

## Planning Your Visit

Once you have confirmed an appointment to access rare books or materials from special collections, it is important to be aware of a few key considerations before your visit.

Researchers must register in-person at the **Reference Desk** on the main floor before entering the Special Collections Reading Room to view materials. While a University of Toronto Libraries borrowing card (TCard) is not necessary for accessing the collections, onsite registration is required during your initial visit.

## Registering to Use Rare Books

When you arrive for your appointment, you will be asked to present a piece of personal identification with your name, current address, and photograph to register as a researcher.

## Accessing the Title(s) You Have Requested

After you register, the staff will provide you with the books you wish to examine. It is important to note that at our Library, each researcher is given access to **one book at a time**. Rare books can only be consulted in the Special Collections Reading Room.

## Registering to Use Special Collections

When you arrive for your appointment, you will be asked to present a piece of personal identification with your name, current address, and photograph to register as a researcher to register.

- present a piece of personal identification with your name, current address, and photograph
- read and agree to the Library's *Policy on Access and Use of Manuscripts and Other Special or Rare Materials in Victoria University Library*
- complete and sign the *Application for Use of Manuscript Materials*.

Blank application forms and a copy of the policy will be provided to you by the staff at the Reference Desk.

## Accessing the Materials You Have Requested

After you register, the staff will provide you with the materials you wish to consult. It is important to note that at our Library, each researcher is given access to **one file at a time**. The materials can only be examined in the Special Collections Reading Room.

Our protocols differ from those of other libraries and archives, where researchers are often provided with multiple files in archival boxes simultaneously.

## Collection of Personal Information

The Library gathers selected personal information of researchers as part of the provision of the various services related to requesting and consulting rare books and special collections. This practice is outlined in the [Policy on the Collection of Personal Information](#).

## Working in the Special Collections Reading Room

While researchers are present, the Special Collections Reading Room is exclusively for the use of materials from special collections and rare books:

- the Reading Room is locked from the outside for security reasons and to ensure researchers remain undisturbed
- staff may limit what you can bring into the Reading Room, including bags and other personal belongings
- large personal items (such as coats, backpacks, and briefcases), should be placed against the back wall of the Reading Room due to space constraints
- the Reading Room is designated as a quiet study space, so conversations should be kept to a minimum as a courtesy to other researchers and all electronic devices should be kept on silent
- researchers are responsible for maintaining their own records about items they have consulted
- special collections materials and rare books must be returned to the Reference Desk at the end of your visit and any time you need to leave the Reading Room, even briefly.

## Handling Rare Books & Items from Special Collections

Library staff are able to provide guidance for handling any fragile materials. Here are some key considerations to keep in mind during your visit:

- all items must be handled with care and should be rested on the reading table (or in a book cradle), at all times. Under no circumstances should any material be placed on the researcher's lap, floor, chair, or any other location other than the reading table
- researchers should not force open tightly bound books and special weights are available to keep them open
- no books, papers, or other objects (except weights provided for holding books open) may be laid on or affixed to the materials
- the arrangement of the items in the special collections files must not be altered
- you can only use pencils, note paper, and your laptop to take notes as pens and highlighters are not allowed
- no food or drink (including water and gum) is allowed in the Reading Room
- smartphones, digital cameras, and hand-held scanners may be used for copying the items from special collections, but you are required to obtain prior permission from the staff and not use flash to take any photographs of the materials. Any photographs you take must only be used for research purposes and cannot be shared with others or published online.

## Wireless Access for Visiting Researchers

External researchers who are not affiliated with the University of Toronto can access the Internet by connecting to [eduroam](#), a roaming wi-fi service for users in research and higher education. It provides secure network access when visiting a university other than your own, using your login from your home institution.

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***Researchers are required to set up their credentials at their home institution prior to visiting the Library to access eduroam at the University of Toronto.*** Alternatively, visiting researchers can request [temporary access](#) to eduroam by using their mobile device.

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**Source URL:** [https://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special\\_collections/visit](https://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special_collections/visit)