

Collections Management Policy

What is a Collections Management Policy?

What do we collect

How do we care for our
collection

How do we share our
collection

Who is responsible for caring
for the collection

Why do we need one?

Required document for AAM
accreditation

We are responsible to the public for how
we treat our collection

Defines how our collection grows

Defines how our collection is treated

Consistency with future leaders of the
museum



Mission Statement and Organizational Background



To preserve and use Ogden's stories
to inspire curiosity and inquiry; and
to help people make meaningful
personal connections with history.

Mission Statement of the Museums at Union Station

Statement of Purpose Review Policy



Ensures continuity



Reviewed every 5 years

Collection Scope

Collections Scope

Year 1800 to the present

Ogden City

State of Utah

Stories of Ogden

- Life
- Work
- Governance
- Built Environment
- Individuals and Ideas

Railroad History

- Railroad company history and impact
- Labor
- Culture and lifestyle

Collection Categories

Definitions

Accessioned:

- ▶ Formally part of permanent collection (we plan to take care of it forever)
- ▶ Held in the public trust
- ▶ Committed to proper storage and care
- ▶ Meets requirements for accession
- ▶ Needs to be deaccessioned before disposal

Non-Accessioned

- ▶ Not part of permanent collection
- ▶ Not part of the public trust
- ▶ Secure but not same standard of care
- ▶ Does NOT need to be formally deaccessioned before disposal

Collection Categories

Accessioned

- ▶ Permanent Objects, including:
 - ▶ Art
 - ▶ Railroad materials
 - ▶ Archival documents
 - ▶ Firearms
 - ▶ Photos
 - ▶ Rare books
 - ▶ Locomotives

Non-Accessioned

- ▶ Institutional Archives:
 - ▶ Museum records
 - ▶ Newspaper articles about Union Station's current events
 - ▶ Records about the Union Station building's history
- ▶ Educational Materials
 - ▶ Example objects
- ▶ Reference library
 - ▶ Books about Ogden
 - ▶ Books about the Railroad
 - ▶ Video documentaries

Acquisitions, Accessions, and Registration

Definitions

Acquisition

- The procurement of objects by the Museum. Not everything acquired is accessioned.

Accession

- The process of transferring ownership of an object to the Museum's permanent collection. Held in the public trust. Regulated by Collections Management Policy. Held in perpetuity.

How do we get things?

