



University of
St Andrews

collections-development-policy-university- collections

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	Public
Applicability date	08/02/2022
Review / Expiry date	15/03/2024
Approved date	01/09/2022
Approver	Professor
Document owner	Executive Officer
School / unit	Office of the Principal
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Library and museum services
Purpose	Policy statement regulating the acquisition and disposal of items for museum and special collections

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1	Updated policy including special collections	Published	Jessica Burdge Head of Collections .	25.08.22

Collections Development Policy: University Collections-History

Document Type	Policy
Document Owner	Head of Collections
School / Unit / Section	Museums of the University of St Andrews
Approver (s)	Vice Principal Collections on behalf of PARC
Approved date (s)	07/02/2022
Review date	15/03/2024
Information classification	Public
Equality Impact Assessment	

Version Number	Purpose / Changes	Author	Date
1 - 4	Earlier versions of the policy from 1991 – 2008, previously titled the Acquisitions and Disposal Policy	Director, Museum Collections Unit	1991 - 2008
2.0	Collections Development Policy (revised and renamed)	H. Rawson, Acting Director, Museum Collections Unit	2013
2.1	Approved	Audit and Risk Committee	21-02-2013
3.0	Reviewed and updated	J. Burdge, Head of Collections	02-2019
4.0	Reviewed and updated to reflect merged remit of University Collections (formerly Museum and Special Collections), and to ensure all is up to date with Accreditation requirements	J. Burdge, Head of Collections	01-02-2022

Collections Development Policy

Introduction

- i. This is a policy statement regulating the acquisition and disposal of items for the Museum and Special Collections, University of St Andrews. The adoption and implementation of a Collections Development Policy by the University is a requirement of the national Museum Accreditation scheme.
- ii. This policy is a revision of the 2019 Museums Collections Development Policy which replaced the initial Acquisition and Disposal Policy adopted in 1991 (subsequently revised 1995, 1999, 2003, 2013). It represents the aims of the University of St Andrews in 2022, and the merging of Museums and Special Collections. It will be subject to revision, at the latest, in the year 2025. Museum Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy that have implications for the future of existing collections.
- iii. This Policy Statement supersedes all previous and existing policies, formal or informal, relating to the acquisition of items for and disposal of items from the Museum and Special Collections, University of St Andrews.
- iv. The existing collections and the criteria governing future acquisition policy are as set out in Sections 2 and 3 of this Policy. The associated Collecting Strategies provide working plans to direct focused and pro-active collecting for specific subject areas, in accordance with these governing criteria.
- v. In the following policy statement, 'University Collections' will collectively refer to the Museums and Photographic Collection, and Archives and Rare Books Collection.
- vi. Within the University's governance structures, Libraries & Museums report to the Planning and Resource Committee of the University Court (PARC), through the Principal's Office. In 2018-20 the Museums advisory and governance arrangements were reviewed and an Academic Advisory Committee, Student Advisory Panel and Museums' Strategic Board have been established. The creation of a merged remit for Museum and Special Collections under the new Assistant Director (Heritage Collections and Curation) from June 2021 has highlighted the need for equivalent advisory and strategic boards to support, inform and peer-review the direction for Libraries and Archives. Work to establish such a structure is underway.

PARC approves, with delegated authority from the University Court, the Libraries & Museums Strategic Plans and Annual Reports. This Collections Development Policy, alongside other key policies required by Museums Accreditation, is approved by the VP Collections with delegated authority from PARC on behalf of the University Executive (the Principal's Office), and with review and advice from the Museums Strategic Board.

The term 'Committee' then, used in this Policy, indicates PARC, and 'Board' indicates the Museums Strategic Board. The term 'University' is used to denote the authority of the governing body, the University Court, with the responsibility for all the University's properties, including all the collections.

1. Mission Statement:

The University of St Andrews is Scotland's first university, founded in 1413. Like the University, its Museums and Special Collections are rooted in and draw inspiration from this 600-year history of research and teaching, and the pursuit of knowledge for the common good.

The University Collections are of national significance and international importance, reflecting the University's academic enquiry, creativity and innovation.

The enduring mission of the University Collections is to steward and share these collections, engaging people everywhere with the intellectual and cultural life of St Andrews and to enable the research, learning and teaching activities of the University.

Collections are exhibited in the Wardlaw Museum and the Bell Pettigrew Museum (both Accredited through the UK Accreditation scheme); studied in the Museum Collections Centre and the Napier Reading Room; stored at the Libraries and Museums North Haugh Annexe and at other locations in St Andrews and Dundee; displayed within and across the University; lent for exhibition nationally and internationally; and actively featured and shared online.

2. An overview of current collections

The University Collections have been forming since the foundation of the University in 1413, and now constitute an extensive record of the institution's history and its teaching and research activity. In many instances, the collections are also representative of the social, cultural, intellectual, scientific or political development of Scotland, and of connections between St Andrews, Scotland and the wider world.

2a Museum Collections

The Museum Collections encompass approximately 115,000 items in the fields of Anatomy and Pathology, Chemistry, Geology, Historic Scientific Instruments, Psychology, Zoology, Ethnographic and Amerindian material and the Heritage Collections (fine art, silver, textiles and furniture, archaeology, numismatics). The Heritage, Chemistry and Scientific Instrument Collections are Recognised Collections of National Significance under the scheme administered by Museums Galleries Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.

