

MUSEUMS COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2018-23

Name of governing body

University Court of the University of Aberdeen

Approved by the University Management Group on 27 August 2018

1. Policy review procedure

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. Museum Galleries Scotland and the Treasure Trove Unit will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections. The policy is due for review five years from the date of approval by the University Court.

2. Purpose of the University's museums

The University's museums aim for excellence in teaching, research and community engagement. They bring collaboration and creativity to the management of the University's collections for the benefit of all users.

The key aims are outlined in the University Museums Strategic Plan.

3. Overview of current collections

The University's museums and collections are internationally renowned and the entire collection was awarded the status of a Recognised Collection of National Significance in 2007. The collections are the product of hundreds of years of collecting, driven by the research and teaching activities of staff and the exploits and generosity of graduates and friends. Holding items acquired by the University and its constituent institutions from their foundation in 1495, museums were established in the later 18th century in King's College and Marischal College. These two colleges were fused in 1860 to form the University of Aberdeen. The collections cover a wide range of Human Culture, Medicine and Health, and Natural History, with an unusually deep cohesion stemming from the intellectual interests of the University, and a relatedness within the collections that runs across the currently-defined disciplines and the original media, with complex threads rising through the centuries, expressed as materials with a genealogical affinity based on connected donors, or on evolving thoughts, practices and concepts.

The Collection Development Policy does not cover material that is not considered worthy of long-term curation by the University, such as those that form a teaching or handling collection, or that consist of official gifts to the University that are not of museum quality.

2.1 Human Culture collections

2.1.1 European and Mediterranean archaeology

The internationally significant collections from Egypt are the second-largest in Scotland (National Audit), comprising over 4000 items. Alongside the impressive Greek and Roman coin collections, there is a notable highlight in Ancient Greek ceramics. Excavated groups are an important aspect of the material from Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia, often the result of partage among major British museums. The important early 19th century collections of Dr Robert Wilson from Italy, Greece, Egypt and Mesopotamia are particularly enhanced by their association with his library and archives held by the University.

2.1.2 Fine Art

Within the areas of greatest strength in the collection (Early Modern Scottish painting, 17th-20th century portraiture, 19th century prints) the collection is remarkably comprehensive with works by most major artists (including George Jameson, Cosmo Alexander, Charles Whyt, Anne Forbes, Angelica Kauffman, James Giles, George Reid and Alberto Morrocco). Likewise, the collections of landscapes include works by many important artists (including James Giles, Horatio McCulloch, William MacTaggart, Joseph Farquharson, Gordon Bryce and James Morrison). Building on the existing strengths of the print

collection, there have been purchases of prints by contemporary artists to extend the range of media, styles and artists. Other recent donations and purchases have built on the collection of 20th century works by Scottish Colourists that was established by the Linklater bequest.

2.1.3 Non-Western archaeology and ethnography

The University's ethnographic collections are among the three largest in Scotland. At the high point of colonial activity, in 1907, the collections were drawn together to create the University's Anthropological Museum. Within Scotland, the collections from Central America are the largest and those from North America, East Africa, South Africa and Australia in second place. The collections from West Africa, South Asia, Melanesia and Polynesia are almost as important in such terms. The importance of the collection is enhanced by the size of the component sub-groups and their association with individual donors, such as those from North America. The Melanesian collections, of over 2000 items, have at their core a large collection from Papua New Guinea and surrounding islands made by the first British Administrator, Sir William McGregor. The European collections are dominated by the internationally-important 1930s Balkan collections of Margaret Hasluck.

2.1.4 Numismatics

The collection is the third largest and most important in Scotland, with particular strengths in Classical coins, notably the outstanding Newnham Davis collection of Greek coins, Scottish coins and communion tokens, an excellent collection of commemorative and prize medals, particularly representing the University of Aberdeen, and trade tokens, jetons and beggars' badges. The comprehensive collection of military medals is considered as part of the Scottish history and archaeology collection. The wide-ranging series of Scottish-minted coins consists of 600 coins (without undue emphasis on 17th century copper), starting with one of the earliest such coins, an early 12th century silver penny of David I and continuing to the last coins minted in Scotland in 1709. There are also several thousand coins from the Upperkirkgate, Aberdeen hoard, over 1,000 medieval European hammered coins, 1,500 British milled coins and 9,000 coins from India, China and elsewhere, with the collection of almost 10,000 communion tokens being from most parishes in Scotland, along with Presbyterian churches elsewhere in the British Empire.

