

Museum and Archive Collections Development Policy

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POLICY

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Policy regulating the acquisition and disposal of items which form part of the Museum and Archive collections of Heriot-Watt University. 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

This policy sets out a framework for responsible and ethical acquisition and disposal of material which forms part of the collections of Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive.

The acquisition, management and disposal of the collections will be guided by:

- The constitution and statement of purpose of Heriot-Watt Museum and Archive
- The legal basis on which the collections are held
- The public benefit derived from the effective use and management of the collection
- An assessment of the needs of the collections
- The collections held by other museums, archives and relevant organisations collecting in the same or related fields

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 Museum's statement of purpose

The Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive Collections are our corporate memory. Our collections record the University's unique heritage from its ground-breaking origins in 1821 as the Edinburgh School of Art, the world's first Mechanics Institute, and continue to develop to reflect our current achievements and future plans. Our collections reflect the history of our campuses and the communities in which they are based and our dynamic evolution into a global University with Scottish roots.

We develop our collections to support and document learning, teaching and research, enhance and reflect the student experience, celebrate the achievements and diversity of the University community and promote University values. We make our collections accessible for everyone to enjoy. We preserve and hold in trust our Collections for current and future generations, to advance knowledge, culture, science, education and heritage for the widest public benefit.

3.2 Key aims

The University Heritage and Information Governance Service (HIG) is responsible for acquiring and managing the Museum and Archive Collections. The Service supports the University's mission and contributes to its strategic priorities by:

- Developing, preserving, managing and promoting use of the University's museum and archive collections, in accordance with professional standards
- Recommending and implementing strategy, policies and procedures to promote the effective management of University information in all formats throughout its lifecycle, to meet operational, legal and evidential

requirements, and to ensure the long term preservation and accessibility of records that are of archival value.

3.3 Objectives of the Collections Development Policy

This policy provides a framework of responsibilities and accountabilities to govern the acquisition and disposal of items that may fall within the scope of the University Museum and Archive collections. The content and provisions of the policy have been developed to meet the requirements of the Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom Collections Development Policy Template, revised in 2014.

The University Court, as the governing body, will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency

By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the Museum and Archive collections.

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums and archives. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

3.4 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museums Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

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 collection or may be considered for potential acquisition into the collection.

4.1 History of the collections

The University museum and archive collections were first brought together under the stewardship of the University Archive, established in 1982. Artefacts and archives reflecting the history and development of the University formed the core of the collections, together with deposited archives and art and sculpture acquired by commission, purchase or donation. On the merger of the Scottish College of Textiles with the University in 1998, the extensive Textile Collection developed by the College became an integral part of the University museum and archive collections under the care of the University Archive, Records Management and Museum Service. The University opened a museum at its Edinburgh campus in 2003 and gained full Registered museum status in the same year. The University

has continued to develop its museum and archive collections to reflect and support its mission and the development of its international activities and campuses.

4.2 An overview of current collections

The collections consist of museum objects and archives in all formats and media.

The Art Collection includes portraits of people associated with the University and its predecessor institutions as well as the history of the Riccarton estate on which the Edinburgh campus is built. These include portraits of the Gibson-Craig family, which owned Riccarton, by Raeburn and of James Watt by Beechey and Harvey as well as portraits of members of the University staff. There are also contemporary works including works by artists of the Edinburgh School and sculptures commissioned for display on campus. Also, on loan to the National Museum of Scotland, is a statue of James Watt by Sir Francis Chantrey.

The Archive Collection includes records of the University and its predecessor institutions from the ground-breaking origins of the Edinburgh School of Arts, the first Mechanics Institute which gave working men access to scientific education, in 1821. The archives trace the University's contribution to education, science, industry and society within Scotland, the UK and internationally. Deposited archive collections, dating from the 15th century to the present, record the heritage of the communities around the Edinburgh campus. These include the papers of the Gibson-Craig family who owned the Riccarton Estate and the research archive and photograph collection of local historian John Tweedie. Other deposited archives include the records of Leith Nautical College, the papers of Sir Robert Blair and a significant body of company archives within the University Textile Collection, such as the mill records of leading tweed manufacturers R and A Sanderson.

The Object Collection comprises material relating to the history of the University and to people and activities associated with it. Much of the collection has been acquired by accumulation from the academic schools and professional services. Examples include laboratory equipment and scientific instruments. There are also ceremonial objects such as the Mace and Watt Club baton and material associated with students, such as prizes and medals. Among the highlights of the collection are a model engine made by James Nasmyth in 1826 and items associated with James Watt including an example of the copying press invented by him and a chair owned by him. Also, on loan to the Scottish Mining Museum, is a beam engine made by Walkinshaw of Bridgeton in the 1790s.

