

Procedures

Museum and Archive Collections Management and Development Policy

PROCEDURES

Procedures relating to:	Collections Management and Development Policy
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PROCEDURES

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
POLICY TITLE

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PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

These standards and procedures support the implementation of the Collections Management Policy.

2. DOCUMENTATION

We will implement a documentation programme to ensure that each object or archive in the collection will have:

- documentary proof of legal title that also meets ethical standards;
- an identity number which uniquely identifies the object or record with that catalogue entry;
- the identity number labelled or otherwise marked on the object;
- a robust link with all associated documentation;
- an accurate and up-to-date record of location;

All documentation procedures in relation to museum objects will comply with [SPECTRUM: the UK Museum Collections Management Standard](#); Version 4: 2011. We will achieve this by following a standard procedural manual to implement the 8 Primary Procedures set out in the SPECTRUM standard.

Archives will be catalogued in accordance with standards set out by the [International Council on Archives International Standards of Archival Description](#) (General) 2nd edition, International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families and National Council on Archives Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names and as recommended in the cataloguing manual and the Archive Accreditation Standard.

Object/archive Entry. All objects and archives received by the University from third parties or transferred to The Museum and Archives from other Schools or Services for potential donation, purchase, loan or identification must be recorded on an Entry Form. Access restrictions and any timescales attached to these, ownership of intellectual property rights and any contextual information about the creation and ownership of the collection should be documented.

Acquisition. If an item is to be retained as part of the collection, an Item Number (accession number) must be allocated and recorded in CALM, this is in addition to the Entry Number.

Reference number. Once catalogued, archives will be given a permanent reference number.

Location and Movement Control. Any object or archive leaving its normal location for a period exceeding ten working days will have that location change recorded in the Collections Management System (CMS).

Production record. Any records or textiles temporarily removed from the store rooms for the purpose of use in the search room, display, conservation or loan will have this recorded in a production slip for purposes of production statistics and audit.

Cataloguing. A catalogue record must be created in the Collections Management System (CALM database) for all items entering the collection. The record will contain the following information as a minimum: for objects, object number, object name, number of parts, brief physical description, reference to acquisition and location information. For archives, reference number, title, date, level, extent and

medium of description for item level descriptions and in addition an administrative history and scope and content note for fonds-level descriptions.

Object/archive Exit. All material leaving the control of the Archive or Museum Service whether outward loan, temporary transfers of material for conservation, permanent transfers to other institutions, or destruction due to damage, must be recorded on an Exit Form.

Loans In. All incoming loans must be recorded on an entry form.

Loans Out. All outgoing loans must be recorded on an exit form.

Retrospective Documentation. The Museum Curator and Archivist will review the records held within the Collections Management System to update object location information where required and continue the programme of cataloguing uncatalogued records either donated or transferred from the records management system. This will be undertaken in accordance with the schedule contained within the documentation section of the Collections forward plan. Progress against this schedule will be monitored through the University planning, performance and development review cycle.

Physical security and long term preservation of documentation records

The Museum curator and Archivist will store original entry and accession records, which provide evidence of transfer of title, in paper format, hold these securely in locked storage and scan and retain electronic copies on a secure drive on the University's centrally backed up IT systems/

The contractor (Axiell) responsible for hosting and maintaining the Collections Management System (CALM Database) will make regular backups of the catalogue. The Museum Curator and Archivist will liaise with the contractor to provide assurance of its business continuity and contingency planning and information security measures to ensure the confidentiality availability and integrity of our collections management data.

3. COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION

The Museum and Archive Service will implement the following standards of collections care, preventive and remedial conservation, with the input and support of other relevant professional services staff and external specialists in accordance with relevant UK and international professional standards.

Preventive Conservation

Preventive conservation is the planned and controlled change to the environment and surroundings of an object to reduce or eliminate, as far as possible, the known aspects of that object's deterioration. The following measures will be implemented to achieve this:

Provision of suitable building conditions

Collections will be safeguarded through the management of the following systems

- building maintenance

- intruder alarms
- fire and evacuation systems

When campus capital developments and building, refurbishment or maintenance works are planned, Museum and Archive staff will be involved in the planning process to consider any opportunities to improve collections accommodation and ensure that appropriate action is taken to mitigate any risks to the collections.

Digital Preservation

Digital surrogates of analogue archives and born-digital archives will be stored and managed in Preservica Cloud Edition to ensure fixity, security and access in accordance with the University's Digital Preservation Policy.

