

APPENDIX 2

COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

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Owner	Head of Conservation

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1. Introduction

This policy is part of the **Fitzwilliam Museum Collections Management Framework**.

The purpose of this policy is to guide conservation and collections care activities as outlined in the Fitzwilliam Museum's **Collections Care and Conservation Plan**, in line with the Museum's **Strategic Plan** and in proportion to resources available. The policy includes a combination of preventive and remedial measures, designed to contribute to the long-term preservation of the collections.

Care of the collections is a primary duty of the Fitzwilliam Museum. All Museum Syndics, staff, interns and volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their induction to the Museum and it is one of the policy documents available online to all. Additional information relating to individual elements of this policy is communicated as required through meetings, training sessions and dissemination of relevant documents.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions have been adopted:

Collections care (preventive conservation)

The measures necessary to avoid, slow down or minimize deterioration or loss of museum objects, specimens and structures.

Remedial conservation

An action applied directly to an item or a group of items aimed at arresting deterioration processes and stabilizing structure in order to preserve cultural and scientific value. It may include restoration, where appropriate.

3. Ethics and Legislation

In caring for its collections, the Fitzwilliam Museum adheres to the following legislation and ethical guidelines:

- [Museum Association Code of Ethics for Museums, 2015](#)
- [Code of Ethics for Museums, ICOM, 2017](#)
- *Museums and Galleries Act, 1992*
- *Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974*
- *COSHH regulations, 2002*
- *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999*
- [University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances, 2018](#)

4. Standards

This policy for the care and conservation of collections is guided and informed by relevant standards and guidelines, including:

- *BS EN 16893: 2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage*
- *PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management*
- *BS 4971: 2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections*
- *SPECTRUM: UK Museum Collections Management Standard V.05, 2017*
- *Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries, v.2.1 2018*
- *The Professional Standards of the Institute of Conservation (Icon), 2016*
- *Government Indemnity Scheme Guidelines for Non-national Museums, 2016*
- *Bizot Green Protocol 2015*

- DCMS Guide to the Care of Human Remains, 2005
- [University of Cambridge Environmental Sustainability, Vision, Policy and Strategy 2015-2020](#)

5. Principles for care and conservation of the collections

The Fitzwilliam Museum is committed to care of its collections in accordance with sector guidance set out in *Spectrum: UK Museum Collections and Management Standard and Benchmarks in Collections Care* and other approved standards, within the limits of its resources.

It aims to strike a balance between the long-term preservation of collections and the accessibility of objects for public display and research, through the careful management of risks to collections.

5.1 Condition of the collections

The Museum will continue to assess and monitor the physical condition of its collections, thereby quantifying needs and providing the basis for strategic preservation and conservation planning. Priorities across curatorial departments will be incorporated into the Museum's **Collections Care and Conservation Plan**.

5.2 Risk Management for collections

The Museum aims regularly to assess and review all risks to the collections and to manage and mitigate these to a level that is acceptable, balanced against the need to ensure that the collections are accessible and interpretable.

5.3 Environmental monitoring

The Museum will continue to monitor environmental conditions in all collections areas. This data will be used to inform and facilitate decisions about preservation and to ensure that remedial action can be taken promptly in the event of malfunction or breakdown of equipment.

5.4 Environmental control

The Fitzwilliam Museum will continue its commitment to maintain and, where necessary, improve environmental conditions in order to preserve the physical condition of objects according to standards outlined in *BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage* and *BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections*.

5.5 Provision of suitable buildings

The Fitzwilliam Museum will continue to maintain and improve the physical condition of its buildings (mostly Grade 1 listed) in line with the **Conservation Plan for the Fitzwilliam Museum (2009)** and agreement with English Heritage and according to the schedules of care and upkeep agreed with the University of Cambridge Estate Management Department and Listed Buildings Consent. It will always consider the suitability of buildings for storage and/or display of its collections in accordance with guidelines *BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage* and *BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections* and standards outlined in [Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries](#) v.2.1, 2018.

5.6 Housekeeping and pest management

The Museum will continue its commitment to raise housekeeping standards across the institution in accordance with its document **Housekeeping Procedures** (under review in 2019).

The Museum accepts that there will be a level of pest presence across the building, but this will be managed through good housekeeping and in accordance with the **Integrated Pest and Mould Management Policy (2018)**.

