

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH MUSEUMS & GALLERIES COLLECTIONS COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT & PRESERVATION POLICY 2010-2015**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The policy of the University is to maintain the integrity of the objects in its care in perpetuity using all reasonable means.
2. The integrity of the objects in the care of the University is maintained by following appropriate procedures and by managing risk in all operations.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR STEWARDSHIP & CONSERVATION**

3. Although the University is responsible centrally for maintaining premises and facilities to minimum standards, each of the curators individually will be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of at least the minimum standards for collections care, taking into account both the requirements for the Museum Accreditation Scheme and the Basic level of care described in 'Benchmarks in Collection Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries: a self assessment check list' published by MLA, 2006.
4. The University takes a mixed approach towards the management of University Collections with major collections and sites managed directly by University Collections and other collections receiving strategic and policy support while being directly managed by Schools. The University's policy is to locate operational responsibility for the management and conservation of individual collections at University Collections / Schools as appropriate. This is necessary because of the essential teaching and research functions of the collections, which are closely aligned with departmental teaching and research strategies. Oversight of this function will be provided at the Schools level, through the office of the Director of University Collections and the University Collections Advisory Committee.
5. It is expected that funding for the stewardship and conservation of the collections will be provided by relevant Support Group / School. The University does however recognise that the funding position over recent years has had the impact of reducing the funding available for its collections. To alleviate some of the effects of limited funding levels, the University has set up a fund to augment departmental funding, and provides University-wide strategic guidance, policy development and support through the office of the Director of University Collections.

### **ESTATES & FACILITIES**

6. Estates issues will be dealt with via the existing Support Group / School procedures. The University Collections Advisory Committee will advise Estates and Buildings on institutional strategy and priority when required.

### **ASSESSMENT**

7. The condition of new items coming into University Collections is assessed at the time of acquisition and accession. On entry into University Collections, all new acquisitions are placed in environmental conditions judged to be appropriate for the materials and structure of the objects in view of the known recent history of the objects.

8. An assessment is made of the risk of infestation in objects entering the collection, and all objects with higher than negligible risk are treated by appropriate infestation eradication measures.

9. If an object entering University Collections is determined to require conservation treatment such as cleaning, this is undertaken on a timescale appropriate to the urgency of the problem. Expert advice is sought in any cases of suspected problems or uncertainty.

10. The condition of the objects is assessed on a continuing basis.

11. When an object is handled or moved, whether for study, display arrangement, storage arrangement, external loan, or other operation, it is scrutinised for signs of possible deterioration.

12. When an object is inspected for cataloguing purposes, its condition is monitored and compared with previous condition records.

### **INSPECTION**

13. If an object is not inspected in the course of the general operations of University Collections, its condition is monitored with a frequency appropriate to the materials and structure of the object. The maximum period between inspections for any individual object is five years. Expert advice is sought in any cases of suspected deterioration or uncertainty.

### **DISPLAY & STORAGE**

14. The display and storage conditions of the objects in the Collection are designed to be conducive to their long term integrity. Consideration is given to the environmental conditions, both in terms of the average values of parameters such as relative humidity and temperature and the diurnal and annual variations around these averages. Consideration is given to the control of atmospheric pollution.

15. Consideration is given to the mounts and other display supports, and to storage packing.

16. Expert advice is sought in setting environmental controls and in changes to the display and storage facilities.

### **DOCUMENTATION**

17. Condition monitoring reports are maintained. Records of any treatment of objects are kept in the relevant Collections Management System.