

## Museum & Study Collection Documentation Policy

### 1. Statement of purpose

This policy has been written in accordance with Spectrum 5.0 and the Museums Association's Code of Ethics. The policy is aligned with the Museum's Statement of Purpose and the Collections Development Policy. All staff (paid and volunteer) have read and agreed to abide by the policy. The Documentation Plan sets out the way the policy will be put into action and should be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan, Emergency Plan, Conservation Plan and any other plans affecting the collection and the Museum buildings.

This policy outlines the processes to be followed by all museum staff and volunteers in documenting collections, from acceptance of new items into the collection, through cataloguing and logging movement of objects within the collection to managing loans.

### 2. Object Entry

Objects will only be allowed to enter the Museum & Study Collection as part of a pre-arranged loan or acquisition by agreement of the Curatorial staff or the Head of Museum. The Museum & Study Collection will only accept objects after assessment of the objects themselves and assessment of the risks associated to people and objects with taking the objects into the Museum collection (recorded on the object entry form). This applies to acquisitions through purchase and donation and loans in.

All objects entering the Museum will be checked as soon as possible after entry to make sure that they correspond to any accompanying inventory and/ or transfer of title documentation supplied. A receipt will be provided for the objects with a written acknowledgement to follow.

Where appropriate items entering the Museum & Study Collection will undergo a quarantine process. All textile items will be frozen for a period of two weeks prior to integration with the collection.

The details of every item that enters the museum and is placed under the protection of the museum, i.e. items to be considered for loan or bequest or items to be assessed for any other item will be filled in on an **Object Entry form**.

Details on the form should include:

- The terms and conditions under which objects are being received for deposit i.e. for donation, purchase or loan
- The name and address of the depositor
- Details of who holds legal title to the object deposited
- A description of the items
- The location of the item

The item (s) will then be allocated an Object Entry Number which will follow on from the number on the last form in the **Object Entry File**.

The number should be attached to the object in a non permanent manner i.e. by attaching a tag to the item or placing it in a clear sleeve with a label attached, depending on the nature of the object.

Where a group of objects enters the Museum & Study Collection the Object Entry form should include the number of objects and enough information to identify each object.

All Object Entry Forms will be kept in the Object Entry File in numerical order.

### **3. Location and Movement Control**

Objects can only be moved by the Head of Museum or a member of Curatorial staff. The member of staff authorising a move should assess the risk to the object or objects before they are moved.

The location of an object will be recorded on the Object Entry Form when it first enters the collection and subsequently on the **Accession Form** if it becomes a permanent acquisition.

If an item is entered on to the **Museum Database** the permanent location of an item will also be listed on the back end of the database.

Any movement of an item will be recorded either on a **Loan Form** (see below) or on an **Object Location Form** and initialled by the member of staff authorising the move. All such forms are kept securely either in a locked cabinet in the Museum Office or in the Museum stores. Information recorded on the Object Location form includes Accession number, maker details, permanent location, new location, reason for move (e.g. display/ loan/ photography) and the name of the person authorising the move.

The only person authorised to sign for loans externally is the Head of Museum. In the absence of the Head of Museum the Museum Curator can sign if this has been agreed in advance in writing. Copies of correspondence should be kept with the Object Location Form.

If items are moved internally (within the Central Saint Martins building) for the purpose of exhibition or photography, the Museum Curator can authorise the move.

If items are moved externally, smaller and low value items may be couriered by the Head of Museum or a member of the Curatorial staff. When high value items, heavy items or large numbers of objects are moved a specialist art handler should be used. All items in transit are covered by the UAL All Risks Insurance Policy. Transport costs will generally be met by the Museum & Study Collection unless an object or objects is being loaned to an external party.

Object Location Forms will be stored in Date order in the **Object Loans and Locations File**.

#### **4. Loans out**

All requests for external loans will be assessed by the Head of Museum.

External loans may be made to other Accredited Museums (or equivalent) for temporary display or research purposes. Such loans will need to be covered by **Loans Out Forms**. Internal loans are objects curated around the college building by museum staff. They are documented on the **Object Location Forms**.

