

Museum & Study Collection Collections Care and Conservation Policy

1. Statement of purpose

The Collections Care and Conservation Policy sets a framework for:

- The preservation of the collections in the care of the Museum
- Preventative and remedial conservation of the collections
- The safe use of and access to collections

This policy has been written in accordance with the Museum's Statement of Purpose and the Collections Development Policy. The Collections Care and Conservation Policy should be viewed in conjunction with the Collections Care and Conservation Plan, which sets out the way the policy will be put into action and should be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan, Emergency Plan, Environmental and Sustainability Policy and any other plans affecting the collection and the Museum building.

2. Definitions

For clarity, the following terms are defined.

Collections care

Range of activities intended to safeguard a collection, including organisational policies, security, storage, cleaning, maintenance, handling, scientific investigation, environmental monitoring and control, exhibitions and loans, conservation, provision of surrogates and emergency planning

Conservation

Interventive techniques applied to an item to achieve chemical or physical stabilisation for the purpose of extending the useful life of an item to ensure its continued availability. All measures and actions should respect the significance and the physical properties of the cultural heritage item

Preservation

The overall management of a collection in order to reduce deterioration, prevent damage and extend its life. Preservation includes establishing and implementing policies and procedures to manage all aspects of collection care including for example environment, physical protection, conservation treatment and emergency planning

Preventive conservation

All measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimizing future deterioration or loss, carried out within the context or on the surroundings of an item, but more often a group of items, whatever their age and condition. Examples of preventive conservation are appropriate measures and actions for registration, storage, handling, packing and transportation, security, environmental management (light, humidity, pollution and pest control), emergency planning, education of staff, public awareness and legal compliance

Restoration

All actions directly applied to a single and stable item, only carried out when the item has lost part of its significance or function through past alteration or deterioration. Often such actions modify the appearance of the item; examples of restoration are retouching a painting, reassembling a broken sculpture, reshaping a basket or filling losses on a glass vessel

3. Care responsibility

Collections care is the ethical responsibility of everyone who works in or visits the Museum. Professional responsibility is held by the Museum & Study Collection museum professional staff and department head, and Central Saint Martins. Staff time and other resources will be allocated to staff's continuing professional development to ensure they are up to date with scientific and research advances in collection care.

All staff and volunteers read and agreed to abide by the Collection Care and Conservation Policy. The department enables appropriate training, risk assessments and standard operational procedures for staff and for properly supervised students, volunteers or interns when working on collections. Researchers or other visitors working with the collections will be briefed on how to handle the items they are working on and will be supervised at all times. No untrained personnel are allowed to handle items from the collection. Where skills are not available in-house for a particular process or material, resources will be provided for external expertise. Any concerns regarding the collections or the care of the collections should be reported in writing to the Head of Museum.

4. The buildings (storage, access and display)

The Museum recognises that the maintenance of its buildings is fundamental to the preservation of both the building and collection and endeavours to keep the buildings in a suitable condition. The Museum's collection is stored and displayed in Central Saint Martins' Granary Building at Kings Cross. The body responsible for the upkeep of the buildings is the University of the Arts London. The Museum carries out regular inspections of the areas it occupies and notifies the body responsible about any remedial or maintenance work required.

The Museum also recognises the importance of keeping the buildings secure. All entrances and exits are covered by intruder alarms and CCTV cameras and temporary display areas are covered by movement sensors. During opening hours the building is manned by Central Saint Martins Estates staff, and at night Estates staff monitor the perimeter of the building. All temporary exhibitions are invigilated. All entrances, exits, windows and internal doors were fitted in 2011 to the BS 5454 standard. Keys to the Museum stores, and to the lockable fireproof safe in which high value items are kept, are held in a lockable key cabinet in the Museum Office. Only Museum staff have access to these key cabinets.

5. The collections

As above, the Museum is aware of the risks to the collection from environmental factors, poor handling, storage and display materials and methods, and of the need to record the condition of the collection. The Museum cares for the collections in store, on display and, by setting suitable requirements, on loan.

The details are listed in the Collections Care and Conservation Plan and include:

1. Collections Overview
2. Monitoring and improving environmental conditions
3. Managing threat from pests
4. General housekeeping
5. Programme of visual inspection
6. Documentation of the condition of the collection and treatments carried out on objects
7. Storage Materials And Methods
8. Display Materials And Methods
9. Object handling
10. Transport methods
11. Loans out
12. Loans in

The museum does not contain any working historic items.

6. Condition Checking

Condition checks should be carried out on all items before entering the Museum and relevant information recorded on Object Entry forms and catalogue records. Particular causes for concern are objects containing chemicals dangerous to people (e.g arsenic and asbestos) and objects that might cause harm to other objects through off-gassing or pest infestation. Any risks to people or other objects found in condition check must be flagged up immediately by telling other members of staff so action can be taken.

Checks should also be carried out on items being loaned out (before and after the loan) and loans in (on arrival and departure). Records should be sent to the borrower/lender and filed with the loan files.

