

# Collections Management Policy

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Responsible Office:	Heritage and Information Governance

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy regulates the management of the Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive collections. The adoption and implementation of such a policy is a requirement of the Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom which is managed in Scotland by Museums Galleries Scotland.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Collections Management Policy is to set out the standards by which the Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive collections are managed.

The Policy sets out objectives and standards for

- documentation
- collections care and conservation
- access

## 3. OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 DOCUMENTATION

Heriot-Watt University will implement an appropriate collections documentation programme to

- improve accountability for the museum and archive collections;
- maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information and attain the very highest standards wherever possible;
- extend access to collection information;
- strengthen the security of the collections.

We will put in place measures to ensure the physical security and long term preservation of all documentation records in all formats.

### 3.2 CONSERVATION AND COLLECTIONS CARE

The collections can only benefit present and future users if professional standards of care are applied to ensure their long term survival. Heriot-Watt University aims to store, handle, display and use its collections in a way that minimises the risk of damage and deterioration.

To achieve this objective, Heritage and Information Governance will

- develop and implement a comprehensive and continuous collections care and conservation programme, in accordance with the standards and procedures that underpin this policy
- control and supervise access to all collections items held in store or retrieved from storage for study
- supervise the handling and transport of all collections items
- specify and monitor the environmental conditions and security controls in which the collections are housed and displayed, and recommend enhanced controls as appropriate
- apply the University risk management process to identify and mitigate risks to the collections
- ensure that all collections are properly insured
- arrange for collections to receive remedial conservation when needed and ensure that all conservation is carried out by appropriately qualified and

experienced conservators and collections care specialists and that treatment is documented in line with professional standards

- set conditions of loan and ensure that all organisations that wish to borrow items from our collections comply with the University's collections management standards and procedures

### **3.3 ACCESS**

We aim to provide the greatest opportunity for everyone to access and enjoy our collections within the reasonable constraints of resources, conservation and security.

In delivering our policy on access to and use of our collections, we aim to:

- encourage members of all sectors of the community to access and use objects, archives and associated collections information
- commit to providing longer-term and temporary exhibitions of objects in the collections;
- seek opportunities for incoming and outgoing loans to increase access, appreciation and enjoyment of the collections
- offer physical and/or intellectual access to collections through outreach programmes, events, digital media, activities and lectures.
- ensure that access and use does not compromise conservation, care and security of, or any ethical sensitivity to objects or archives to ensure their long-term survival.
- act in accordance with relevant professional standards

Wherever possible, we provide access to our museum and archive collections free of charge to visitors and researchers. The circumstances in which we may charge for services related to our collections are set out in the Access section of our Collections Management Standards and Procedures.

## **4. SCOPE**

This policy applies to any item in the possession of Heriot-Watt University which has been accessioned into the University Museum and Archive collections or may be considered for potential acquisition into the collections.

## **5. LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY**

The University Court, as the Governing Body, has overall responsibility for the stewardship of the collections.

The Court has delegated authority to the Finance Committee to have oversight of the University's museum and archive collections and to review and oversee the work of the Collections Committee to preserve, promote access to and develop the collections.

The Collections Committee reports to the Finance Committee and recommends strategy and policy, in order to preserve, promote access to and develop the University's museum and archive collections.

The Secretary of the University has senior management accountability for the stewardship of the collections and approves the Heritage and Information Governance strategic plan. The Secretary of the University is the Chair of the University Collections Committee and is in attendance at the Finance Committee.

The Director of Governance and Legal Services has management responsibility for the Heritage and Information Governance Service, which is responsible for the management of the Museum and Archive Collections.

The Director of Campus Services, as the senior officer with responsibility for the delivery of the estate strategy and the management of estate and buildings services, is responsible for maintaining the University accommodation in which the collections are housed and for liaising with the Head of Heritage and Information Governance to maintain and enhance collections storage and access facilities and to mitigate any risks to the collections in the course of development and building works.

The Head of Heritage and Information Governance is the professional officer responsible for the management of the University Collections according to appropriate professional standards. This officer is responsible for recommending policy and strategy for the University Collections to the Collections Committee and thence to Finance Committee and the University Court and for making an annual report on the management of the Collections.

The Curator and Archivist are responsible for recommending to the Head of Heritage and Information Governance collections management standards and procedures and for developing and implementing a programme of collections documentation, care and access in accordance with these standards and procedures.

## **6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Head of Heritage and Information Governance will

- Make regular line management reports to the Director of Governance and Legal Services on the management of the Collections.
- Report annually to the Collections Committee and thence to the Finance Committee on the management of the Collections
- Make an Accreditation return as required to Museums Galleries Scotland, providing evidence that the Collections are managed in compliance with the Museum Accreditation Standard.
- Seek input and feedback from the Collections Advisory and User Group, the Digital Preservation Group and other internal and external stakeholders on the effectiveness of the University collections management programmes and consider opportunities to enhance service delivery and user engagement in the light of evolving professional standards and best practice.