2.1.5 Scientific Instruments

The collection of around 3,000 historical scientific instruments has resulted from the collecting of material that has been in use in the University of Aberdeen, primarily for the purpose of teaching and research in natural philosophy and was brought together by a distinguished line of past professors, including Patrick Copland, James Clerk Maxwell, GP Thomson and RV Jones. It is one of the most diverse collections of historical scientific instruments in any British University, developed within a structured institutional context giving it importance that many other collections lack. The 18th and 19th century objects cover numerous subject areas, notably astronomy, surveying and navigation, statics and dynamics, properties of matter, pneumatics and hydraulics, electrostatics, current electricity and magnetism, optics, heat, acoustics, meteorology. The 20th century component of the collection is one of its major strengths, including additional themes such as X-rays and their application in medicine and crystallography; electronic instruments and measurements; measuring radioactivity; the development of precision instrumentation; the evolution of computational machines; optical equipment and changing techniques in teaching physics.

2.1.6 Scottish history and archaeology

The collections are of all periods, ranging from Mesolithic flints from Deeside and the North Sea coast to 20th century farm tools. The main strengths of the collection lie in North-East prehistory, Scottish militaria and University history, while there are also important collections of recent historical items and folk-life material. While the strength of the collection lies in its comprehensiveness, there are a number of significant unique items. The archaeological collection is now the principal depository of prehistoric and early historic material from the North-East, building on the collections of funerary assemblages from eastern Scotland. Certain groups of material, such as lithics from coastal flint scatters, the Argo collection of agricultural objects from specific farms, material deriving from archaeological excavations and items associated with University also have excellent supporting documentary material. The Gordon Collection, consisting of a comprehensive set of medals associated with members of the Gordon clan and militaria formerly associated with the House of Gordon is another well-contextualised and coherent group of high quality material.

2.2 Medicine and Health Collections

The University's medicine and health collections provide a nationally-significant, key source for the study of medicine, as well as being an important cross-disciplinary resource and providing a nationally important record of the history and development of medicine from the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century. They chart the teaching of medicine and health and show the research contributions of staff in this field, so closely complement the University's other collections, notably ethnography and zoology.

2.2.1 Anatomy

With the oldest items in the collection dating to at least the early 19th century, the collection is the product of the research and teaching activities of staff in Aberdeen, notably Professors Struthers (1823-1899), Reid (1851-1939) and Lockhart (1894-1987) and includes some 500 specimens. The collection of c400 anatomical models dates from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including examples from the major model makers of the time and models made of wax, papier-mâché and plaster. Of particular note within the collection for its rarity is a life-sized papier-mâché model of a man dating from 1879 by Auzoux. The anatomical models form an important aspect of the University's wider model collection and have been complemented by recent purchases of plastic anatomical models for continuing teaching purposes. The collection of 900 works on paper include late 19th century watercolours of anatomical dissections some of which can still be matched with their original associated wet specimens prepared, and a collection of anatomical drawings produced for Professor Robert Lockhart's *Anatomy of the Human Body* by seven artists and photographers including Alberto Morrocco. Access to, and display of, parts of the collection is restricted by the Anatomy Act (1984) as amended by the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006.

2.2.2 Pathology and Forensic Medicine

The collection is a unique historical record of disease manifestations in the North-East Scotland in the middle third of the 20th century and includes a few artefacts relating to crimes of note committed in the Aberdeen area around the same period. The collection also contains models dating from the late 19th/early 20th centuries demonstrating a range of pathological appearances. The collection as a whole represents the work of a succession of Regius Professors of Pathology and Professors of Forensic Medicine - and their staffs - in the University of Aberdeen. There are around 1800 fluid-preserved specimens showing both pathological conditions and traumatic pathology, many with associated anonymous clinical case files and supporting contextual material such as weapons and photographic evidence. There are also wax, papier-mâché and ceramic models showing a variety of pathological appearances, scientific instruments used in the preparation and examination of pathological specimens and associated archival and photographic material. Access to, and display of, parts of the collection is restricted by the Human Tissues Act (1961), as amended by the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006.