Loans should be requested in writing at least six months before the loan period begins. In exceptional circumstances the Museum may consider late requests but never less than three months prior to the loan period beginning.

Any organisation requesting to borrow an item from the collection must provide evidence of intent and ability to provide an acceptable level of care, security and safekeeping for the object and to conform to the conditions of the loan specified. A refusal might be made where there are any concerns around the safekeeping of the object, or where the object is required for research, teaching or display in-house. Objects which are too fragile to display will also not be loaned.

Items should not be loaned for a period of more than 18 months.

The borrower must provide evidence that loaned objects will be covered by insurance or indemnity, as appropriate, for the duration of the loan period. A written agreement will be signed by both the borrower and the lender before the loan commences. Any loan must be for a finite period. The period of the loan can be extended if a request is received, and permission given, in writing. All correspondence relating to the loan will be kept in the **Object Loans and Locations File**.

Before a loaned item leaves the collection an **Object Condition Form** must be filled in. Information on the form should include storage, handling and display requirements. This should be checked by the borrowing institution, signed and returned to the collection within 24 hours of the item being received.

## 5. Contemporary Collection Loans

Students often request to borrow items made by them which have been bought for the collection. This is generally for the purpose of exhibition or interview, whether for a job or a post-graduate course. These loans can be authorised by the Museum Curator up to one year after the work has been purchased for the Museum, even if the items are to leave the building. A **Loan Form** should be filled in and placed in the **Object Loans and Locations File**.

## 6. Loans in

The Museum & Study Collection does not accept long term loans. Loans in will only be accepted for temporary displays. Loans in will not be made for a period of greater than 18 months.

All items which are loaned to the collection will be treated with the same care as items that are part of the permanent collection.

Loans in will only be made from other Accredited museums and Archives or from individuals or institutions where the Museum & Study Collection is satisfied that the lender has title to the object or objects and that they have been acquired by ethical means.

Loan agreements should be authorised by the Head of Museum.

All items which are loaned to the collection which will be documented on the appropriate **Loan Form**.

Information on the form must include:

- The name and address of the lender
- A description of the item
- The reason for the loan e.g. Exhibition
- The value of the item for insurance purposes
- The duration of the loan

- The location of the item (NB: This information **MUST** be kept up to date so if the item is moved from the Museum Store to the Lethaby Gallery or the safe, for example, a record of this move must be made on the form with the date of the move).

The form must be signed by both the lender and the borrower before the loan commences.

In addition to the Loan Form an **Object Condition Form** should be filled in for every object which enters the collection.

Information on the form should include:

- Detailed description of the items condition on entry
- Any specific advice on handling
- Any specific advice on storage
- Any specific advice on display

A copy of the form should be sent to the lender as soon as possible after the item has entered the collection.

It should be checked and signed by both the borrower and the lender when the item is returned to the lender.

Where the lender can no longer be contacted the loan will be kept for a period of 12 months following the termination of the loan period.

## **7. Acquisition**

No item will be accessioned unless it complies with the Museum's collecting policy and the UAL Archives, Museum and Special Collections Acquisition Policy.

All acquisitions must be authorised by the Head of Museum with the exception of items that are valued at £100,000 or above, larger than 15 linear or 50 cubic metres, or presenting notably sensitive or controversial issues (legal, ethical or practical). These must be agreed by the UAL Archives, Museum and Special Collections Advisory Board

No item will be accessioned if it is found to contravene any local, national or international law, treaty or recognised code or practice

An item will not be formally accessioned unless the Museum has written evidence of the original title to an object and written confirmation of the transfer of title to the Museum.

All donations must be made via the appropriate UAL legal agreements as outlined in the relevant section of the Procedural Manual.

UAL legal Donors will be made aware that once an item is accepted in to the Museum Collection it cannot be returned to them.

Information relating to the acquisition of objects, including all correspondence, will be placed in alphabetical (by Maker name) files.

All items will be catalogued to inventory level within two months of entering the Museum & Study Collection and will have complete catalogue records within 12 months.

Basic information about the method of acquisition, e.g. Donation, Purchase, Bequest will be entered on to the Accession Forms and where appropriate, a credit line will be included. Information will also be included on the Museum Database.

