

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Archives and Collections: Collections Care and Conservation Policy

POLICY DETAILS:

Date of approval	December 2021
Approving body	Board of Governors
Supersedes	Collections Care and Conservation Policy August 2019
Date of EIA	November 2021
Date of next review	December 2023
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Responsible Executive Group area	Research and Innovation
Related policies and documents	Documentation Policy
Benchmarking	Museum Association Accreditation Scheme

Mission Statement:

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is widely recognised for being an open and accessible institution that shares its expertise, knowledge, heritage and resources with local, national and international partners and it understands that the responsible management and care of its important collections and archives is central to its reputation.

Collection Conditions Overview:

GSA will continue to pursue 'best practice' in the care of its collections and archives as outlined in the Collections Trust's [Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Libraries and Archives](#).

Environmental Monitoring:

GSA will monitor and evaluate the physical environment in which its collections and archives are stored and displayed, and actions will be undertaken to promote the maintenance of storage and display areas which meet Museums Galleries Scotland's recommended parameters for temperature, relative humidity and lighting levels.¹

Monitoring will be carried out in person, through regular site visits to storage areas and displays, and will be aided through data acquired from data loggers.

Preventative Conservation:

GSA recognises that preventative conservation involves the limiting of damage or deterioration of items in its collection and archive and it is therefore important to understand how the environment can impact on the well-being of objects.

- *Appropriate Building Conditions:* The School seeks to provide high quality conditions and accessible and secure areas for the storage, display and use of items. Material is further safeguarded by the storage of collections and archives in appropriate packaging and storage systems; the use of security alarm systems with 24hr cover and incident response; invigilation of the service's reading room; and a fire and evacuation system.

¹ <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/advice/collections/temperature-and-humidity-in-museums/>
<https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/advice/collections/conservation-and-lighting/>

- *Disaster Planning:* A disaster/emergency plan exists for the School's Archives and Collections service and is regularly updated. The School also subscribes to Harwell's Document Restoration Service as a Priority user.
- *Surrogacy/Digitisation:* Where possible, and appropriate, surrogate or digital copies will be considered as a means of minimising wear and tear to original objects. Increased access to material can also be supported through the provision of material in alternative formats. If duplicates exist, consideration will be given to identifying objects that could form part of a recognised 'handling collection'. In instances where the original media is particularly vulnerable to deterioration due to its format, (for example VHS tape and 35mm slides), digital copies will be made and the originals will be disposed of.

Remedial Conservation:

GSA acknowledges that in addition to preventative conservation, interventive or remedial conservation will often be required to stabilise or improve the physical condition of an item. Priority will generally be given to an item whose condition is poor and is likely to deteriorate quickly, or where the condition of an object needs to be enhanced to allow it to be used for exhibition or display. The School also recognises that:

- Only qualified conservators should be employed to undertake such remedial treatments and where possible these conservators should be ICON registered.
- All treatments should be planned and carried out in consultation with an appropriate member of GSA staff and should be recorded (and photographed) as a means of enhancing the history and understanding of an object.

Collections Care and Conservation Programming:

Collections Care and Conservation programming is undertaken in consideration of collection needs, user demands and equality impact. Activities are designed to promote access to the holdings while safeguarding them for future use. This work is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.