2.2.3 Related material

The collection of the former Surgery Department Museum consists of a small number of late nineteenth and early twentieth century scientific instruments, alongside a collection of replica Roman surgical instruments.

2.3 Natural History Collections

2.3.1 Geology

The geological collections are a repository for worldwide research material of palaeontological, mineralogical and lithological nature that is the third largest geology collection in Scotland. The palaeontology collection contains around 12,000 specimens, including over 600 'Type and Figured' specimens. The collection is strong in its demonstration of regional geology. Fossil corals and bryozoa collected by HA Nicholson in the 19th century are a particular strength of the collection, while a more recent acquisition is the Dr AG Lyon Collection of material from the internationally-renowned Early Devonian Rhynie chert. The mineral collection contains over 12,000 specimens, reflecting the comprehensive range of staff research interests and expertise and it now comprises specimens from many Scottish and UK localities as well as from around the world. Given the length of time during which the collection has been assembled, it now contains many specimens from localities which no longer exist. The rock collection contains almost 9,000 specimens of worldwide origin, but with a particular strength lies in its specimens from northern Scotland. Much of the material is of increasing value in that many localities are no longer available for collecting and increased by the fact that many specimens have associated thin sections and chemical analyses.

2.3.2 Herbarium

The Herbarium is internationally important and worldwide in scope. It has approximately 120,000 herbarium specimens, with a special emphasis on South-East Asia, notably Thailand numbering approximately 22,000 sheets, including over 400 type specimens. It is regarded as the second most important collection of such material in the world. It was principally collected by Arthur Francis George Kerr (1877-1942). The British collection is the largest numbering 55,000 specimens and is particularly representative of Scottish material, holding the third largest collection of native plants in Scotland, after the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh and the merged Glasgow Museums/University collections. Specimen information is good relating to identification of species, collector, collection dates and location while many of the specimens have additional data stored with them, including notes made by researchers relating to individual specimens.

2.3.3 Zoology

The University has the only large, international collection of zoological specimens in the north of Scotland. The collections are the result of collecting over the last 200 years or so by the teaching and research activities of our staff and students and by the gifts of graduates and friends of the University. The Zoology collection includes a wide range of material that is worldwide in scope and which covers the whole of the Animal Kingdom, from protozoa to the great whales. The collection contains around 75,000 specimens, including mammal and bird mounted taxidermy, study skins, -fluid-preserved collections, insect collections and collections of slides. Alongside the main collection of zoological specimens is a collection of skeletal material, originally part of the comparative anatomical collections of Regius Professor of Anatomy John Struthers (1823-1899) and a set of comparative anatomical models, notably examples from the major 19th century model makers including around 40 glass models of marine invertebrates by Rudolph and Leopold Blaschka and papier-mâché models by Louis Auzoux.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The general principles for collecting are:

- to preserve important material for the benefit of the University and the wider community
- to build on the existing strengths of the collections, including those of the University Special Collections and Archives
- to collect material to support teaching, research and public engagement.

While details are given below, the overall priorities for collecting are to focus on:

- Items that support university teaching and research
- Items that relate to significant aspects of the University's history
- High quality works of art for display on campus
- Maintaining the University's role as a major repository for material relating to the archaeology of the North-East

Under normal circumstances only items which are accompanied by adequate documentation as to their origin and method of collection will be acquired. All potential acquisitions will be considered in the context of storage restrictions, staffing capacity, expertise and collections care arrangements. The allocation of material to specific collections will be at the discretion of the relevant curatorial staff to ensure the most appropriate levels of care, discoverability and accessibility. This may include transferring material to the University's Special Collections Centre for long-term curation. This Collection Development Policy will only apply to material that is acquired for the permanent museum collections.