5.7 Conservation treatment

Remedial conservation of collections is only undertaken by, or under the supervision of, qualified conservators. Work is carried out in accordance with principles of international best practice and ethical guidelines.

5.8 Specialist collections

5.8.1 Human remains

The Museum's small collection of human remains is stored and conserved in accordance with **DCMS Guide to the Care of Human Remains, 2005**.

5.8.2 Working collection: Clocks

The Museum's collection of working clocks is cared for and maintained by conservation and technical staff to the same standard as the rest of the collections and under the guidance of a specialist (external) clock conservator.

5.8.3 Working collection: Manuscripts and Printed Books

The Museum's collection of manuscripts and printed books constitutes a working library. It is cared for by specialist in-house conservators and technicians working to best practice guidance. Volumes and documents are assessed and treated in line with their individual needs.

5.9 Scientific investigation

The Museum recognises the importance of making its collections available for technical examination and scientific analysis by internal and external researchers. This need is balanced with the duty to care for and preserve the collection for future generations. External requests to undertake technical examination and scientific analysis are subject to approval through the process outlined in the **Request for Technical Examination and Scientific Analysis of Fitzwilliam Museum Collections** document (2018).

5.10 Conservation and scientific investigation documentation

All scientific investigation and conservation work must be fully documented. The Museum is committed to ongoing improvement in the standard of this documentation in line with best practice and taking account of relevant technical developments.

5.11 Loans in and out

The **Fitzwilliam Museum Standards for Loan Out and Outward Object(s) Loan Agreement** set out requirements for the preservation of its collections whilst they are under the care of another organisation.

Collections on loan to the Fitzwilliam Museum are cared for to the same standard as the Museum's accessioned collection and by commitment to any special requirements that have been agreed with owners and insurers.

5.12 Emergency planning

Strategies for safeguarding and recovery of the collections in the event of an emergency are included in the Museum's **Emergency Preparedness Framework (2019)** and **Emergency Manual (revised 2019)**.

The Museum is committed to the ongoing training of all staff (to an appropriate level depending on role) to ensure that the emergency plan can be implemented effectively.

6. Sustainability

As part of the University of Cambridge, practice in this area is guided and supported by the University's **Environmental Sustainability Vision, Policy and Strategy**. The Museum will continue to work in partnership with architects, building engineers and conservation specialists to deliver, where possible and appropriate, more sustainable systems for controlling the environment in collections areas.

Conservators use sustainable practices when feasible, reducing cost and use of unnecessary resources. Materials and techniques used by conservators aim to limit the need for future intervention.

7. Collections care and conservation support and advice

Care of the collections is the responsibility of everyone who works with or makes use of the collections. The Museum will train all staff, interns and volunteers who handle collections in the course of their work. Researchers and other visitors working with the collections will be briefed on how to handle objects and will be supervised at all times.

The Museum will employ only professionally trained conservators who should be either accredited by the UK Institute for Conservation (Icon) or be committed to working towards accreditation.

Any external conservator or conservation practice that is contracted to provide advice or services should, wherever possible, be professionally accredited.

The Museum is committed to sharing internally & externally its skills, knowledge and research in conservation and collections care.

8. Implementation

8.1 Governance

This **Collections Care and Conservation Policy** has been submitted to the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum for approval.

8.2 Stakeholder management

This **Collections Care and Conservation Policy** is used to guide the **Collections Care and Conservation Plan**, prepared by the Head of Conservation in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

8.3 Owner

The Policy owner is the Head of Conservation.

8.4 Publication

The **Collections Care and Conservation Policy, Plan** and any related documents will be posted on the staff intranet for access by all staff and colleagues within the Museum.

The **Collections Care and Conservation Policy** will be posted on the Museum's website for public access.

8.5 Review

The Fitzwilliam Museum will be mindful of new developments in collections care and conservation and will review this policy at least once every five years. The next review date will be no later than **September 2024**.

Appendix

Fitzwilliam Museum policies and plans referred to in this policy:

- Collections Care and Conservation Plan
- Housekeeping Procedures (under review)
- Integrated Pest and Mould Management Policy (2018)
- Emergency Preparedness Framework (2019)
- Emergency Manual (revised 2019)
- Conservation Plan for the Fitzwilliam Museum (2009)
- Request for Technical Examination and Scientific Analysis of Fitzwilliam Museum Collections (2018)
- Fitzwilliam Museum Standards for Loan Out (2018)
- Outward Objects(s) Loan Agreement (2018)