

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Archives and Collections: Documentation Policy

POLICY DETAILS:

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| Date of approval | November 2016 |
| Approving body | Museum and Archive Committee |
| Supersedes | Documentation Policy October 2012 |
| Date of EIA | |
| Date of next review | November 2019 |
| Author | Susannah Waters and Peter Trowles |
| Responsible Executive Group area | Learning Resources |
| Related policies and documents | Collections Care and Conservation Policy |
| Benchmarking | Museum Association Accreditation Scheme |

The Glasgow School of Art: Documentation Policy for Museum and Archive Collections

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) recognises that it has a duty of care for the fine art, design, architectural and archive collections held in its possession. Well-managed documentation procedures are an essential element of a successful, professionally run museum and archive and are indicative of how an institution views its broader responsibilities.

Therefore, GSA is committed to making sure that it is able to:

- account for each item's acceptance into the collection and to provide written/signed evidence for all acquisitions
- record, document and label each object to the minimum standards set out in SPECTRUM, the UK's documentation standard or the equivalent for archival collections
- disseminate appropriate levels of documentation (via searchable databases or other methods) as a means of extending public access to item/collection information
- locate each item at any given time and be in a position to track the temporary movement of any item within the museum and archive
- produce and retain relevant documentation supporting the loan of all items *into* and *out of* the museum and archive for the purposes of exhibition display, conservation needs etc
- provide written evidence that items, permanently exiting the collection, meet acceptable standards, as outlined in SPECTRUM, particularly with regards to de-accessioning, where the Museum Association's *Code of Ethics* should also be consulted.

The GSA also recognises that it has a duty of care to guarantee the physical security and long term preservation of all documentation records for its museum and archive collections. It will therefore ensure that:

- where appropriate, original cataloguing systems (such as file cards) are retained as historical evidence of how the collection developed
- current paper documentation (accession registers, object entry, loan and exit forms) are archived in a secure environment but that these can be readily accessed, as and when required
- a surrogate copy of the Accessions register be maintained and kept in a location (ideally in separate building) away from the original volume
- consideration be given to the over reliance of collections documentation held on electronic systems where there is a risk that technology/software programmes become obsolete and the data is subsequently inaccessible.