Environmental monitoring

Museum and Archive staff will

- monitor the environment in storage and display areas, to measure and record relative humidity (rh) and temperature
- collect environmental data using continuous recording systems and hand held meters
- collate, utilise and act upon data to provide stable and appropriate collection environments
- monitor, manage and eradicate pests

Environmental control

Archive and Museum staff will store and display collections in a managed environment that minimises their rate of deterioration, using the following control factors and methods with reference to BS4971 and BS/EN16893.

- Relative humidity (RH): for general mixed media collections, 35 -60% RH with less than a 10% fluctuation in any 24 hour period
- Temperature: 13-20° centigrade
- Visible light and UV radiation: exposure of sensitive material to both visible and UV light will be kept to a minimum
- Display case construction: where appropriate, objects on display will be cased and, if appropriate, the internal case environments tailored to suit the objects within.

Storage

Where practicable, stored collections will be housed in cupboards, inert crates, boxes, covered racking or covered pallets to protect against dust.

All archives and textiles will be housed in acid free boxes, tissue and bags in accordance to the documented procedures to protect against dust, insects, acid migration, water and UV light damage

Control methods to be used:

- Relative Humidity (RH): localised buffering material, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, air conditioning
- Temperature: air handling units and localised heating
- Visible light: daylight exclusion, blinds, filtering films
- UV Radiation: filtering films, daylight exclusion

Housekeeping

Housekeeping programmes including regular cleaning of collections storage, display and study facilities will be established and followed.

Quarantine procedures

New acquisitions and incoming materials will be inspected for signs of infestation and mould and, if necessary, held in quarantine pending appropriate treatment. Only then will such objects be introduced into stores or displays containing other collection items.

Pest monitoring

Areas containing vulnerable collections will be monitored using insect traps that are checked at least once every three months. Should pests be detected, the trap contents will be recorded and the area monitored rigorously to locate and eradicate the source.

Handling, moving and transport

Collections items are particularly at risk when being moved or handled. Objects and archives from the Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive collections will only be moved under the supervision of a member of Information Services. Where appropriate, objects and archives that are transported will be suitably wrapped or crated to give them the most suitable protection. Museum and Archive staff will follow the University insurance procedures to ensure that collections items in transit or housed away from the University are appropriately insured at all times.

Risk and Security Management

The Museum and Archive staff will follow the University Risk management process, using the Information Services Risk Register to identify and record risks to the collections and report these to the Global Director of Information Services and Head of Risk and Audit Services in order to agree and prioritise mitigating actions and ensure that the register is kept up to date.

Museum and Archive staff

- Are responsible for controlling and supervising access to all collections items held in store or retrieved from storage for study
- Will liaise with the Head of Risk and Audit Services and the Operational Security Manager to agree and put in place appropriate security controls to manage risks to the collections in storage and on display
- Will obtain expert security advice for stored and exhibited collections at least every five years and earlier if needed. The service will develop an action plan in response to assessment recommendations and ensure that this is factored into strategic and operational plans

Insurance

Heritage and Information Governance staff will follow the University insurance management procedures to compile and update comprehensive insurance schedules for the collections and report these to Head of Risk and Audit Services so that the collections can be properly insured. The Museum Curator and Archivist will liaise with the Head of Risk and Audit Services and the owners of items loaned to the University

collections to obtain and update valuations of collections items to ensure that they have appropriate insurance cover.

Disaster planning

The Museum and Archive will maintain a disaster plan and appropriate disaster equipment will be located at all collections stores. The staff will be responsible for training Information Services staff which are part of the dedicated disaster team in disaster response at the Edinburgh and Scottish Borders Campuses, and the plan will be tested annually.

Remedial Conservation

Remedial conservation is the active treatment of an object to stabilise its condition, or to enhance its condition, or some aspect of its significance for study and interpretation.

Heritage and Information Governance staff will work in accordance with the following principles

- We will employ only appropriately qualified and experienced conservators and collections care staff to carry out conservation work. All conservators will be registered on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON) and where available, professionally accredited
- We will maintain records of all treatments in accordance with SPECTRUM standards

4. ACCESS

Access to collections involves providing physical proximity to objects and archives and intellectual use of the information and knowledge relating to them.

We provide physical access to the collections through display, temporary exhibitions, access to study our archive and reserve collections and loans to and from other heritage and cultural organisations.

Intellectual access involves making information about objects and archives available through exhibitions, catalogues and other publications in paper and/or electronic formats, and photographic media, and access to supplementary information about the collections.

