary Loan of Special Collections Materials](#) and strives to optimize access, enhance collaboration, sustain research, promote awareness of our libraries' distinctive holdings, and support the long-term stewardship and preservation of special collections items across the SHARES membership. The Big Ten Academic Alliance initiative builds in part upon work done by previous SHARES working groups, active between 2002 and 2013, whose efforts culminated in a seminal [research report](#) on sharing special collections through interlibrary loan.

Interlibrary loan is defined as obtaining material as a copy or loan for a requesting individual's own personal research and excludes materials obtained for exhibition loan. Special Collections include rare, distinctive, and/or valuable items of any format that are under controlled access and separate from a library's general circulating collection.

I. SHARES Principles

A. SHARES libraries should:

1. Work cooperatively within and across interlibrary loan, special collections, preservation, and/or digitization units at our libraries to consider and fill interlibrary loan requests for special collections materials.
2. Develop and maintain written local policies and procedures governing the borrowing, lending, shipping, and packaging of special collections items.
3. Ship all physical loans of special collections materials via a trackable, insured courier.

B. As borrowers:

1. Exhaust general circulating collections at other domestic libraries – and then consult with users to confirm if a special collection loan and its accompanying usage restrictions are acceptable – before attempting to proceed with a special collections loan.

2. Restrict patron usage when borrowing special collections materials to a supervised and secure reading room, and handle all materials with care, in a manner that avoids damage and allows safe return in the same condition as received.
3. Follow carefully all usage, packing, insurance, and shipping instructions as stipulated by the lending library.
4. Take responsibility for any damage or loss of any borrowed items while in transit from/to the lending library, in the borrowing library's possession, or while being used by the requesting user. The borrowing library must meet all costs of replacement, repair, or appropriate compensation as determined by the lending library.

C. As lenders:

1. Look for ways as lenders to say Yes and evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis, independent of format rather than having blanket rejection policies.
2. Accept and fill scan requests for short portions (e.g. articles, chapters, folders, etc.) of special collections materials and consider alternate options (e.g. digitizing an entire work) in lieu of a physical loan, when appropriate given the item's condition and in accordance with copyright law.
3. Include paperwork with loans that clearly identifies special collections items, documents pre-existing defects/damages, stipulates insurance value, and denotes any special usage, shipping, and/or packaging restrictions.

II. Workflow Protocols

Sharing special collections is optional but highly encouraged for SHARES participants. SHARES libraries can participate in any, all, or none of the modes of sharing—scanning portions of works, digitizing entire works, and lending physical items—as borrower, or lender or both. While no role or mode is compulsory as far as participation, SHARES libraries must follow the protocols outlined in this document when borrowing or lending special collections materials within the consortium.

A. Lending Requests: Scans of small portions (e.g. articles/chapters/folder)

1. Article/chapter/portions request arrives via interlibrary loan.
2. Have locally determined individual(s) (e.g. ILL, special collections, archives and/or digitization staff) retrieve item from shelf or storage.
3. Review appropriateness of special collections piece for scanning. Review factors may include, but are not limited to: size, condition, donor restrictions, copyright, availability of staff/equipment, etc. Notify requesting library promptly if unable to fill and specify reason.
4. If able to fill, determine appropriate staff/equipment to be used for scanning.

5. Scan requested article/chapter/folder so that the electronic copy 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.
6. Update request in ILL request management tool and deliver electronically to the requesting library.
7. Return item to shelf or storage as appropriate.

B. Lending Requests: Digitizing entire works

1. Search open access resources (i.e. HathiTrust, Internet Archive, and Google) for an existing digital copy if the title was published 95+ years ago and is likely in the public domain.
2. Have locally determined staff (e.g. ILL, special collections, archives and/or digitization staff) retrieve item from shelf or storage.
3. Conduct an assessment of the item to determine if it is eligible for scanning. Assessment factors may include, but are not limited to: size, condition, donor restrictions, copyright, availability of staff/equipment, etc. Promptly notify the requesting library if the assessment concludes that the item is not eligible for scanning.
4. Determine if scanning entire work is in accordance with relevant copyright law. Before cancelling any request for copyright reasons, contact the borrowing library to determine if it can secure copyright permission for the scan and provide written approval from the rights holder to the lending library.
5. Determine appropriate staff/equipment to produce a scanned copy of the item.
6. Add an alert for the borrowing library: "Pls note - This is the best scan possible based on the condition of the item." This should alleviate questions when an item is of poor quality which can result in a scan that is less than optimal but the best scan that can be achieved.
7. Return item to shelf, storage or other designated location.
8. Consider adding the scanned copy to an open access site (e.g. Hathi, Internet Archive, local digital repository) if appropriate and of high quality. Consider cataloging the item locally and on WorldCat if possible to enhance access.