Additional checks should be regularly carried out on at risk items (such as silk garments which fracture over time or wool garments which are liable to attract pests) and recorded in the general maintenance files.

General spot checks should be carried out on a regular basis and additional condition checks should be carried out if there is a breach in security, change in environmental conditions, flood, fire or suspected pest infestation.

Condition checks should be carried out by Curatorial Staff and where risks are identified or changes notes mitigating action should be taken.

7. Audit

Audits are the responsibility of curatorial staff and address issues such as degeneration due to over-handling, pest infestation, the replacement of protective tissue wrappings and object location.

As the Museum is a reserve collection regular requests from researchers to retrieve items from the store act as spot checks as regard collections location management. More systematic location audits should be regularly scheduled and recorded by the Curatorial Staff.

Regular visual inspections should be programmed by Curatorial staff and items considered to be at risk added to the At Risk register and on the object catalogue record. During visual inspections protective wrappings such as acid free tissue paper should be replaced if required.

Collections, such as woollen or silk garments which are prone to pest infestation or plastics and polymers which off-gas and degrade are to be inspected on an annual basis and the results of the inspection recorded.

8. Access, use and movement

It is recognised that making collections accessible will always introduce a degree of risk to those collections. When facilitating access to collections the risks and benefits must be weighed up and minimised where possible. Where the risk to the object outweighs the benefit to the researcher access must be limited.

Use will be risk assessed and standard operating procedures followed for common functions. Object movement and handling guidelines (for example in the Documentation Procedural Manual) will be issued and followed.

In the Study Room users will be provided with relevant equipment (for examples, chin rests, gloves, book rests) and information (such as handling guidelines for different types of material) to minimize the risk of damage during use. Material will be withdrawn from use if deemed at serious risk. In such cases, resources will be sought to address these conservation needs as a priority. Where useful, the generation of surrogate copies or imagery, either physical or digital, will be considered where possible to ensure continued access.

Appropriate staff will undertake condition reports, risk assessments and photography of material prior to acquisition, display and loans out. Loans in will be assessed upon arrival and compared to any existing condition report. Incoming material may be quarantined if necessary. Material may be withdrawn from use at any time if the risk is deemed too high. Large, damaged or fragile items will be assessed before movement.

9. Conservation and preservation principles

The Museum will strive to provide an appropriate climate of temperature, relative humidity and light levels in a pest-free environment that achieves a satisfactory balance between the long- term preservation of the collections and accessibility to staff, students and external users.

Ethical codes in the treatment of collections are followed, such as those endorsed and laid out by the UK Institute of Conservation (ICON), and for collection care more broadly via the Code of Ethics for Museums, International Code of Museums (ICOM) 2006 and the Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums 2015. The Museum also strives to follow the standards and philosophy of collections care and conservation delineated in PAS 197: Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management, PD 5454: 2012 Guide for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Materials, PAS 198: 2012 Specification for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections, and ISO 31000: 2009 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines. The Museum also uses Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries 2.0 to aid in the evaluation and improvement for its collection care activities. Reference is also made where applicable to the British Library's

collections care pamphlet/online information series (previously from the Preservation Advisory Centre). The safety and preservation of the collection will be considered from the outset of any plans to alter the displays or storage or modify the buildings.

Collections care needs, risks and activities are communicated through the College Operational Board and through to the College Executive Board if necessary. Collections care is also part of the Forward Plan, which is available to all staff and reported on through a variety of internal annual monitoring mechanisms. Externally interested parties may receive information about collection care issues, or specificities relating to individual items, through the Museum & Study Collections' free general enquiries and research appointment services.

10. Preventive Conservation

A preventive conservation strategy is the Museum's approach to collections care, supported by interventive approaches where required. The necessary preventive measures are based on a thorough understanding of how collections in different formats react to their environment and deteriorate physically or chemically.

The Museum will provide sufficient secure space in a suitable condition to store the collections in accordance to the appropriate standards, mentioned in Section 3 above. Items from the collections will be displayed and stored in an environment that minimises their rate of deterioration. All stores and galleries will be monitored for temperature and relative humidity. Cleaning of display and storage areas will be undertaken by, or overseen by, Museum & Study Collections staff. Pest control measures will be deployed and risks monitored, by both Museum staff and Estates through the College-wide Pest Management Programme. Appropriate storage material (acid free boxes and tissue etc.) will be used.

Access to stores will be limited to Museum & Study Collections staff, Video Archive staff, supervised Estates and maintenance personnel, and suitably trained volunteers. The Museums and Study Collections will provide suitable supervision for volunteers if their access to stores is necessary.

Beyond day-to-day protection of the collections, measures will also be taken to provide emergency arrangements and facilities in the event of disastrous damage to the collections, as detailed in the Emergency Plan.

All relevant information, including condition checks, environmental conditions in stores, rehousing projects and audits of collections for pest management will be recorded.