3.1 Human Culture collections

3.1.1 European and Mediterranean archaeology

European and Mediterranean archaeological material is often illegally excavated and exported. The Museum therefore places a low priority on the acquisition of archaeological material from these areas. Coherent assemblages historically associated with people from the North-East may be collected, while individual items of importance or that fill gaps in the collection may be considered for acquisition. In other cases, potential donors will be recommended to offer material to appropriate museums in the originating country or to National Museums Scotland.

3.1.2 Fine Art

Acquisitions will aim to build on the strengths of the existing collection, prioritising works associated with the history of the University and supporting teaching in the University. Particular note will be taken of the collecting areas of other local institutions, such as the Aberdeen Art Gallery and the Grampian Hospitals Art Collection. 20th century and contemporary art will be collected, focusing on works by artists of renown working in Scotland that relate to the existing collections, notably the Linklater Bequest. Works by artists from elsewhere will also be considered, particularly where they relate to major research themes in the University or strengths of the wider collection, such as those from the 'North'. Items associated with the history of the University or to significant University research will be collected, with the criteria for selection being the significance of the item to the University, the quality of the item and the costs associated with acquisition and curation. Works of art may also be acquired where they would support teaching, such as building on the collection of prints that have been acquired to familiarise students of the History of Art with graphic techniques and media.

The University may acquire works of art by gift, purchase and commission to enhance the aesthetic environment of the University campus. Acquisition to the main art collection will, however, be at the discretion of curatorial staff taking into account long-term issues of conservation and security. Before any works of potential relevance to the Fine Art collection are acquired by the University, the Head of Museums and Special Collections should be consulted.

3.1.3 Non-Western archaeology and ethnography

The Museum is aware of the illegal excavation and export of material in this area and the sensitivity of certain items. Acquisition of material in this area will therefore be approached with particular care and consideration. Active collection of material should be associated with the research and teaching activities of the University and should aim to establish long-term relationships with the people from whom material is collected. Archaeological material will not normally be collected, except where it is in coherent assemblages historically associated with the people from North-East Scotland. Items will not be collected if they have been acquired in a way that contravenes the 1970 UNESCO Convention or the spirit of the 1995 Unidroit Convention. Potential donors of material from outwith the priority areas will normally be recommended to approach appropriate museums in the originating country or National Museums Scotland as more appropriate repositories.

Among the existing collections from Europe, Asia and North America is some particularly important Inuit material. Current priorities aim to extend this 'Northern' aspect of the collection and add to it other material from northern Eurasia and North America. Such collecting will normally be conducted in collaboration with University researchers and the people from whom the material is to be collected.

The existing collections from Africa, Oceania, Central and South America include particularly important groups of material which offer a valuable resource for teaching and display. However, collecting from these areas has a lower priority and material will only be accepted if it supports the current research and teaching priorities of the University. Such items, and any other material falling outwith these priorities, will only be accepted if it is well contextualised, protects material from destruction or loss, relates to areas of particular strength in the existing collections or is of particular value for display or teaching purposes.

3.1.4 Numismatics

In general, there will be no further additions to this area of the collection. Exceptions relate to items associated with the history of the University, such as prize medals, and military medals that closely relate to the University's Gordon Collection. Potential donors of other material will be recommended to approach Aberdeen City Museums, the Hunterian Museum or National Museums Scotland.

3.1.5 Scientific Instruments

The main focus of collecting will be to preserve items that relate to significant areas of teaching and research in the physical sciences in the University. This will include equipment that is no longer in use related to the practice of physics, medical physics, astronomy, computer science and engineering. A priority will be given to items of value to the study of history of science and technology, particularly those having a strong association with notable academics and significant research in the University. For example, the creation of a comprehensive collection of computing equipment is outwith the scope of the policy. Other items of scientific equipment, including those from other disciplines, may be collected that support the teaching, research and public engagement aims of the University's museums. Archival material, such as photographs, catalogues, instruction manuals, film and digital media may be collected

if they are clearly associated with particular items in the collections. Other archival material will be offered to the University's Special Collections. Material without a clear association with the University will not normally be collected.

