

# Guidelines for Exhibit Cases in PCL

Revised December 2023

## Policy

Exhibits are a valuable part of the University of Texas for the opportunities they afford us to share, inform, educate, and promote UT Libraries' collections and services. Exhibits provide an excellent opportunity for the Libraries to engage in collaborative and interdisciplinary projects, especially with graduate students, faculty members and others in the University community. Items included in exhibits are primarily from the Libraries' collections and supplemented, as appropriate, with materials from other sources. Physical exhibitions created by the Libraries can have complementary online component(s) as appropriate. All online material created for, or in conjunction with exhibitions shall be permanently archived and publicly available in our online repository, [Texas ScholarWorks](#). The Libraries also create and host freely available, [online exhibitions](#) which may complement physical exhibitions and highlight the collections. This policy defines the philosophy and goals for exhibits and displays in the PCL but may be adapted to other Libraries' locations as stakeholders see fit. It identifies responsibility for these programs, and defines acceptance guidelines and general policies. The Exhibits Advisory Committee at UT Libraries, in consultation with others, will be responsible for updating and revising this policy.

## Goals

- Infuse concepts of community, connection, equity and accessibility
- Promote the diverse holdings and scholarly value of specific Library collections
- Promote the role of the Libraries, its collections, resources, services, and staff as central to the research and teaching programs of the University
- Encourage individuals from the University community to collaborate with the Libraries to showcase research and scholarship
- Support university events, programs, symposia, activities, and accomplishments
- Promote University and community relations

## Exhibits Advisory Committee

- Membership on the Exhibits Advisory Committee is reviewed annually by Committee members. Staff in Preservation & Digital Curation Services are to be consulted for every exhibit, whether they have a presence on the Committee or not.
- Inaugural committee chosen for experience with exhibits, events, materials, collaborations with departments, students or faculty; subsequent committee members chosen based upon interest.
- Interested staff can email the entire committee at: [pclexhibits@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:pclexhibits@utlists.utexas.edu)

## Communication methods

- Guidelines for handling exhibit submissions process will be hosted internally
- Exhibit policy and proposal form communicated:
  - On [PCL Exhibits](#) Webpage
  - In other areas as opportunities arise

## Selection Criteria

The following criteria apply as exhibit proposals are considered, although not all exhibits will meet all criteria. The Libraries reserves the right to approve or disapprove all exhibit requests, to have final approval for the layout of the exhibit, and to make all decisions regarding length of exhibit duration, placement of the exhibit within the Libraries, and content of publicity. Criteria includes:

- Relevance to Library collections
- Interdisciplinarity – exhibits that inspire conversations between disciplines

- Appropriateness to special events, anniversaries, holidays, etc.
- Relation to other events or exhibits in the community
- When the topic is controversial, an objective presentation is required
- Does not promote the partisan political, religious, or social doctrines of any single person or group
- Reflects vitality, originality, artistic expression, and experimentation
- Does not promote the financial profit of any individual, organization, or commercial enterprise
- Ease and cost of installation
- Exhibitor agrees to sign an exhibit proposal with the Libraries
- Other considerations:
  - Preservation issues: There are lights in the SC and in the case itself that need to be considered for their effect on paper and other materials. The Preservation Department has a light meter. Pages of books, for example, will need to have page turns scheduled during the length of the exhibit. Wendy Martin and the staff in Preservation can be consulted on matters of preservation.
  - Graduate student work considerations: should this exhibit be timed with a related piece of scholarship or the completion of a thesis/dissertation, timing may be considered.
  - Priority is given to submissions from or involving graduate students.
  - Working with a librarian or UT Libraries staff member is encouraged. It is the burden of the exhibitor to seek out appropriate Library staff partnerships, though a request for assistance can be made at the time of submitting an exhibits proposal.

