



The
University
Of
Sheffield.
Library

The University of Sheffield Heritage Collections Strategy

1. Context and purpose of the Heritage Collections

The University of Sheffield's Heritage Collections consist of thousands of objects acquired since the University's foundation in 1905 through research, commission, purchase, loan and gift. These include oil paintings, watercolours, sculpture, art glass in the Turner Museum of Glass, medals, silver, ceremonial objects, historical scientific instruments and the Alfred Denny Museum of Zoology.

The University Heritage Collections are working collections, displayed across the campus and used regularly for teaching, supporting academic research and public engagement. The Zoological Collection housed in the Alfred Denny Museum is one part of these heritage collections that directly supports research and teaching, comprising of unique, rare and extinct creatures. Some of the heritage collections are used for ceremonial occasions. The Heritage Collections illustrate the history and development of the University and its position as one of the UK's leading research universities.

The University of Sheffield is a truly civic university, founded through the aspirations and financial support of the people of Sheffield. The University maintains a strong commitment to the city and people of Sheffield which is shown through the Heritage Collections. The collections form the basis of a range of outreach into the city, through open days, tours and exhibitions. The Turner Museum of Glass is open to the public and engagement is offered through booked talks to groups.

Many of the Heritage Collections are available to the public; the University's large collection of pictures in a variety of media are displayed in offices, coffee shops, libraries, study and work spaces all over the campus. Outdoor sculptures show the University's commitment to enriching the University environment for the enjoyment of all. As well as fulfilling a decorative function, the collections embody the history of Sheffield and the University and create a vibrant sense of place on the campus.

The Heritage Collections are cared for as specified by the Collections Trust under Spectrum Standard procedures in order to safeguard the collection for future use and access, and to preserve the University's rich heritage.

2. Processes

2.1 Acquisitions

The Heritage Collections Advisory Panel will make decisions on all new acquisitions including commissions, donations and long-term loans in and out of the collection, following the guidelines set in the University Heritage Collections Acquisitions Policy.¹ It will be chaired by the Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor. The Director of Advancement, the Director of Library Services & University Librarian,

¹ Acquisition and Disposal Policies are currently being developed by the University Heritage Collections Manager and will require approval by the Panel.

and Faculty representatives from the Faculties of Arts and Humanities, Engineering, Science, Social Sciences, and Medicine, Dentistry and Health will also be members of the panel. They will be supported by the University Heritage Collections Manager as Secretary to the Panel. The panel will meet at least twice a year, and as required.

For gifts, loans and commissions managed by the Development, Alumni Relations and Events team, the University Heritage Collections Manager must be informed of such projects so as to notify the Heritage Advisory Panel. In cases of major acquisitions, the President & Vice Chancellor and the Provost & Deputy Vice Chancellor need to be informed early in the process around consideration and acceptance.

Major acquisitions are defined as donations or project managed commissions that:

- Are received from high profile donors
- Are existing works or commissions by significant artists
- Require significant investment in their display or placement e.g. large campus sculptures
- Are of sufficient value that they are noted on the University's General Property Insurance Policy

The University Heritage Collections Manager will play a vital role in managing the commissions and assist with the project so that the offer of donation, loan or commission correctly enters the heritage collection as specified in the Acquisitions & Disposal Policy.

Terms and conditions will be agreed by the Heritage Collection Advisory Panel and the donor for all donations and long term loans. Donations with a clear and valid title of ownership will be preferred to long term loans. Donors will be strongly encouraged to offer a monetary donation along with donations and long term loans to support the management, use and display of the object or collection.

Terms and conditions should also be agreed between the panel and any artist commissioned to produce an artwork.

Faculties and Departments, including Professional Services will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Heritage Collections Advisory Panel is satisfied that the University can acquire valid title to the item in question. It is important to state and clarify proof of ownership before acquiring any of the above from donors.

The University will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom.

In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the University will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The University will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department of Culture Media and Sport in 2005.

So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the University will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

The University will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Heritage Collections Advisory Panel has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures; for example reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).

Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the University is either:

- Acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- Acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded
- Acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
- In possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases, the University will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

The University will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

The University Heritage Collections Manager will work with Faculties to advise which material located and/ or owned by the Faculty should be designated as heritage objects or collections. The processes outlined in this strategy will apply to acquisitions, rationalisation and disposal.

2.2 Rationalisation and disposal²

The requirements for deaccessioning and disposal will be undertaken in a clear and transparent way by the University by following all procedures specified in Spectrum Standards. Disposal may take place to remove badly damaged or deteriorated items that can no longer be used, duplicates, or material of low relevance to the University in order to focus curatorial care on more significant items.

The Heritage Collection Advisory Panel will make decisions on disposals in consultation with relevant stakeholders. It will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. If an object was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation, the conditions attached to the original grant will be followed.

The method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort destruction. Any monies received by the University from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections.

Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to MLA Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

² Acquisition and Disposal Policies are currently being developed by the University Heritage Collections Manager and will require approval by the Panel.

Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable.

2.3 Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

The Heritage Collections Advisory Panel, acting on the advice of the University Heritage Collections Manager may take a decision to return human remains, objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The University will take such decisions on a case by case basis, within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications.

2.4 Access

The Heritage Office aspires to allow maximum access and use of the collections whilst balancing this against the requirement to care for and protect objects to ensure they survive in the long term.

Where appropriate, the Heritage Office aims to place collection items with Faculties and Departments to be utilised for research, teaching, outreach or enriching the estate, within University buildings or University spaces.

The decision to fulfil requests for external loans from the Heritage Collections are decided by the University Heritage Collection Manager, in consultation with relevant Faculties and Departments.

3 Heritage Office services

3.1 Collections management and support³

The Heritage Office is part of the University Library. It will support the management of the Heritage Collections in the following ways:

- Cataloguing the Heritage Collections using a museum standard database compliant with Spectrum Standards and including the core fields of information for the identity and description of the collection. There are nine primary procedures specified by Spectrum Standards which include: acquisition and accession, cataloguing, object entry, location and movement control, loans in (borrowing objects), loans out (lending objects), object exit, inventory, documentation planning.
- Provide DARE and other departments with advice on accepting gifts and commissions which are to be acquired as part of the heritage collection.
- Providing expert advice on collections management, conservation, preservation, environmental conditions and security to Faculties directly managing collections.
- Liaise with Estates and Facilities Management to support and facilitate building maintenance projects by removing or protecting in-situ heritage collections.
- Direct management of Heritage Collections held in the Heritage Stores to ensure a high-standard of care is taken for collections in storage.
- Direct management and advice is provided in reference to *Spectrum and Benchmarks in Collections Care*.
- Curating exhibitions and organising outreach activities and providing advice to others within the University carrying out these activities.

³ Collection Management policy is currently being developed by the University Heritage Collections Manager and will require approval by the Panel.

- Providing advice and overseeing picture hanging and artwork installations across the campus.
- Management of loans out from the Heritage Collections.
- Organising and managing loans in to the University.
- Ensuring adequate insurance provision for Heritage Collections.

3.2 Disaster Recovery

The University Library has a priority subscription to [Harwell Document Restoration Services](#) who provide disaster recovery solutions for documents, books and artwork. The subscription covers the whole University. The University Heritage Collections Manager can also provide expert advice and assistance when planning for an emergency and in the case of a disaster.

3.3 Insurance

All Heritage items owned by the University are covered by the University's insurance policy. Any items on loan to the University or part of our permanent collections are automatically covered up to a value of £250,000. Anything over this value is listed on the asset register with a description and a series of photographs that show both the item and its condition.

The University Silver is separately listed on the contents listing of the Insurance policy.

3.4 Related Documents

Donations should comply with The University of Sheffield's [Financial Regulations](#) section 10.7 Donations, Bequests and Legacies and [SIA 14](#).

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To be reviewed no later than November 2024

Anne Horn, Director of Library Services & University Librarian is responsible for the University Heritage Collections Strategy.