Gift or
donation

Bequest

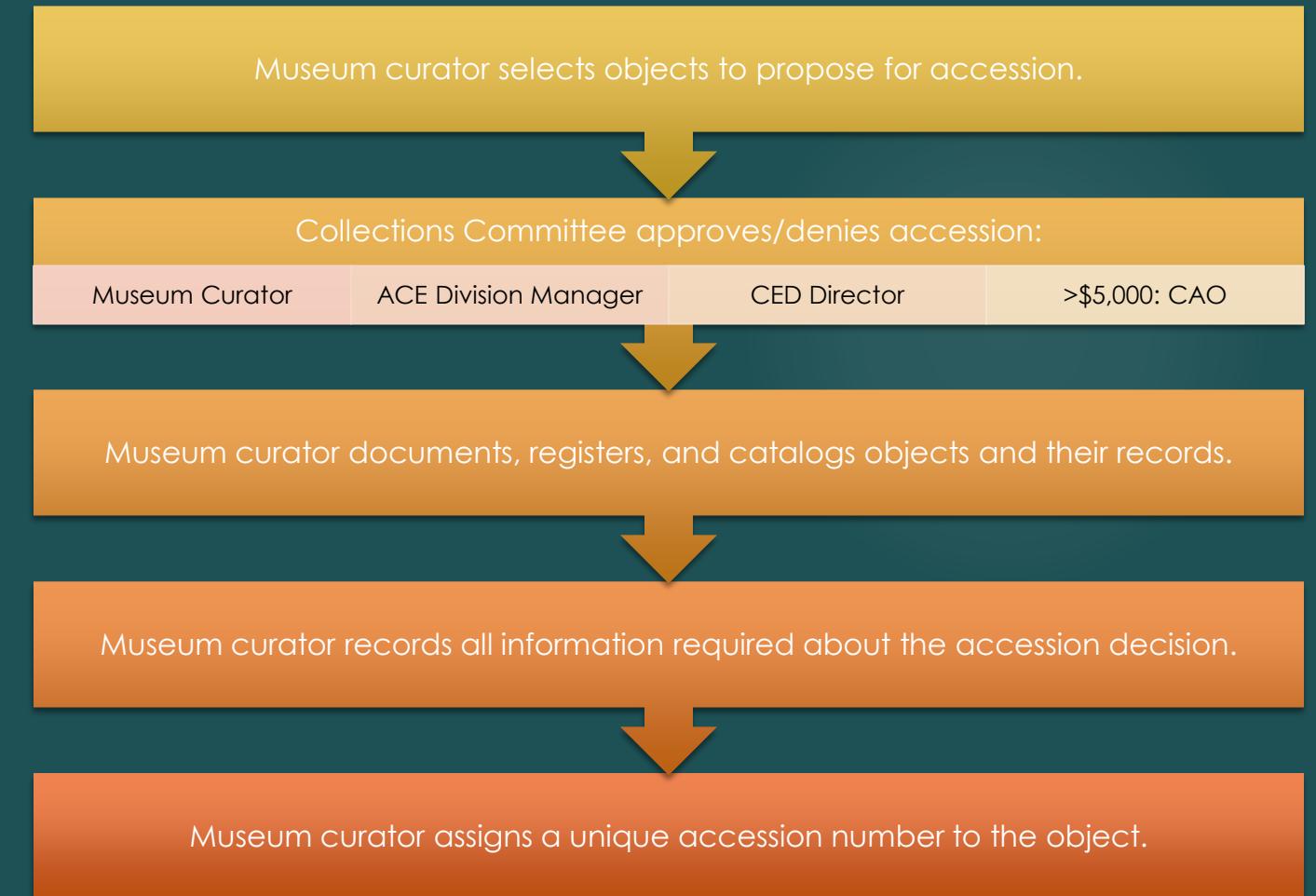
Purchase

Exchange

Adoption of an
Orphaned
Collection

Conversion of
an old or
unclaimed loan

Roles and Responsibilities for Accessions:

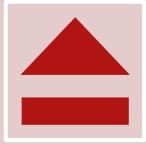


Requirements for Accession:

- ▶ The object is relevant to and consistent with the mission of MUS and its collection scope as defined in the official Collections Management Policy.
- ▶ The object comes to MUS with no restrictions, liens, encumbrances, or conditions for its donation.
- ▶ MUS is able to provide for the storage, protection, and preservation of the objects in accordance with professionally accepted museum standards.
- ▶ The object is in, or capable of being returned to, acceptable conditions.
- ▶ Objects are legally and ethically acquired.
- ▶ Objects are thoroughly researched to ensure their authenticity and are what they are purported to be at time of accession.
- ▶ The object is an original material.
- ▶ The object is not human remains or a sacred funerary object.
- ▶ The object is intended to remain in the public trust for the foreseeable future.

Deaccessions and Disposition

Why deaccession?



Formal removal of an object from the permanent collection



Controversial but important

Can enhance a collection
Can prevent waste of resources



Must be conducted ethically and in good faith

Documentation of each decision

What is Deaccessioning?

- ▶ Deaccessioning: the formal, legal removal of an object from the permanent collection. This is the opposite of accessioning. This is not the physical surplus of items.
- ▶ MUS may deaccession items to best serve the Museum's mission and public trust responsibilities. Deaccessioning can enhance the Museum's collection items through exchange, preserve the museum's resources for more relevant collection items.
- ▶ Deaccessioning will only occur ethically and in good faith, in compliance with the American Alliance of Museum's *Code of Ethics for Museums* and following all applicable laws.

The only reasons we would deaccession an item:

- ▶ The object is not useful in carrying out MUS's mission or is outside the scope of collections.
- ▶ The object is redundant or a duplicate of another object.
- ▶ The object has been determined to be inauthentic, misidentified, or misattributed.
- ▶ The object lacks sufficient historical significance, merit, or importance to be maintained in the permanent collection.
- ▶ MUS can no longer adequately care for the object in accordance to professionally accepted standards or the object poses a threat to other objects or staff.
- ▶ The object's condition has deteriorated beyond reasonable repair.
- ▶ MUS does not have free and clear legal title to the object.
- ▶ Object removal is mandated by law or court order.