Any restrictions about how the object may be used should be formally recorded on the Accession form and Museum Database.

Once an item has been formally accessioned it will be allocated a unique number in one of the Museum categories:

Ceramics	C
Fine Art	FA
Oriental	O
Photography	PH
Posters	POS
Prints	P
Reproductions	R
Teaching Books	TB
Textiles	T
Theatre	TH

Or Contemporary Collection categories:

Artist Books	AB
Ceramics	C
Fashion	FA
Glass	GL
Graphic design	GD
Jewellery	J
Miscellaneous	MISC
Mixed Media	MM
Painting	PA
Photography	PH
Prints	P
Product Design	PR
Sculpture	S
Textiles	T
Theatre	TH

The Accession Number includes Classification – Year – Number – Collection

For example, a Theatre object from the museum collection should be labelled TH.2013.1.**M**, a Theatre object from the contemporary collection should be labelled TH.2013.1.**CC**.

If an item has more than one part e.g. a number of theatre designs relating to the same production or a textile print in a number of different colour ways it would be labelled TH.2013.1.M.**1**, TH.2013.1.M.**2**, TH.2013.1.M.**3**, etc.

The accession number and a brief description of the object it relates to will be recorded in the appropriate Accession Register as soon as an item is accessioned.

Accession records are kept as a paper copy and entered onto the Museum Database which is backed up daily to a mirror server. Accession registers are kept in a fire proof safe in the Museum store. The Accession Register will be copied annually to archival paper and kept in a safe in another part of the building.

## **8. Cataloguing**

Once an item has been accessioned, more detailed information about the object will be entered on to an **Accession Form**.

All sections should be filled in to the best of the cataloguer's ability.

The level of description should be sufficient to identify an object or group of objects and its differences from other, similar objects.

Where appropriate, items may be catalogued as a group as long as the record contains sufficient information to identify each object in the group.

The Getty thesaurus (which has been integrated with the Museum Database) should be used to ensure correct and standardised terminology.

All catalogue records should be kept in locked cabinets in the Museum office or on the **Museum Database**, which is password protected.

A searchable online catalogue is published with a limited number of fields from the Museum Database to ensure that confidential information is not made public. The online catalogue publishes object number, object name, maker name, place of production, date, media, description and an image (where the image has been copyright cleared and approved for publication).

All items should be catalogued to inventory level within 2 months of entering the Museum and should have a full catalogue record within 12 months.

Accession forms will be placed in numerical order in the appropriate category **Accession Files**.

Items will also be added to the **Museum Database** (see **Database Instruction file**) which is backed up to a mirror server daily.

## **9. Retrospective Documentation**

All items in the collection must, at the very least, be listed on an Object Entry Form. All uncatalogued items will be stored in specific areas. Any backlog will be addressed and assessed on an annual basis. A **Documentation Plan** outlining documentation backlogs will be kept regularly up-to-date by Museum staff.

If additional information about an object is received after it has been catalogued this will be added to the accession form and database entry as soon as possible.

Collections information will be regularly reviewed and areas for improvement highlighted in the **Documentation Plan**.

## **10. Object Exit**

If an item is to be de-accessioned this can only be authorised by the Head of Collections. An item will only be de-accessioned if it is too damaged to be repaired. The Museum does not generally undertake formal disposals but in the event of a formal disposal being made it

should be done after a full Collections Review and in accordance with recommendations on the Collections Trust website. .

If an item is to leave the collection as a loan to another institution this can only be authorised by the Head of Collections, unless agreed otherwise in advance. All items being loaned to other institutions should undergo a complete condition check, formally recorded with photographs, prior to leaving the Museum.

If an item is to leave the collection to be returned to a lender this can be authorised by the Museum Curator.

In all instances where there is a recipient, a signature must be obtained which transfers custody of an object between parties. Where the first recipient is a courier a signature from the person or organisation to which it is being delivered should also be requested.

<b>Date approved by Operational Management Committee</b>	<b>July 2019</b>
<b>Date for next review</b>	<b>July 2022</b>