3.1.6 Scottish history and archaeology

The Museum's collecting area for Scottish archaeological material is North-East Scotland, approximating to the local authority areas of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. Items will only be acquired from outwith this area if a more appropriate local museum chooses not to acquire them. Items will only be acquired as an allocation to the University by the Crown, normally on the advice by the Scottish Archaeological Finds Advisory Panel (SAFAP), unless the curator is satisfied that valid title to the item can be proven, such as by a certificate of 'No Claim' issued by SAFAP.

The collection of historical material will also normally be confined to this area. Items which have close associations with the North-East, such as through use or manufacture, will also be acquired, with due regard to the collecting policies of other Accredited museums.

Priority will be given to assemblages of Prehistoric to Early Historic date deriving from recent archaeological fieldwork with associated contextualising information and the acquisition of Iron Age and Early Historic material in which the collection is weaker. Medieval to Modern archaeological material will normally only be considered for acquisition if no other local Accredited museum wishes to acquire it. Material relating to the traditional culture of Northern Scotland or those associated with North-East people may be acquired, especially if relating to the teaching and research activities of the Elphinstone Institute. Although active collecting for the Gordon Collection of militaria associated with the Gordon Clan has ceased, additional items may be acquired if closely related to material already in the collection, though the collecting priorities of the Gordon Highlanders Museum will be respected. Items relating to significant individuals associated with North-East Scotland or the University of Aberdeen will be collected, particularly those relating to University teaching and research prior to 1907 or where their collection relates to existing material in the University's collections. Items deriving from mixed assemblages of archival and artefactual material will also be collected where these relate to the collecting priorities of the University's Special Collections.

3.2 Medicine and Health Collections

3.2.1 Anatomy

The main principle for collecting is to preserve important human anatomical material (and related non-biological artefacts) for the benefit of teaching and research in the human anatomical and related disciplines. This will build on the existing strengths of the collection to concentrate on material which demonstrates the normal distribution of human anatomical variance. All human tissue specimens will be accepted under procedures laid down by the Anatomy Act 1984, as amended by the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006, and any additional guidance as may be put forward by HM Inspector of Anatomy. Normally, only material connected to the North of Scotland will be collected as there is no conflict with other equivalent museums. Where material is considered from elsewhere it would only be considered in consultation with the relevant museums.

3.2.2 Pathology and Forensic Medicine

In the current climate surrounding the retention of human organs and tissues, it would probably be impossible to build up such a collection again. There will therefore normally be no further additions to this area of the collection. Were it possible to do so, new acquisitions would be centred on material not yet represented in the collection, such as new variants of disease, and collecting would follow the highest ethical standards, be fully documented and only take place with the informed consent of the individuals concerned. Such material would almost always be obtained from within the north-east of Scotland (e.g. from operative specimens) unless in very exceptional circumstances (for example it is possible that individual items of exotic (e.g. tropical) disease might come from elsewhere).

3.2.3 Related material

Items that are not human remains may still be acquired, such as anatomical, pathological or forensic models, scientific instruments and archival material, if they relate to items in the collection or to teaching and research in medicine and medical sciences in the University of Aberdeen. Medical case files may be acquired when they relate directly to specimens held in the collection, or in some instances where the case file refers to a specimen that no longer exists. Such material will only be acquired and used in a way that takes regard of current standards in ethics, data protection and freedom of information. Collecting of material will take place with sensitivity to any possible conflicts with the collecting policy of other museums and the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society.

3.3 Natural History Collections

3.3.1 Geology

As Geology is a world-wide subject, material in the collections comes from all continents, but the collecting priorities place an emphasis on Scottish material. Collecting will be limited to material of research, display and teaching value, normally obtained through collecting by staff and students in the course of their professional activities. Priority will be given to acquiring mineral specimens if they are of exceptional quality or of mineral species not represented in the collection. Acquisitions to the rock collection will prioritise rocks for which analyses are available, specimens from classic localities, and specimens mentioned in research publications. Scientific equipment and archival material may also be acquired where these objects illustrate the practice of geology at the University of Aberdeen.

