

# THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

## Archives and Collections: Documentation Policy

### POLICY DETAILS:

Date of approval	June 2019
Approving body	Museum and Archive Committee
Supersedes	Documentation Policy November 2016
Date of EIA	
Date of next review	June 2021
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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 (accessions paperwork, 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 accessions paperwork is maintained and kept in a separate location.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New accessions paperwork is scanned and a digital surrogate is kept and backed up on a server. Older accessions are recorded in two registers, each kept in a different building.

<sup>2</sup> During 2019 a disaster recovery plan will be put in place for collections databases. A digital asset register is maintained to review risk of born-digital archive materials.