## **7. IMPLEMENTATION**

Heritage and Information Governance will achieve the objectives of this policy by implementing the Collections Management Standards and Procedures that have been developed in support of this policy

## **8. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FURTHER REFERENCE**

### **Policies**

Collections Management and Development Policy

### **Procedures**

Collections Management Standards and Procedures

## Further reference

Museum Accreditation Standard

[http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/accreditation\\_standard\\_english\\_web.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/accreditation_standard_english_web.pdf)

Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums

<http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>

SPECTRUM: the UK Museum Collections Management Standard

Version 4: 2011

<http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/spectrum>

## 9. DEFINITIONS

Heriot-Watt University  
Museum and Archive

Those premises, staff and collections of original material managed by Head of Heritage and Information Governance. At the time of adoption of this Policy, this principally encompasses the University Museum and Archive at the Mary Burton Centre at the University's Edinburgh campus at Riccarton, the University Textile Collection at the Scottish Borders Campus at Galashiels, collections held in University owned or leased storage facilities as well as various works of art, archives and historic objects throughout the various campuses of the University. The term "Museum" is used in a functional sense, and may at all times be taken to subsume the terms "Gallery", "Art Gallery", "Heritage Centre", "Archive" or otherwise as appropriate.

Collections

Any items entered in the Accession Registers kept by Heriot-Watt University Heritage and Information Governance, 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.

## 10 FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

Further information about the scope and implementation of this policy is available from Heritage and Information Governance.

Telephone 0131 451 3218 email [heritage@hw.ac.uk](mailto:heritage@hw.ac.uk)

<http://www.hw.ac.uk/heritage-information-governance/>

## 11. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. 1.0	xx.xx.xxxx	e.g. UE	



# Collections Management Standards and Procedures

PROCEDURES

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY**  
**STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES TO SUPPORT COLLECTIONS**  
**MANAGEMENT POLICY**

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## 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 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 will comply with SPECTRUM: the UK Museum Collections Management Standard; Version 4: 2011

<http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/spectrum>

In addition we will document archives 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.

<http://www.ica.org/10206/standards/standards-list.html>

We will achieve this by following a standard procedural manual to implement the 8 Primary Procedures set out in the SPECTRUM standard.

**Object/archive Entry.** All objects and archives received by the University from third parties or objects transferred to Heritage and Information Governance from other Schools or Services for potential donation, purchase, loan or identification must be recorded on an Entry Form.

**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.

**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).

**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 Heritage and Information Governance 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.** Heritage and Information Governance staff will review the records held within the Collections Management System to update object location information where required and continue the programme of appraisal of records held in storage for potential accession into the institutional archive. 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**

Heritage and Information Governance staff 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. We 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.

Heritage and Information Governance, Information Services and the Contractor will work together to agree and implement measures to ensure long term preservation and access to our collections data through systems upgrade, migration or emulation, in the context of the University's wider digital preservation and digital asset management programme.

## **3 COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION**

Heritage and Information Governance 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.

### **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, Heritage and Information Governance 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.

### **Environmental monitoring**

Heritage and Information Governance 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**

Heritage and Information Governance 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 PD 5454 2012: Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials

- 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.

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, 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 3 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 Heritage and Information Governance staff. Where appropriate objects and archives that are transported will be suitably wrapped or crated to give them the most suitable protection. Heritage and Information Governance 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 Head of Heritage and Information Governance will follow the University Risk management process, using the Heritage and Information Governance Risk Register to identify and record risks to the collections and report these to the Director of Governance and Legal 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.

Heritage and Information Governance 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 Head of HIG 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**

Heritage and Information Governance staff will liaise with colleagues in other professional services to maintain Disaster Plans and procedures for collections salvage and business continuity for all venues housing museum and archive collections, review these plans regularly and update them where necessary.

### **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  
<http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=8352>
- Museums Association, Code of Ethics for Museums  
<http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>
- National Council on Archives Public Services Quality Group:  
A Standard for Access for Archives, 2008  
[http://www.archives.org.uk/images/documents/access\\_standard\\_2008.pdf](http://www.archives.org.uk/images/documents/access_standard_2008.pdf)

### **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

### **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 Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 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 request for confidentiality).

### **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 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 Data Protection Act 1988 and any other relevant legislation

We will publish details of our charges in the Heriot-Watt University Guide to Information.

## 5. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

Further information about the scope and implementation of these standards and procedures is available from Heritage and Information Governance.

Telephone 0131 451 3218 email [heritage@hw.ac.uk](mailto:heritage@hw.ac.uk)  
<http://www.hw.ac.uk/heritage-information-governance/>

## 6. DEFINITIONS

<b>Collections</b>	Any items entered in the Accession Registers kept by Heriot-Watt Heritage and Information Governance, 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
<b>Archives</b>	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.
<b>Fonds</b>	The archival cataloguing term for the archives of one person or organisation – the highest level of archival arrangement

## 7. PROCEDURES VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. 2.0	xx.xx.xxxx	n/a	