



## Policy for the Documentation of the Collections of The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

Policy Name	Hunterian Documentation Policy
Approved by	Hunterian Strategic Development Board
Date Approved	21 November 2024
Last Reviewed	24 May 2016
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## 1. Documentation at The Hunterian

**Our Mission** - As an integral part of the University of Glasgow, The Hunterian preserves and develops its collections and expertise for innovation and engagement, to create meaning, value and relevance with academic, museum and civic communities.

**Our Vision** - The Hunterian aims to be an ethical and accessible museum organisation that engages critically with its historic legacy for the benefit of all of its stakeholders and audiences, in support of the University's effort to positively affect society.

The Hunterian acknowledges the International Council of Museums definition of museum documentation as:

'Museum documentation is concerned with the development and use of information about the objects within a museum collection and the procedures which support the management of the collection. This information should be recorded in written or digital form in a museum documentation system and should be accessible to staff, researchers and the public.'<sup>1</sup>

The Hunterian uses the EMu Collections Management System to manage and store collections information and documentation. We also hold various paper records, registers and files of collections information and documentation which have been, or are in the process of being, digitised and added to EMu. The Documentation Plan outlines timescales for this. The University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections share the same EMu dataset and we are working towards standardising terminology and procedures where relevant.

In July 2016 the Hunterian along with partners Glasgow Life and the National Library of Scotland began moving into Kelvin Hall a new collections store and study centre. The majority of the Hunterian collections and associated documentation are now stored in Kelvin Hall. The collections decant represents a major improvement in collections care, access and documentation in The Hunterian.

The Hunterian acknowledges that the collections contain information about peoples and cultures using language and terminology that are outdated and may be racist, offensive or otherwise inappropriate. We are committed to the work of addressing hurtful legacies in the collections we care for. We are committed to including information from communities of origin, and non-traditional and marginalised voices within the documentation through expanding physical and digital access to the collections, and stimulating the co-creation of knowledge and original research.

## 2. Aims of this Policy

The aims of this Policy are to:

- Improve accountability for the collections.
- Extend access to collections and collection information onsite and online. Ensuring other perspectives are represented in the collections data.

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<sup>1</sup> CIDOC Statement of principles of Museum Documentation (2012)  
<https://cidoc.mini.icom.museum/standards/cidoc-standards-guidelines/>

- Meet or exceed minimum professional standards in collections documentation procedures and collections information.
- Strengthen the security of the collection through accurate collections information.
- Improve risk management of the collection.

This policy should be used as part of the Collections Management Framework and used in conjunction with the following policies: Collections Development Policy, Documentation Plan, Conservation Plan and Policy, Collections Management Procedural Manual, Loans Policy, Human Remains Policy and Repatriation Policy.

### **3. Ethics and Legislation**

All collections information and documentation will be recorded, stored and used in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, and all other legislation relating to the protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals. All requests for information will be considered under the guidelines of the University of Glasgow Data Protection and Freedom of Information Office (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/dpfoioffice/>) We will review requests for confidential data such as donor information, environmental information, valuations or site details on a case by case basis and in accordance with the applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of acquisition or loan.

All collections information and documentation will be recorded, stored and used in compliance with the Museums Association Code of Ethics (<https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/ethics/code-of-ethics/>), the ICOM Code of Ethics (<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics/>) and to Spectrum standards.

### **4. Accountability**

The Hunterian is committed to maintaining a level of collections documentation which ensures we are able to identify and locate all objects in the collection. We will do this by ensuring:

- All objects entering the collection will have an accession record and be assigned a unique accession number.
- Each object in the collection will be marked or labelled with its accession number and/or a unique barcode.
- Location and movement history and use history of all objects will be recorded in EMu.
- Where there are gaps or incomplete documentation, we will record this in the Documentation Plan and outline a plan to address this backlog.
- Access to edit and create records on the collections management system is controlled by the Digital Collections Manager.
- Regular audits are carried out on collections and documentation.

### **5. Standards**

Spectrum is the UK Collections Management (<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/>) standard developed by the Collections Trust which sets out a series of procedures that ensures good practice in collections management. It is a requirement of the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme that the following primary Spectrum procedures are followed.

- Object Entry
- Acquisition and Accessioning
- Location and movement control
- Inventory
- Cataloguing
- Object Exit
- Loans in
- Loans out
- Documentation planning

In addition to this we will endeavour to follow procedures for non-primary procedures, such as use of collections, where practicable.

The Hunterian's compliance with these procedures is detailed in the Collections Management Procedural Manual. Relevant Hunterian staff are provided with training on the relevant sections of the Procedural Manual by the Digital Collections Manager or the Head of Collections Management.

## **6. Access to Collections Information**

We will ensure that, subject to the regulations of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), intellectual property rights and collections security, all relevant documentation contained within the collections management system will be made available and searchable on the Hunterian online collections catalogue.

Access to any paper documentation, where possible, is by appointment only at the Hunterian Collections Study Centre and is also subject to the requirements of GDPR, intellectual property rights and collections security. Some historic documentation is held by Archives and Special Collections, access to this is available by appointment in their Reading Rooms (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/archivespecialcollections/bookanappointment/>)

## **7. Security of Collections Information**

Information and documentation relating to the collections, when digitised, is stored or attached to the relevant record in the collections management system, this is backed up on a regular basis in accordance with university IT regulations. All changes in the collections management system are recorded in a read only audit trail which is backed up. Access to and or rights to edit on the collections management system is granted only to relevant Hunterian staff.

## **8. Collections Research**

We will ensure that all collections-based research, usage, sampling analysis and results, reports and publications are documented and associated with the catalogue record for each relevant object.