3.3.2 Herbarium

Acquisition priorities for the Herbarium focus on specimens from Scotland and South-East Asia. Except for Type specimens, material from other parts of the world will be regarded as being of lower priority. Items will only be acquired if accompanied by adequate documentation, particularly relating to location and date of collection and about the field collector, and following consideration of its value to teaching, research and public education. Collaboration with the work of the Cruickshank Botanic Garden will be a significant consideration in this regard. Voucher material will be acquired where it relates to taxonomic research, DNA analyses or where it would support distributional study of plants or the work of local researchers. Archival material and botanical models may be acquired if they are related to items in the collection, if they are of significance to the history of plant science research and teaching in the University of Aberdeen, or if they would significantly support teaching, research or public engagement. Material will only be acquired if legal considerations are appropriately considered, notably the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

3.3.3 Zoology

The Museum contains worldwide collections and will continue to acquire material that is worldwide in scope. Future collecting will aim to support the research activities of staff and graduate students, and to underpin the education of undergraduates and the general public about biological principles, the diversity of living creatures, their taxonomic relationships, their adaptations to life and the conservation of biodiversity. Priority will be given to collecting material relating to current research in the biological sciences at the University of Aberdeen, and relating to the history of biological research and teaching in the University. However material not linked to University teaching and research may be acquired for the purpose of display and interpretation, where this significantly supports the public engagement aims of the University Museums. Such material may also be acquired for the reserve collection where it fills an important gap in the collections or significantly enhances the strength of an existing collection, thus ensuring an appropriate depth and breadth of coverage of the natural world. Specimens will only be acquired if accompanied by adequate documentation, particularly relating to the location and date of collection and about the field collector.

Material will only be acquired if legal considerations are appropriately considered, notably the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). As it is illegal in the UK to possess or control any wild birds' eggs that were taken since the Protection of Birds Act (1954), collections of wild birds' eggs will not be acquired unless the donor can provide reliable written evidence that the eggs were taken from the wild prior to the Protection of Birds Act (1954), or unless the donor has been granted a license to remove and possess the eggs by Scottish Natural Heritage (or equivalent) where appropriate). Donations of birds' eggs will only be considered where the eggs are of significant research value and are accompanied by reliable data. Collection of birds and

mammal specimens is based on an ethical approach which precludes the collection of wildlife deliberately killed for display taxidermy.

As well as zoological specimens, models or replicas may be acquired where they relate to significant aspects of the collections or are required for teaching, research or display. Scientific instruments and other research equipment will not normally be acquired, except where they have a direct relevance to items already in the collections or if closely related to significant biological research carried out at the University of Aberdeen. Archival material that is of specific relevance to biological research and teaching in the University of Aberdeen, including drawings, letters, photographs and digital media, may be acquired where such material illustrates significant aspects of the zoological collections and is required for the interpretation of the collections.

Material that is not required for the collection may be offered to the University's Natural History Centre to support its educational activities, if it is safe for public handling and otherwise suitable for this purpose.

4. Limitations on collecting

a. The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

b. Items offered to the University as gifts or bequests will not normally be accepted if they are subject to any restrictive covenant or special conditions. A general exception to this rule will be deemed to exist in respect of restrictive covenants or conditions intended only to assure the permanent protection of the item concerned in the University's collections. The University Court may be asked to approve the acquisition of specific items to which unusual conditions are attached. Items will not normally be accepted into the collections on loan. No item will be accepted on 'permanent loan', a term which has no legal status. In exceptional cases, items of major importance that fall within the scope of this Policy may be accepted on long, fixed-term, loan, the period to be agreed in writing between the curator and owner (or representative). Where the term of a loan has expired, it may be renewed or extended for further finite periods, at the discretion of both the owner and the curator. In exceptional circumstances the University may ask for a contribution from the lender towards the upkeep of items on loan.

c. The University will not acquire any object or specimen for its museums 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 those of the United Kingdom).

d. 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, the museum 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 for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

e. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the University museums 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.

f. The University museums will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

Under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects, including antiquities, found in Scotland. Scottish archaeological material cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to the University of Aberdeen by the Crown. Where the Crown chooses to forego its title to a portable antiquity, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the University Court can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

g. Any exceptions to the above clauses 5c-f will only be because the University is either acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or 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; or acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or 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.

h. As the University's Anatomy and Pathology collections hold and may acquire human remains, the University recognises that these museums will need to be on the list of museums in the Anatomy (Specified Persons and Museums for Public Display) (Scotland) Order 2006, or to have obtained a licence under the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 and will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2008.