C. Lending Requests: Physical Loans

1. Request Handling
 - a. When an item is held in a special collection, ILL staff at the owning library will send a conditional response to notify the requesting library that:
 - i. It is a special collections item;
 - ii. They must exhaust other domestic lenders for a circulating copy in a general collection;

- iii. They may ask for a special collections loan consideration as a last resort if they put the potential lender at least three times in the lending string of a new ILL request to give sufficient time for local review.

Sample ILL system conditional message:

Special collection item: Exhaust other lenders first. If not filled elsewhere, rerequest with our symbol 3x in string and include borrowing note requesting consideration for spec coll item; we will then seek curator approval to lend.

- b. If loan request is received for a public domain work not online (e.g. in Hathi, Google Books, Internet Archive, etc.), it may be considered for scanning / digitization in lieu of a loan if possible.
 - c. If the requesting library exhausts other domestic lenders and re-requests asking for special collection loan consideration, the lending ILL staff will consult their special collections curator or their designee asking for loan consideration. ILL staff should provide item's citation, shelf location, and call number as well as name of the requesting library. Local procedure might also include asking the requesting library to provide a completed Facility Trust Checklist to assist the loan approval determination.
2. Approval process
- a. Locally determined individual(s) (e.g. special collections staff, ILL staff, other) retrieves item from shelf for potential loan review.
 - b. Locally determined individual(s) (e.g. special collections staff, ILL staff, other) reviews item for lendability by considering item's condition, age, rarity, value, and borrower's location. A determination is made whether or not the loan request can be filled or an alternative (e.g. whole item digitization; scanning small sections) can be offered.
 - c. If loan is not permitted and/or digitization or small section scanning is offered instead, ILL staff will relay information to the requesting library.
 - d. If loan is permitted, the following **minimum standard loan conditions** apply:
 - i. Item must be used in a special collections reading room or equivalent supervised space.
 - ii. Item must be stored in a secure place when not in use.
 - iii. Photocopying/scanning of loaned material by library staff, or photography by user, in accordance with copyright law is permitted, unless explicit instructions to the contrary are specified by the lending library's special collections staff.
 - iv. Loan period should be at least 30 days.
 - v. No adhesive label, tape, or sticky note will be applied to item.
 - vi. The borrowing library's rules for usage in their special collections reading room will be followed unless the lending library's special collections gives specific instructions for a particular piece as a condition of the loan.
 - vii. Item must be returned via insured, trackable commercial courier.
 - viii. Item must be carefully packaged in its own box separate from general circulating collection items and include paperwork identifying it as a special collections item

- requiring special care and processing. See Packaging and Shipping Instructions for Special Collections Items.
- e. The owning library's special collections curator or designee will notify the owning library's ILL staff of any usage or shipping restrictions particular to a specific piece so that they may be relayed to the requesting OCLC SHARES library via a conditional message for agreement before any item is sent.
 - i. The special collections curator or designee should also specify any required insurance value for shipping.
 - f. If the OCLC SHARES requesting library accepts the conditions or if no additional restrictions beyond the standard loan conditions apply, the lending library's locally determined individual will update the local catalog and/or the local special collections request management system, and the ILL staff will update their ILL system, to indicate the item is checked out and being shipped.
 - g. ILL staff prepare ILL paperwork for item which includes standard or item-specific usage/shipping restrictions as well as a return shipping address label or information.
3. Shipping
- a. Locally determined individual (e.g. special collections staff, ILL staff, etc.) prepares a condition report for the special collections item at the time of packaging, and denotes insurance value for borrowing library's return shipping.
 - b. Locally determined individual (e.g. special collections staff, ILL staff, etc.) packages item.
 - c. See the **Packaging and Shipping Instructions for Special Collections Items** for specific instructions.
 - d. Provide tracking information to borrowing library upon request.
4. Materials Returned
- a. Upon return, locally determined individual (e.g. special collections staff, ILL staff, etc.) unpacks item, compares item to initial condition report, and inspects material for any damage. If damage is found, the supplying library's ILL staff notify the borrowing library ILL staff of the irregularity discovered as well as any replacement, repair or other appropriate compensation required.
 - b. Locally determined individual(s) check in or update the local catalog, ILL system, and/or any special collections request management system to complete the request.
 - c. Locally determined individual returns item to shelf.

D. Packaging and Shipping Instructions for Special Collections Items

1. Locally determined individual(s) trained to manage interlibrary loan special requests must be on hand to pack material.
2. Locally determined individual (e.g. special collections staff, ILL staff, etc.) prepares a condition report for the special collections item at the time of packaging.
3. Include a copy of the condition report, usage/shipping restrictions, complete return shipping address information, and appropriate ILL paperwork with all loans.
4. Packaging Instructions for lenders:

- a. Wrap item in acid-free, lignin-free tissue paper as if it were a present.
 - i. Never use colored or dyed paper.
 - ii. Never use tape or other adhesives on the paper wrapping or the item.
 - b. Enclose item in a manner that will protect against moisture.
 - c. Wrap item in two layers of bubble wrap with no tape touching the underlying paper wrap.
 - d. Pack enclosed item in its own box.
 - i. Never use mailing envelopes, jiffy bags, padded mailers for special collections items.
 - ii. Pack to allow a minimum 2 inches of fill on all sides.
 - e. Seal all box seams with tape.
 - f. On the outside of the box or label, include note that the item must be opened by borrowing institution's locally determined individual(s) (e.g. ILL, special collections, archives and/or digitization staff).
5. Shipping
- a. Locally determined individual (e.g. special collections staff, ILL staff, etc) packages and ships the item with any additional instructions.
 - b. Ship materials using a carrier that offers tracking and insurance, such as FedEx, UPS, and DHL.
 - c. Ship materials early in the work week to avoid having materials spend time in transit or in mail holding areas on weekends. Shipping should not occur if there are outside mitigating factors that could delay package delivery (e.g. holidays, bad weather at lending or borrowing library's point of origin.).
6. Unpacking of received materials
- a. Assess the condition of packages before unpacking
 - b. Evaluate the item's condition, compare to any condition report sent by lender, and contact lender's ILL staff if any discrepancies are found.
 - c. Save packing materials for item's return only if they are in suitable condition for re-use.
 - d. If package appears damaged:
 - i. Document exterior of package before unpacking
 - ii. Document any damage to the item
 - iii. Immediately contact lending library
7. Packaging instructions for borrowing institutions
- a. Packing of borrowed materials must be done by institution's locally determined individual(s) (e.g. ILL, special collections, archives and/or digitization staff).
 - b. Pack returning item according to any instructions provided by the lending library. If no special instructions are given, use guidelines in this document.
 - c. Ship materials using a carrier that offers tracking and insurance, such as FedEx, UPS, and DHL.
 - d. Insure package for value denoted by lender.

E. Borrowing Requests: Physical Loans

1. Patron makes an interlibrary loan (ILL) request for a physical item.
2. Search open access resources (e.g. HathiTrust, Internet Archive, and specialized databases) for an existing digital copy if title was published 95+ years ago and is likely in the public domain.
 - a. If online copy is found, deliver PDF—or link to PDF—to user.
 - b. If not found, ILL staff sends request through traditional ILL to potential lenders who will reply with a conditional notification if an item is in a special collection.
3. Before attempting a special collection loan:
 - a. Exhaust all other domestic lenders first to try and obtain a loan from a general circulating collection.
 - b. If that fails, communicate with your local user to find out:
 - i. Is it critical for them to see the original material?
 - ii. Do they have a tight deadline?
 - iii. Are they willing to use the item in a special collections reading room with usage restrictions?
 - iv. Will a digital surrogate, microform copy (if available), or scan of a portion of the material suffice?
4. If a physical loan is desired, send new ILL request to lending library with their symbol at least 3 times in the lending string and include a borrowing note to indicate:

Special collections item requested. Other options exhausted. Please consult curator. Conditional with any usage/shipping restrictions.

Upon conditional reply, communicate with local user to confirm their acceptance of specific usage restrictions before replying Yes to the conditional and having the item sent.

5. Complete Facility Trust Checklist if requested by potential supplying library in order to assist their loan approval determination.
6. Inform locally designated individual(s) (e.g. ILL, special collections, archives, mailroom, etc.) that special collection item is coming so they may watch for it and handle it appropriately.
7. Upon item's arrival:
 - a. Update request in your ILL request management tool to indicate item has been received.
 - b. Evaluate the item's condition, compare to any condition report sent by lender, and contact lender's ILL staff if any discrepancies are found.
 - c. Place an acid-free paper streamer with piece, denoting username, due date, and transaction information. **No adhesive label, tape or sticky item will be applied to item.** Any accompanying paperwork from lender must also remain with the piece.
 - d. Email local user that special collections item has arrived. Notification should include:
 - i. Summary of lender's usage requirements.
 - ii. Where to go to see the material as well as the hours of operation.
 - iii. Contact information for local special collections personnel if appointment is advised.
 - iv. Carbon copy email message to locally designated special collections staff.

- e. Take item to locally designated special collections staff for secure storage until patron arrival.
8. Local user will follow all special instructions from lender as well as any local special collections' rules for user registration and material usage in the supervised reading room.
9. Locally determined individual(s) will check out/in the material in any special collections management system used (optional).
10. If user requests a scan of some small portion of the work for their individual research and reproduction is not prohibited as a condition of the loan:
 - a. Determine if scan request is in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
 - b. Determine appropriate staff/equipment to be used for scanning that will cause no harm to piece.
11. Locally determined individual(s) notify ILL staff when user is finished or due date has arrived and item can be returned.
12. ILL staff update transaction in ILL request management system to indicate item is being returned.
13. Determine appropriate staff person to carefully package item in accordance with any instructions stipulated by the lender. Include all paperwork with piece, including any condition report. See the **Packaging and Shipping Instructions for Special Collections Items** for specific instructions.
14. Ship materials using a carrier that offers tracking and insurance, such as FedEx, UPS, and DHL. Provide tracking information to lender upon request.