Requirements for Deaccession

Must meet **all** the following requirements:

1. It has been accessioned into the Museum's permanent collection.
2. The object has been in the collection for a minimum of three (3) years in accordance with the Tax Reform Act of 1984 and to avoid tax penalties placed upon the donor.
3. One or more criterion for deaccession has been met.
4. The object has been physically found.
5. If the object has a restriction from deaccession imposed in the Museum's documentation, then legal counsel has been consulted.
6. Deaccession has been approved by the museum curator, the ACE division manager, the CED director, and the City's CAO.

Surplus of Collection Items

- ▶ Surplus: physically removing an object from the collection
 - ▶ Takes place ONLY after deaccession
- ▶ Goals:
 - ▶ Remain in the public trust
 - ▶ Remain accessible to the public

Appropriate ways to surplus:

Exchange of ownership with a dealer or non-profit

Transfer of ownership with a dealer or non-profit

Keep as part of a non-acquisitioned collection

Repatriation of objects to the appropriate national government, tribal entity, or cultural group

Return of object to original donor

Return of a work of art to a living artist

Sale at public auction of deaccessioned objects (with no conflicts of interest)

Destruction of a severely deteriorated object, a fake or forged object, or a hazardous material.

We will NOT
surplus by:



Sale in the Museum gift shop



Sale or transfer to a staff member,
volunteer, City Council member,
CED leader, or their families



Putting objects in the trash

Financial Ethics Commitments:

“Proceeds from the sale of nonliving collections are to be used consistent with the established standards of the museum’s discipline, but **in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections.**”

- American Alliance of Museums, *Code of Ethics For Museums*

“Collections shall not be deaccessioned or disposed of in order to provide financial support for institutional operations, facilities maintenance, or **any reason other than the preservation or acquisition of collections.**”

- American Association of State and Local History, *Statement of Professional Ethics*

How do we use funds?

Approval:

- Direct care of collections
- Add to the collections
- Enhance use of collections (conservation treatments, storage equipment, strategic improvements)

Require advance approval:

- Routine collections care

Always Prohibited:

- Institutional budget shortfalls
- Routine building care
- Staff salaries

Artifact Loans

OUTGOING AND INCOMING LOANS

Outgoing Loans

What we do not loan:

Objects being researched

Objects in fragile condition

Objects with cultural sensitivities

Objects with high value

Objects currently on display

Institutional archives or library

Who do we loan to?



Peer institutions (other museums)



Non-profit organizations



Other groups that benefit the public good



We do not loan to:

Individuals
For-profit institutions
Violators of previous loans

Additional Requirements

- ▶ Approved by ACE Division Manager
- ▶ Receiver is able to care for the object
- ▶ Insurance must not be less than what is carried by our museum
- ▶ Defined time period
- ▶ Credited to the Museums at Union Station Collection

Outgoing loan criteria

The loan fulfills our mission

We hold clear right and title to the object

Lendee provides adequate security and storage

Length of the loan is determined

The Lendee is a peer institution or non-profit, and two sets of contact information have been recorded

Object condition report has been documented

Loan is approved by Museum Curator and ACE division manager

Incoming Loans

The Basics of Incoming Loans

WHO:

- Other groups, private individuals

WHAT:

- Objects that helps with our mission
- No objects that would create a conflict of interest

Incoming Loan Criteria

The loan helps the museum fulfill its mission

The lender has clear right and title to the object and permission to lend the object

The Museums at Union Station can provide for the adequate storage and security

The length of the loan has been determined

Two sets of contact information have been recorded

The loan has been approved by the Museum Curator



Documents,
Records, and
Inventories

What is documentation?

Collection history,
condition, use, location,
and value

Must be kept clearly,
permanently, and
comprehensively

Who keeps the documentation?

- ▶ Museum Curator:
 - ▶ Updates records
 - ▶ Physically keeps records
 - ▶ Electronically backs up records

Objects in Custody

Questions of Ownership

Objects Found in Collections (FICs)
including unretrieved loans, non-
accessioned artifacts, objects left for
authentication.



The Museums at Union Station presumes ownership after a good-faith effort to find documentation, provenance, or proof of alternative ownership

Collections Access Policy

What can the public access?