The Textile Collection is acknowledged to be of international research significance for the history of design, textiles and fashion from the 18th century to the present. The institutional archives of the University and its predecessor bodies are an important source for the development of textile education in response to industry needs. The scope of the deposited collection goes beyond tweed, tartan and highland dress to embrace company archives and pattern books, couture fabric and apparel from revolutionary textile designer and colourist Bernat Klein; iconic prints and patterns for interior design from Dundee based Donald Brothers; Paisley shawls from Edinburgh, Turkey and Kashmir and woven and embroidered fabrics from Africa and the Middle East to China and the far East.

4.3 Themes and priorities for future collecting

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will collect objects, works of art and archives in all formats and media. The criteria which govern collection are detailed below but may be summarised as follows:

- Heriot-Watt University: our heritage and development, current mission and strategic plans
- Community heritage: the history of the Riccarton estate on which the Edinburgh campus is built and its links with our local communities
- Textile heritage, reflecting the University's Scottish roots and global mission
- Works of art, with emphasis on artists of the Edinburgh School

Heriot-Watt University

We will develop our collections to document, and where appropriate to support, learning, teaching and research, enhance and reflect the student experience, celebrate the achievements and diversity of the University community and promote University values. We will collect historical and contemporary material to ensure that our corporate memory appropriately reflects our history, our current mission, our strategic plans and priorities and the experiences and achievements of our staff, students, alumni and other members of the University community on all of our campuses in Edinburgh, Galashiels, Orkney, Dubai and Malaysia and in the course of our activities worldwide.

Our collections will contain material associated with the University and its predecessor institutions, listed below from 1821, their place within Scottish education, scientific, industrial and cultural history and people associated with them.

- The Edinburgh School of Arts
- The Watt Institution and School of Arts
- Heriot-Watt College
- The Galashiels Combined Technical School
- The South of Scotland Central Technical College
- The Scottish Woollen Technical College
- The Scottish College of Textiles

Community heritage

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will collect material associated with the history of the Riccarton estate on which the Edinburgh campus is built, from the 13th century to the present, and the communities associated with it such as the Craig and Gibson-Craig families.

Textile Heritage

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will acquire objects and archives to support learning, teaching and research relating to Scottish textile heritage especially that associated with the Scottish Borders, and the history of design and fashion from the 18th century to the present. The scope of collecting will reflect the global nature of University business and culturally diverse influences on Scottish design. The University also collects examples of student work which represent current trends, standards and achievements.

Art

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will collect art connected with the history and development of the University, such as portraits, landscapes, sculpture and images of buildings. The Museum and Archive collects and commissions 20th

century and contemporary art with particular emphasis on works by artists of the Edinburgh School.

Archives

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive collects archives in all formats and will apply the University's records retention and digital preservation policies to appraise and select University records worthy of permanent preservation. In accordance with professional archive practice, Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will apply appraisal procedures to assess and select archives offered by external donors or depositors. This involves appraising and selecting records for retention during the process of arranging and cataloguing, retaining, for instance, only samples of routine transactional records.

4.4 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

Such rationalisation and disposal may take place:

- To remove from the collections any item that is too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any further use for the purposes of Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive.
- To improve the curatorial care of the collections by the disposal of duplicate or unprovenanced material of low intrinsic relevance to the Collections Development Policy.
- To transfer to the ownership of another accredited museum or archive any item which, by reasons of changes in public, social or educational need, administrative responsibility, development priorities, or the establishment of a new accredited museum or archive, the Head of Heritage and Information Governance advises the University would be more appropriately placed elsewhere.

4.5 Collecting policies of other museums

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums and archives:

- Dumfries Council Archives
- Edinburgh City Archives (City of Edinburgh Council)
- Edinburgh Museums and Art Galleries City of Edinburgh Council)
- National Galleries of Scotland
- National Library of Scotland
- National Museums Scotland

- National Records of Scotland
- Scottish Borders Archive and Local History Service
- Scottish Borders Council Museum and Gallery Service

4.6 Archival holdings

As Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002).

4.7 Policy review procedure

The acquisition and disposal policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the acquisition and disposal policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

4.8 Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

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; to approve any acquisitions with significant resource implications and any proposed disposal of items from the collections; and to review and oversee the work of the Collections Committee to preserve, promote access to and develop the collections.

The University Executive is the University's primary operational management decision-making body. It has management oversight of the University's assets and resources; is responsible for advancing the strategic planning and development of the University and for presenting recommendations to the Court for approval; ensuring that the University operates within all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements; approving, on behalf of University management, University policies and procedures which require the approval of the Court and recommending those policies and procedures to the Court for approval; receiving for its information, corporate policies and procedures for which it has delegated management approval authority to another body.