#### Process

- Set up and takedown logistics (burden is on exhibitor)
  - Cradles and supports are available for checkout from Exhibits Advisory Committee.
  - Facsimiles: If requesting funding for printing, exhibitors should submit an itemized list for all printing needs, including for facsimiles, labels and supplementary materials. The Committee will base their determination on available funding. All scanning must be performed by exhibitor. Best practices for scanning images available upon request.
  - Publicity: exhibitors are responsible for all publicizing, beyond that which is available through the Libraries (TexLibris, social media, calendar entries). The UT Libraries' Communications Officer (contact available from Exhibits Advisory Committee) is available for consultations.
- The Exhibitor must provide an abstract and image(s) for the [Library Exhibits](#) collection in Texas ScholarWorks.
- The Libraries' Communications Officer is available for consultation in the creation of flyers, posters, and handbills.
- The Libraries' Communications Officer is also available for advice on media contacts.
- Security: The exhibit is displayed in a locked case located in the Scholars Commons in a visible, but not high traffic location. No other security measures are provided. Should the exhibitor include any personal items in the exhibit, the Libraries takes no responsibility for the security or welfare of these materials at any time, including during transport, installation, or dismantling. Before an exhibit is installed, exhibitors must sign a release, indemnifying the Libraries from any responsibility for loss or damage. The original signed Exhibit Release Form [pdf] will be retained by the Exhibits Advisory Committee.
- The exhibit will be permanently archived in Texas ScholarWorks - minimum information required for archiving includes:
  - Creator, title, date(s) of exhibit, department and at least one, but preferably more keywords.

#### Best Practices

- **Exhibit Aesthetics:** Exhibits must be well prepared, organized, and aesthetically pleasing. Using the dimensions of the exhibits case, the exhibitor should submit mockups for the placement of

materials and text/labels at the time of application. The exhibits case dimensions are 76H x 48W x 20"D. To see pictures of the brand and model of the current exhibits case, search for: Waddell Edge Exhibit Case. Documentation from manufacturer here:

<http://waddellfurniture.com/pdf/14/Edge.pdf>

- **Exhibit Duration:** Exhibits should have specific start and end dates, although the end date may be extended if the schedule allows. As a general rule, exhibits should be on display for two to three months, but shorter exhibit times are permissible. Since exhibit conditions place a strain on Library materials being displayed, exhibits running longer than three months are not encouraged, and should be undertaken only under exceptional circumstances. UT Libraries' Preservation Dept. will have final word on duration of display of Library materials.
- **Exhibit Materials Handling:** Exhibitors must handle books and artifacts gently and with conservation concerns in mind. In general, books should be displayed on bookstands, cradles or supports. The interior lighting in the case can be damaging to exhibited materials. Exhibitors should consider using facsimiles for fragile or light sensitive materials such as newspapers and photographs. No materials may be exhibited outside of the locked glass case.
- Preservation staff are experienced in the proper handling and display of unique and fragile materials, and can provide guidance to Library exhibitors. Special arrangements should be made in advance for consultation and questions by contacting our Preservation Dept. (contacts available through Exhibits Advisory Group)
  - See these sources for more information:
    - [ANSI/NISO Z39.79-2001 Environmental Conditions for Exhibiting Library and Archival Materials](#)
    - [NEDCC: Protecting Paper and Book Collections During Exhibition](#)
- Generally, when circulating Libraries materials are used in a display, the materials must be checked out using an exhibition check-out card available from Circulation. This will cause a special message to appear in the UT Libraries' Catalog that the item is "Unavailable – PCL Exhibit" for the duration of the exhibit. Exhibitors may place a card in the display noting that the materials will be available for check-out after the exhibit ends.
- **Exhibit Text/Labels:** Text should be word processed and printed on a high quality printer if not professionally designed and/or typeset.
  - Typeface should be a legible font such as Times New Roman, Century, or Arial
  - Text should have contrast, such as black on white.
  - Introductory panels should be 150-170 words or less
  - Captions for individual items should be 20-30 words
  - Font size should be at least 28 point for introductory text panels. For secondary text panels, 18 point is acceptable if the reader can be within 20 inches. For text that only contains a few lines of copy, 14 point is acceptable.
- **Exhibit Support Materials:**
  - Bibliographies, brochures and other promotional material and/or instructional materials to accompany an exhibit are strongly recommended but not mandatory.
  - Exhibits will have a presence on Texas ScholarWorks.
  - Exhibitors are responsible for preparing the content of the publications associated with their exhibit. Examples include: a bibliographical list of items displayed; a brochure; an exhibit catalog.
  - The Libraries also create and host online exhibitions which complement physical exhibitions and highlight the collections. Online exhibitions are freely available and accessible year round.