



Museums and Archives Collections Management Policy

Collections: The Museums and Archives of The Royal College of Surgeons of England, including Deposited and Corporate Archives; the Hunterian Collection; the College Museum; the Wellcome Museum of Anatomy and Pathology; the Odontological Collection; the Historical Instrument Collection; the Special Collections and associated reserve collections.

Governing body: The Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England ('the College') / The Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection

Date approved by Trustees of the Hunterian Collection: 4 July 2012

Date approved by College Council: 12 July 2012

Date for review: June 2017

1. Scope and purpose

- 1.1. The College holds collections of outstanding medical, scientific, historical and cultural significance. It aims to use these collections:
 - 1.1.1. To support the College Mission in the education, training and continuing professional development (CPD) of surgeons at every stage of their careers with the aim of advancing surgical standards and in accordance with the Charter, Standing Orders and Ordinances of The College.
 - 1.1.2. To enhance the College's reputation by raising awareness of surgeons and their work in society.
 - 1.1.3. To aid the professional work of the College by providing training resources.
 - 1.1.4. To facilitate and generate excellent medical, scientific, historical and other research.
- 1.2. This document provides a summary of the policy raft that articulates the principles of collections development, information, access and conservation that will allow Museums and Archives to achieve these aims.
- 1.3. This policy is complemented by the *Museums and Archives Collections Management Plan* (reviewed annually) and the specific policies detailed in each section below, to which it acts as an index document.

2. Collections development

- 2.1. The College will develop its collections strategically, sustainably and within a feasible resource base through acquisition, disposal and loans.
- 2.2. Details of acquisition and disposal principles, including the College's commitment to due diligence, can be found in the *Museums and Archives Acquisition and Disposal Policy* (due for review November 2016).
- 2.3. Loans offer the opportunity to expand access to items which would otherwise remain in store and facilitate research which would not otherwise be carried out. The College will therefore lend accessioned items to other appropriately sanctioned heritage, educational or research institutions, within available resources and subject to loan conditions.
 - 2.3.1. Details of the approach to incoming and outgoing loans can be found in the *Museums and Archives Loans Policy* (due for review March 2017).
 - 2.3.2. Loans will be made under the auspices of an explicit loan agreement.
 - 2.3.3. Entry and exit forms will accompany all movement into and out of the collections.

3. Collections information

- 3.1. The College is committed to enhancing its collections knowledge base, storing this information and making it as widely available as possible for use in engagement, learning and research.
- 3.2. The College is committed to complete documentation of its collections: the *Collections Management Plan* (reviewed annually) outlines how this will be achieved.
- 3.3. To this end collections information will be stored in the collections management system Adlib, freely accessible via the online catalogue, except in the following circumstances:
 - 3.2.1. Human remains of recent provenance under the auspices of the Human Tissue Act 2004.
 - 3.2.2. Patient records less than 100 years old.
 - 3.2.3. Images of a graphic nature (such as traumatic injuries or sexual content).
 - 3.2.4. Where access would breach copyright and other intellectual property rights.
- 3.4. Museum documentation will comply with the SPECTRUM collections management standard.
- 3.5. Archive documentation will comply with the General International Standard Archival Description ISAD(G).
- 3.6. Images and text within and associated with the collections remain the copyright and intellectual property of the College unless otherwise stated. Copies and reproduction rights may be supplied upon application.
- 3.7. Processes and practices for museum documentation can be found in the *Documentation Procedural Manual* (reviewed biannually).

4. Collections access

- 4.1. The College aims to promote an understanding of the history and the modern practice of surgery and its associated disciplines through learning opportunities that are accessible, inspiring, thought-provoking and sustainable, presented in an environment that is comfortable, secure and enjoyable for all our visitors.
- 4.2. The approach to learning and access is outlined in the *Museums and Archives Learning and Access Policy* (due for review June 2017)
- 4.3. Details of the approach to researcher access can be found in the *Museums and Archives Research Policy* (due for review March 2017).
- 4.4. Museums and Archives collections will be accessible and promoted online and via new media in accordance with the College's multi-media strategy and following established sector guidelines and standards (especially BS 8878: 2010 Web Accessibility Code of Practice).
- 4.5. Details of the process by which users may draw attention to any shortfalls in the College's practice (with respect to Museums and Archives) can be found in the *Museums and Archives Complaints Policy* (due for review April 2017).

5. Collections care

- 5.1. The College will strive to provide an appropriate climate of temperature, relative humidity and light levels in a pollution and pest-free environment that achieves a satisfactory balance between the long-term preservation of the objects and specimens, and accessibility to staff and users.
- 5.2. Details of the principles of collections care can be found in the *Museums and Archives Conservation and Collections Care Policy* (due for review 2017).
- 5.3. Plans for responses to emergencies can be found in the *Museums and Archives Disaster Plan* (reviewed annually).

6. Ethical and legal standards

- 6.1. All the practices outlined above will be guided by the most recent editions of the Museums Association *Code of Ethics* and the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland) *Code of Conduct*.
- 6.2. Human remains will be treated in accordance with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums* (2005).
- 6.3. Relevant legal frameworks will guide the College's practice in collections development, information, access and care, especially:
 - 6.2.1. The Equality Act 2010.
 - 6.2.2. The Human Tissue Act 2004 and the Human Tissue Authority's Codes of Practice.
 - 6.2.3. The Data Protection Act 1998.
 - 6.2.4. The Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003 and other legislation relevant to acquisition detailed in the *Museums and Archives Acquisition and Disposal Policy* (due for review November 2016).