5. Collecting policies of other museums

The University will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. Specific reference is made to the following collections and museums, including the signatories of the North-East Museums Concordat:

- University of Aberdeen Special Collections Centre
- Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums
- The Gordon Highlanders Museum, Aberdeen
- Grampian Hospitals Art Collection, Aberdeen
- Aberdeenshire Council Museums
- The Moray Council Museums
- The Moray Society (Elgin Museum)
- National Museums Scotland
- other university museums in Scotland

6. Management of archives

As the University museums hold archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, the University Court will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002) and by discussion with colleagues in the University's Special Collections Centre.

7. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outwith the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the University Court, having regard to the interests of other museums.

8. Acquisition procedures

a. The University museums will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the University can acquire a valid title to the item in question. Collecting will aim to follow the highest ethical standards, ensuring that all relevant laws, treaties and professional guidance are followed and that all relevant ethical issues are thoroughly considered.

b. Wherever appropriate, the University will aim to acquire relevant intellectual property rights associated with acquired objects.

c. A curator, as the University Court's representative, will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of gifts or bequests to a collection, for soliciting gifts of material for the collections within the terms of this policy, and for making purchases of material in accordance with this Policy and within the University Court's normal standing orders.

d. Advice and criticism about the use of the collections from any source will be acknowledged, respected and considered. Whether at the time of acquisition or later, if the critique derives from representatives of the original owners, the appropriate curator will consider it with proportionally greater sensitivity.

9. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

Most areas of the collection are liable to see acquisitions, though this is regarded as a low priority for certain areas, notably European and Mediterranean archaeology, ethnography from Africa, Oceania, Central and South America, numismatics, Medieval to Modern Scottish archaeological material, the Gordon Collection of militaria and pathological and forensic human remains.

Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal may take place as part of the University's long-term collections policies for its museum collections, in order to increase the public benefit derived from museum collections. The University will not undertake disposal of items in its museum collections motivated principally by financial reasons. Items will normally only be considered for disposal if they are beyond repair, if they are scientific specimens with an extremely low scientific value, such as being associated with negligible accompanying data, or if keeping them poses a significant threat to health and safety. Any consideration of items for disposal will follow the guidance of the Museums Association's Code of Ethics and Disposal Toolkit when making disposal decisions. If a decision is made according to the procedures outlined in this policy, disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety).

10. Repatriation, restitution and spoliation

The University Court, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff may take a decision to return human remains, objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. For relevant material, it will refer *Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period* issued in 1999 for non-national museums, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

The University will take decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in sections 11.1, 11.3 and 11.7 below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate. Instead, the procedure stated in the Appendix 'Responding to requests for return from the University of Aberdeen's Museum Collections' will be followed.

11. Disposal procedures

Where a decision is made to consider the disposal of material in the museum collections, the following process will be followed, ensuring that the disposal process is carried out openly and with integrity and transparency.

11.1. Disposal preliminaries

By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The University Court therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection. The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

11.2 Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

The University will not undertake disposal from the Accredited museum collections motivated principally by financial reasons. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in sections 11.3 to 11.7 will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

11.3 The disposal decision-making process

The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the University Court only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought. In the event of emergency destruction being required for reasons of health and safety or the protection of the rest of the collection, a full and speedy report will be made to the University Court.

11.4 Responsibility for disposal decision-making

A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the University Court acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

The exception to this is that, in accordance with the procedures of the Anatomy Act (1984) as amended by the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act (2006), the proper disposal of human remains in the Anatomy collection donated under the Anatomy Acts is the legal duty of the Licensed Teacher of Anatomy. In exceptional circumstances the Licensed Teacher may be required to dispose of human remains and to have sole responsibility for the decision. The University Court will be informed of the decision and a clear documented audit trail will be maintained.

11.5 Use of proceeds of sale

Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Museums Galleries Scotland. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

11.6 Disposal by gift or sale

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 or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain. The University will not dispose of items from its museum collections by exchange.

11.7 Documenting disposal

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 in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on de-accession and disposal.