In delivering our access services we will act in accordance with relevant professional standards. These include

- Museums Association, [Ethical Guidelines 4: Access](#)
- Museums Association, [Code of Ethics for Museums](#)
- National Council on Archives Public Services Quality Group: [A Standard for Access for Archives, 2008](#)

Maximising Access

In order to maximise access, we will

- advertise exhibitions
- offer facilities for the study and use of collections in our Museum and Archive and Textile Collection search rooms. These facilities are open to all, at

advertised times and by arrangement, within the constraints on access and use detailed below and subject to collection handling guidelines

- make no discrimination regarding access on the basis of physical, sensory or intellectual ability, cultural origin, age or social status, and will seek to widen general access and social inclusion
- work in partnership with other institutions to arrange incoming and outgoing loans to promote access and appreciation of our collections and enhance the visitor experience
- develop on-line catalogues to our collections providing global access to information about them
- submit annual surveys of new accessions to the National Register of Archives
- submit catalogue entries to collaborative partnerships including the Archives Hub
- use social media to raise awareness of the collections, service and events
- Have a programme of digitization to allow remote access to collections items and to limit handling of originals

Conditions of access

Access and use must be balanced against the need for conservation, care and security of, or any ethical sensitivity to objects or archives to ensure their long-term survival. Accordingly, we may refuse any request for access that might jeopardise the long-term future of any item in the collections. We will offer full reasons for a refusal if that is our decision. However, we will provide the opportunity to examine a photograph or replica of the item concerned, whenever reasonably possible.

In some cases, we will restrict access to objects or archives of particularly high value, fragility or sensitivity to students, scholars and others with a demonstrable need to see the material.

We may limit access to particular parts of the collections (e.g. radioactive specimens) by the need to comply with Health & Safety legislation.

Copying or reproduction of any Museum information or materials will be subject to compliance with copyright legislation.

We will not grant access to objects or archives of specific cultural significance when there is reason to suspect that there is intention to trivialise or sensationalise the specimens or if the request fails to meet any access requirement restrictions.

We will respond to requests for collection-related information, in accordance with the European Union General Data Protection Regulation, the UK Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Scotland Act 2002, Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations and any other relevant legislation. It may sometimes be necessary for us to apply lawful exemptions to the public right of access under this legislation to keep confidential information regarding the acquisition of objects or archives, for instance, in order to protect vulnerable sites or in order to respect an individual's rights to privacy..

We may limit access to originals when the items have been digitized and a digital surrogate is available through the on-line catalogue to limit handling of the original.

Where items are located in an outstore or at another Campus advance notice of which items are needed for research is required to allow staff time to retrieve these records. Staff would not be able to produce these on the day.

Loans

All loans into and out of the University collections will be for a finite, fixed term. Where appropriate there will be the option to renew the loan for a further term by mutual agreement.

All items loaned to the Museum and Archive will receive the same standards of collections management as we apply to our own collections.

All loans to other organisations are subject to the requirements for care, documentation and management set out in our Collections Management Policy and Procedures.

Charges

We provide access free of charge

- to our museum displays and temporary exhibitions
- for study and research in our collections search rooms
- for loans to other museums, galleries and archives, provided that the borrower bears any costs associated with the transport, care and insurance of the loaned items

We may charge for

- special events
- filming, photography or reproduction of images for commercial purposes
- research services that we agree to undertake, for instance genealogical research using the University's archives
- publications
- copies of information or photographs, where copying is permissible under copyright legislation
- responding to complex or repeated requests for information in cases where we are allowed to charge in accordance with the fees regulations under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations, European Union General Data Protection Regulation, the UK Data Protection Act and any other relevant legislation.

5. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

Helen Taylor, Archivist h.e.taylor@hw.ac.uk

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6. DEFINITIONS

Collections

Any items entered in the Accession Registers kept by Heriot-Watt Archive and Museum Service, whether as gift, or purchase, together with any items not entered in the Accession Registers, but in the possession of the University at the date of approval of this policy, which were donated, loaned or purchased with the intention that they should become part of the Collections

Archives

Records, in any format, which have been created by an organisation or individual in the course of their activities

and functions and selected for permanent preservation for their historical or evidential value.

Fonds

The archival cataloguing term for the archives of one person or organisation – the highest level of archival arrangement

7. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. XX	10 March 2021	Finance Committee	Changed to reflect new reporting and Committee structure and professional standards

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