2b Archival Collections

The archival collections comprise the University's institutional records (sometimes called the muniments) and the manuscripts. The earliest muniments date from the early 13th century, before the foundation of the University in the early 15th century. They include a huge range of material, including title deeds on vellum, minutes, accounts, matriculation and graduation records and lists of students, maps and plans, photographs, administrative files and correspondence. The most recent muniments were created and are managed digitally. The University's collection of manuscripts ranges in date and subject from Greek papyri and medieval philosophical treatises to modern business papers. The Collection is particularly strong in material relating to the North-East Fife, including estate, architectural and business records as local church and burgh records. They form the primary resource for research into individuals or studies connected with the University, and the history of science, literature and theology. There is a small, but high-quality, collection of non-European material in a variety of languages.

2c Photographic Collections

The Photographic Collection numbers nearly two million images which exist in a wide variety of formats: negatives, slides, prints, postcards, albums and born digital image files; and cover a wide variety of

subject areas from social documentary to travel and exploration. Collections date from the earliest days of photographic experimentation in the 1840s, through to contemporary acquisitions, and include several notable photographers and photographic firms. As such they form a nationally and internationally significant account of the history of photography, and the important role of St Andrews and Scotland as a major hub for photographic activity.

2d Rare Book Collections

The Rare Book collection contains approximately 210,000 volumes. From 1710 to 1837, the Library was entitled to a copy of every book printed in Britain under the Copyright Deposit Act, as a result of which it is particularly strong in 18th century material, with a special emphasis on books relating to the Scottish Enlightenment. The main subject areas of the collections are theology, classics, history, English and Scottish literature, philosophy, science and medicine. There are about 180 incunabula, 5,000 16th century books, 7,000 17th century books, as well as a substantial general collection of 18th and 19th century items. The collection is also constituted of a number of personal and named collections which the University has received as donations.

3. Themes and priorities for future collection

3a. The broad collecting area for these collections is identified as the University of St Andrews and its associated bodies; its colleges, buildings, societies, estates, members and activities; its teaching and research fields (past and present); and areas and themes represented by its existing collections.

To augment the existing collections, the importance of developing and growing collections that continue to have relevance for, and be representative of, the University and its activities, is recognised. We seek to ensure that the stewardship of our collections reinforces and reflects their national and international importance. We therefore aim to make judicious, transparent and thoughtful acquisitions based on one or more of the following principles.

The University Collections will:

- stimulate opportunities for scholarship and academic enquiry in both teaching and research;
- be more representative of and relevant to the University's diverse population;
- represent current research and/or teaching activity (now and as an historical record for the future);
- progress one or more of our strategic planning themes;
- create opportunities to engage our local community and wider audiences, making meaningful connections between audiences and the University's fundamental purpose in pursuing knowledge for the common good;
- add strength and create discussion around existing collections;
- raise our profile as a world-class collection;

Within this broad collecting area, Collections Development Plans sets out more specific and targeted items for development of the collection, within the guiding principles stated above.

3b. Additions to the University’s Collections may be made by donation, bequest, or through purchase. New acquisitions will be recommended by Collections staff to the Libraries and Museums Collections Working Group (CWG), which will propose approval of acquisitions according to the financial delegations set out below and within the terms of this policy. A lifecycle costing approach will be taken into account within the framework of other relevant policies (eg. Collections Care and Conservation Policy, Documentation Policy, Learning and Access Policy, Digital Preservation Policy). Where the acquisition of any item would result in significant financial implications in respect of purchase, storage, conservation or display, the matter will also be referred to the appropriate level of financial delegation.

Value threshold	Sign off by	
Up to £5k	Assistant Director, Heritage Collections	Value thresholds apply also to lifecycle stewardship costs
£5k to £25k	Director of Libraries and Museums	
£25k to £100k	VP Collections, Music and Digital Content	
£100k to £1m	VP Collections, Music and Digital Content and Chief Financial Officer	
Over £1m	PARC	

3c. Items offered to the Collections as gifts or bequests will not normally be accepted if they are subject to any restrictive covenant or special conditions. In exceptional circumstances, if the CWG feel that the item(s) in question are of over-riding importance, they may recommend the acquisition of a specific item(s) to which conditions are attached, for approval according to the delegations above.

3d. The acceptance of items on loan, normally for a finite period for display or specific study, will be authorised on the University's behalf according to the following level of delegation.

Value of incoming/outgoing loan in total	Approval to borrow/lend by	Loan agreement signed by	Dispute escalation (if included in loan agreement) to
£0-£25,000	Director of Libraries and Museums	Assistant Director, Heritage Collections and Curation	Vice Principal, Collections Music and Digital Content
£25,000-£100,000	Vice Principal, Collections Music and Digital Content	Director of Libraries and Museums	Vice Principal, Collections Music and Digital Content
£100,000+	Vice Principal, Collections Music and Digital Content	Vice Principal, Collections Music and Digital Content	Principal

3e. Any exceptions to normal loan conditions will be considered by the Director and/or VP Collections. No item will be received on ‘permanent loan’, a term which has no legal status. The period of all loans will normally be agreed in writing between the University and the owner of the item in advance of deposit.