11. Interventive conservation

Appropriate safe facilities will be provided for on-site conservation work, although most such work takes place externally. Only suitably qualified and experienced professionals will be engaged to treat collections. The Museum will check the suitability of conservators chosen to work or advise on the collections. A professionally accredited conservator or a conservator listed on the ICON Conservation Register will normally be chosen. The Museum also regularly works with MA Conservation students from Camberwell College of Art and Glasgow's Centre for Textile Conservation & Technical Art History. Where conservation students undertake interventive work they are closely supervised by fully qualified conservators. They will be made aware of all Central Saint Martins policies and procedures.

External funding will be sought for high priority treatment that is beyond existing resources such as time, space, equipment or staff knowledge. Surveys and condition assessments will inform preservation and conservation plans, which will be reflected in departmental forward planning. The Museum will keep detailed records of all treatments carried out on objects, including the name and contact details of the person or company.

12. Restoration

The Museum & Study Collection does not usually undertake restoration, but were it to do so, it would ensure that the work does not significantly modify the appearance of an item and is reversible.

13. Insurance and Indemnity

All items owned by the Museum or on loan to the Museum are fully insured through UAL under three policies:

- 1) All Risks Property
- 2) All Risks Property Extension
- 3) Fine Art Policy

1. All Risks Property Cover

This policy covers property held in the Museum Stores. The limit of indemnity for the damage to property held at the museum stores under the All Risks Property Cover is £10 million. The deductible is £11,000

2. All Risks Property Extension

This policy covers property in specified gallery areas, items in transit and property away from UAL. The limit of indemnity under the All Risks Extension is £250,000 (£60,000 any one

item) and the deductible is £1,000. Cover does not extend to theft in respect of property left in an unattended vehicle overnight except where such a vehicle is either garaged in a building which is securely closed and locked or locked within a compound secured by locked gates. Cover extends both to items owned by the University and to items not owned by us but for which we have accepted responsibility when they are held off site.

3. Fine Art Policy

This covers high value items and does not have a deductible applied. These values are revised each year by the Head of Finance at CSM and increased by an inflation-linked amount to ensure that they remain up-to-date.

14. Valuation

A valuation of significant items in the Museum collection was undertaken by Sotheby's in 1989. These values are revised each year by the Head of Finance at CSM and increased by an inflation-linked amount to ensure that they remain up-to-date.

Particularly high value items are also covered under the Fine Art Policy. The amounts covered are also increased by an inflation-linked amount each year to ensure that they remain up-to-date. This information is passed to Central Services so they can update the Fine Art Policy.

Purchase values for all items bought for the Museum Collection are recorded on purchase sheets and/or on TMS. Where items are assumed to be of high value and no value is known a valuation will be sought from the artist's studio, a specialist or by price comparison with recently sold items of a similar nature. Where appropriate, this information is passed to Central Services so they can update the Fine Art Policy.

Where an object is being loaned to another organisation and the object is considered to be of high valuation a formal valuation will be sought either through comparison with similar objects or through a relevant specialist.

The Museum does not offer valuations to members of the public for ethical reasons.

15. Damage and Loss

The Head of Museum should be informed immediately if objects are damaged or suspected lost. In instances of suspected theft the Head of Museum will also contact the police and deal with any media interest.

When an object is found to be missing from its recorded location a search of surround areas and similar collections should immediately be made by the Curatorial staff. If the object cannot be found a note should be made in the catalogue record

If an object is damaged Curatorial staff should work with the Head of Museum to review what led to the damage and record lessons learned to prevent future damage. If the object is repairable help should be sought from a qualified conservator.

16. Emergency Planning for Collections

The Head of Museum is responsible for Emergency Planning. The plan is regularly updated (every 4 years) in conjunction with the UAL Estates team.

Printed copies of the Emergency Plan are held in the homes of all Curatorial Staff and the Head of Museum and in the Museum Office, UAL Estates Office and Head of College Office. Electronic copies of the Emergency Plan are also held by those listed above.

Risk is assessed using a standard risk assessment methodology developed in line with the UAL Estates team and Health and the Central Saint Martins Health and Safety Officer. Anything above minimal risk or minimal impact must be addressed.

Collections are indemnified against loss of damage through the UAL All Risks Insurance Policy.

The Emergency Plan is tested by regular walk throughs with Museum and Estates staff.

Museum staff are all trained in putting the Emergency Plan into action in conjunction with the Estates team, who have a separate Emergency Plan covering the fabric of the building. In the event of an emergency the Estates team take precedence and Museum staff are only allowed on site once the Estates team have given permission.

The Museum & Study Collection is a member of the Central London Museums Group who have a reciprocal arrangement regarding storage of centralised resources. Members of the Central London Museum Group have also offered staff and space if one of the membership experiences an emergency situation. A fully stocked Just in Case Case should be kept in the Museum stores.

Date approved by College Executive Board	July 2019
Date for next review	Circa February 2022