► **Everything** except:

- Objects currently on display
- Objects under active research
- Unprocessed objects
- Fragile objects
- Sensitive/private information from donation and catalog information, corresponding with open records laws

Collection Access

PUBLIC:

- Access to displays during open hours
- Appointment for one-on-one access (No walk-ins)
- Collections Access Fee may be applicable
- Supervised by trained curatorial staff member
 - Includes access by untrained staff, contractors, inspectors, or museum leadership
 - Determined by Museum Curator

PRIVATE/COMMERCIAL:

- Allowed **unless** it inhibits the public from access



“ In compliance with the Tax Reform Act of 1984, the Museum prohibits any staff member of the Museum from making an appraisal shared with a donor or potential donor, arranging for or paying for an appraisal for a donor or potential donor, or recommending an appraiser to any donor or potential donor. Internal appraisals made for the use of the Museum will not be shared with donors.

”

Statement on Appraisals

Collections Care

Agents of Deterioration

Museums at Union Station will:

- ▶ Prevent
- ▶ Minimize
- ▶ Detect
- ▶ Mitigate

Hired conservation treatments will be done by professional conservators and are approved by Curator and ACE Manager.

Preventive Conservation

Tackling the ten agents of deterioration

 Physical Forces <small>Possible causes</small> Poor handling, accidents <small>Possible effects</small> Abrasion, breakages, losses	 Thieves, Vandals <small>Possible causes</small> Poor security, breach of rules <small>Possible effects</small> Total/partial loss, defacement, loss in value	 Fire <small>Possible causes</small> Arson, negligence, poor maintenance <small>Possible effects</small> Smoke, discolouration, loss	 Water <small>Possible causes</small> Flood, rain, leaks, fire suppression <small>Possible effects</small> Loss of media, mould, physical damage	 Pests <small>Possible causes</small> Poor housekeeping <small>Possible effects</small> Physical damage or loss of material, contamination
 Contaminants <small>Possible causes</small> Pollution, poor housekeeping Inherently unstable materials <small>Possible effects</small> Chemical changes, dirt, transfer of contaminants	 Radiation/Light <small>Possible causes</small> Daylight, no UV filters <small>Possible effects</small> Accelerated degradation, embrittlement, fading	 Incorrect Temperature <small>Possible causes</small> Unsuitable environments, plant failure <small>Possible effects</small> Accelerated degradation, embrittlement, softening	 Incorrect Relative Humidity <small>Possible causes</small> Unsuitable environments, plant failure <small>Possible effects</small> Mould, embrittlement, accelerated degradation	 Dissociation <small>Possible causes</small> Poor labelling, misplacing items <small>Possible effects</small> Loss of information, difficulty locating items, loss of coherence of object(s) or collections

How do we stop the agents of deterioration?



STORAGE AREAS ARE
MONITORED FOR LIGHT,
TEMPERATURE, AND
HUMIDITY.



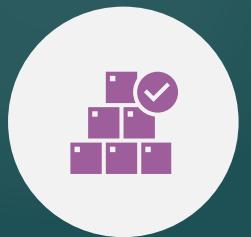
REGULAR FULL-BUILDING
INSPECTIONS COMPLETED
BY OPERATIONS
MANAGER AND
MAINTENANCE LEAD.



MUSEUM CURATOR AND
OPERATIONS MANAGER
RESPONSIBLE FOR
INTEGRATED PEST
MANAGEMENT POLICY.



MUSEUM CURATOR TRAINS
MUSEUM STAFF ON
CORRECT HANDLING
TECHNIQUES.



FULL INVENTORIES EVERY
10 YEARS; PARTIAL
INVENTORIES AS NEEDED.

Further Reading

- ▶ “AAM Code of Ethics for Museums.” American Alliance of Museums. American Alliance of Museums, accessed March 21, 2023. <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/>
- ▶ “AASLH Statement of Standards and Ethics.” Statement, 2018. <http://download.aaslh.org/AASLH+Statement+of+Standards+and+Ethics+-+Revised+2018.pdf>.
- ▶ “Chicago Historical Society Collection Management Policy.” Chicago History Museum. Chicago Historical Society, accessed March 21, 2023. https://www.chicagohistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Collections-Management-Policy_-2015-09-18-final-revision.pdf
- ▶ “Collections Management Policy.” American Alliance of Museums. American Alliance of Museums, accessed March 21, 2023. <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/collections-management-policy/>.
- ▶ Simmons, John E. *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.