Where the term of the loan has expired, it may be renewed or extended for further finite periods, at the discretion of both the owner and the University.

3f. Items that fall within the University's collecting remit, as described at 3a, may be acquired regardless of their geographical location at the time of acquisition. Where this involves the collection of items from a place within the collecting area of another museum, library or archive, a principle of open actions and good communications will apply.

4. Rationalisation and disposal

4a. Responsible disposal may take place as part of long-term collections planning, in order to benefit stewardship and access to collections. The University abides by the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the University's collections.

4b. Priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined through a formal review process. 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.

4c. 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. Priorities for review will focus on:

- Objects containing materials (for example, asbestos, radioactive substances) that present an unacceptable level of risk to health and safety, where their significance is not such as to warrant the processes and costs involved in decontamination or provision of specialist, segregated storage, or this is not found to be possible without unacceptable remaining risk.
- Items damaged beyond reasonable conservation or repair; items infested or contaminated beyond reasonable treatment or conservation, likely to put at risk other items in the collections. (NB As robust collections care and management procedures should prevent this situation from arising, this is anticipated to be a very infrequent occurrence, perhaps arising from an emergency such as fire or flood, or from investigation of historic departmental or other collections being considered for incorporation into the formal Museum Collections of the University; deterioration caused by active neglect is not an acceptable reason for disposal).
- Duplicate items (e.g. lab equipment, geological specimens, digital files); minor items of limited connection to the core collections and active collecting areas; re-identified objects and specimens, shown to have little or no importance or connection to the existing collections and collecting areas; or re-identified objects found to have more relevance to another Accredited Museum or otherwise appropriate organisation.
- If research reveals that the return of an item should be considered under the terms of sections 10 and 11 (below), the University will take decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. Account will be taken of the MA Code of Ethics and other relevant sectoral guidelines.

5. Limitations on collecting

The University recognises its responsibility to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of relevant standards, including the Museum Accreditation Standard and in due course the Archive Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

6. Collecting policies of other institutions

The Museum 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 institutions:

Fife Cultural Trust - formerly Fife Council
St Andrews Preservation Trust Museum
British Golf Museum
Historic Environment Scotland
National Museums Scotland
National Galleries Scotland
National Library of Scotland
National Records of Scotland
Other University museums, libraries and special collections in Scotland

8. Acquisition procedures

8a. University Collections 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 are satisfied that the University can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

8b. In particular, University Collections 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).

8c. 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, the University will reject any items that have been or could have been illicitly traded. The University will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

8d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the University 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 (e.g. a British court in the case of a specimen seized from a third party under the Protection of Birds Act). Biological material will only be accepted within the regulations of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

8e. The University will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures. Scottish archaeological material, including individual chance finds and excavation assemblages, will only be acquired through allocation to the University by the Crown through the Treasure Trove process, or if the Crown has chosen to forego its title to a portable antiquity or excavation assemblage and has issued a certificate of 'No Claim'.

8f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the University is either:

- 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 possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970

In these cases the University will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

8g. If the Museum holds or intends to acquire anatomical specimens dating from 1988 onwards, the Museum recognises it will need to be on the list of exempted museums linked to the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 or to have obtained a licence under the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006. Any acquisitions of human remains will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

9. Spoliation

The University 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.

10. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

The University, acting on the advice of the Museum's Strategic Board and professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by MGS in 2011), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The University 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 11a-11d, 11g and 11s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

11. Disposal procedures

Disposal preliminaries

11a. The University will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

11b. The University Collections have a long-term purpose and are held in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The University therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection.

11c. The University will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item, and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

11d. When disposal of a University Collections item is being considered, the University 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 and method of disposal

11e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12g-12s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

11f. The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

The disposal decision-making process

11g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the University only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the University's collections and collections held by 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

11h. A decision to dispose of material, whether by gift, exchange, 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 University acting on the advice of the Strategic Board and professional curatorial staff via the CWG, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone. In exceptional circumstances, such as the discovery of material posing an immediate threat to health and safety, for example unstable radioactive material, severely deteriorating material containing asbestos etc, the Director, liaising with and acting on the advice of the University's Environmental Health and Safety Services, may arrange for the immediate disposal and destruction of the object or specimen without waiting for the next meeting of the Strategic Board or PARC. In such situations, the Director will immediately inform VP Collections, and the process must be fully documented, and the managing committee updated at the next meeting.

Use of proceeds of sale

11i. Any monies received by the University from the disposal of items will be applied 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.

11j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Museum Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale

11k. 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 archives, libraries or Accredited museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

11l. If the material is not acquired by any institutions 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 an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal*, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

11m. 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 collections. 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.

Disposal by exchange

12n. The museum will not dispose of items by exchange

Disposal by destruction

12s. If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the University may decide to destroy it.

12t. 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.

12u. 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 the University's research policy.

12v. 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.

12w. The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

Documenting

disposal

12x. 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.