The Collections Committee reports to the University Executive and 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 collections forward plan. The Secretary of the University is the Chair of the University Collections Committee, a member of the University Executive and is in attendance at the Finance Committee.

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

The Head of Heritage and Information Governance is the professional officer responsible for the operation of Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive and 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 potential acquisitions and disposals to the Head of Heritage and Information Governance, for delegated approval or escalation as appropriate, and for implementing the acquisition and disposal procedures.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 6.1** The Head of Heritage and Information Governance will make regular line management reports to the Director of Governance and Legal Services on the management and development of the Collections in accordance with this policy.
- 6.2** Heritage and Information Governance will maintain a permanent record of items accessioned into or disposed from the University Collections and will report annually to the Collections Committee and thence to the Finance Committee on objects and archives accessioned into the collections and any items recommended for disposal.
- 6.3** Heritage and Information Governance will liaise with internal stakeholders in Schools, Institutes and Professional Services and external users as appropriate, to promote the use of the collections, evaluate the effectiveness of the Collections Development Policy in supporting the University's mission and consider potential areas for collections development.
- 6.4** Heritage and Information Governance will set up a Digital Preservation Group to oversee the implementation of a digital preservation strategy and programme for the University's s electronic archives.
- 6.5** The Head of Heritage and Information Governance will make an Accreditation return as required to Museums Galleries Scotland, providing evidence of compliance with the Accreditation Standard.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Acquisition

- a. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is as follows. All potential acquisitions of items that fall within the remit of this policy must be referred to the Head of Heritage and Information Governance for approval. Where appropriate, authority to acquire collections items will be delegated by the Head of Heritage and Information Governance to the Curator and Archivist. Where potential acquisitions have significant financial or collections care implications that cannot be met within the resources delegated to Heritage and Information Governance the Head will ask the Secretary of the

University and Collections Committee to seek approval from the University Executive and Finance Committee for the acquisition.

- b. Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- c. Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- d. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- e. The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.
- f. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- g. Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive museum will not acquire any archaeological material.
- h. Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:
 - acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

7.2 Spoliation

Heriot-Watt University Museum and Archive will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

7.3 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects

The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the Heritage and Information Governance service's professional staff, may take a decision to return objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 7.5a-7.5d, and 7.5f below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

7.5 Disposal procedures

- a. All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- b. The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- c. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

Motivation for disposal

- d. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or, as a last resort - destruction.
- e. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
 - the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored
 - extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
 - the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection

The disposal decision-making process

- f. The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations

collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- g. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

Disposal by gift or sale

- h. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums or Archives likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- i. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums or Archives to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through a notice on the Museums Association's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist publications and websites if appropriate.
- j. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

Use of proceeds of sale

- k. Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Museums Galleries Scotland.
- l. The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation

standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

Disposal by exchange

- m. The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

- n. If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
 - Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
 - Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
 - The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

Documenting disposal

- o. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

8. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FURTHER REFERENCE

8.1 Policies

[Information Governance and Records Management Policy](#)
[Collections Management Policy](#)
[Digital Preservation Policy](#)

8.2 Procedures

Acquisition and Disposal Procedures

8.3 Further reference

Terms of Reference:

- Finance Committee
- Collections Committee

[Museum Accreditation Standard](#)

[Museums Association Code of Ethics](#)

[Archive Accreditation Standard and Guidance](#)

[Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom \(third edition, 2002\)](#)

9. DEFINITIONS

**Heriot-Watt University
Museum and Archive**

Those premises, staff and collections of objects, archives and art which may from time to time be managed by the 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.

**Head of Heritage and
Information Governance**

The professional officer responsible for the management of the University Museum and Archive Collections according to professional standards. This officer must have a relevant degree, or a diploma in museum studies (or equivalent), or experience of the principles and practice of museum operation and management as may be determined to be acceptable by Museums Galleries Scotland.

Acquisition

Managing and documenting the addition of objects, archives and associated information to the collections of the Museum and Archive and their accession to the permanent collection.

Disposal

The act of the Museum's formally relinquishing possession of an item in the collections. This

will be carried out in accordance with the Museum's Collections Development Policy

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.

Collections

Any items entered in the Accession Registers of Heriot-Watt Heritage and Information Governance Service, whether as gift, or purchase, together with any items not entered in the Accession Registers, but in the possession of Heriot-Watt University Heritage and Information Governance Service at the date of approval of this policy, which was donated or purchased with the intention that it should become part of the Collections

Governing body

The University Court, which has delegated oversight of acquisition and disposal of the museum and archive collections to the Finance Committee

10. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

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

11. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. 12.3	Revision of Policy previously approved on 17 November 2015	Finance Committee	Added reference to Archive Accreditation Standard