



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Collections Care and Conservation Policy

Libraries, Museums, Galleries

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Name of service: Victoria Gallery & Museum (Museum Accreditation No. AN249), Garstang Museum of Archaeology (Museum Accreditation No. AN315) and Special Collections & Archives

Name of governing body: The University of Liverpool

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 20 December 2024

Policy review procedure: The Collections Care and Conservation Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every two years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: 20 December 2026

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Collections Care and Conservation Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of the collections.

1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of the Collections Care and Conservation Policy is to set a framework, set within the limits of the institution's resources, for:

- The holistic care and preservation of the collections managed by Cultural Heritage Services, now and to secure them for future generations
- Preventative and remedial conservation of the collections
- The safe use of and access to the collections

This policy has been written in accordance with the Collections Development Policy for Libraries, Museums, Galleries (LMG). The associated Collections Care and Conservation Plan sets specific objectives. Both the policy and plan should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Plan for Libraries, Museums, Galleries: [Reimagining Libraries, Museums and Galleries](#), the Collections Management Policy, Collections Access Policy, Collections Information Policy and any other policies and plans affecting the collections and associated exhibition areas, stores and facilities.

2. Context and Legal Framework

The Charitable Purpose of The University of Liverpool

The charitable purpose of The University of Liverpool is to advance education, learning and research for the public benefit.

Statement of Purpose for the Collections

Cultural Heritage Services seek to preserve, develop, interpret and make accessible to all the collections of The University of Liverpool, supporting the University's mission and charitable purposes. Our mission is to enable, embody and amplify the strategic ambitions of Liverpool 2031 as a provider of comprehensive collections and services, as research and curatorial partners, and as professional leaders. Our vision is to share, inspire and generate knowledge amongst our users, partners and communities, and promote their skills, curiosity and confidence.

3. Standards

Cultural Heritage Services (CHS) aims to improve the care and condition of its collections, within the limits of its resources, in accordance with professional and ethical standards and best practice including:

- Benchmarks 3.0 Conservation Planning Tool for Archives, Libraries & Museums
- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage – specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
- BS EN 17820:2023 Conservation of Cultural Heritage — Specifications for the management of moveable cultural heritage collections
- BS EN 16790:2016 Conservation of Cultural Heritage – integrated pest management for protection of cultural heritage
- BS EN 16095:2012 Conservation of cultural property. Condition recording for movable cultural heritage
- NDSA Levels of Born Digital Preservation
- Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association ‘Theft of Books and Manuscripts from Libraries: An Advisory Code of Conduct for Booksellers and Librarians’
- The Government Indemnity Scheme standard
- Archive Service Accreditation
- Museum Accreditation
- Spectrum: The UK museum collections management standard
- The Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association
- Code of Ethics, Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland)
- Ethical Framework, CILIP (the library and information association)

CHS will comply with relevant Health and Safety legislation, including, but not limited to, the Health and Safety at Work etc Act (1974) and its enabling regulations including the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (2002).

The safety and preservation of the collections will be considered from the outset of any plans to alter the displays or storage, to modify the buildings or to allow access to any part of the collections.

Wherever possible, the organisation will seek to minimise the unnecessary use of energy and to reduce the environmental impact of caring for the collection, while upholding professional standards of collections care and management.

4. Staff and Expertise

The collections are managed by professional and experienced staff across museum, library and archives sectors.

All collections staff are employed by The University of Liverpool. All buildings and stores in which collections are housed, are owned and maintained by The University of Liverpool. Collections care and conservation is fully integrated across CHS collections under the leadership of the

Heads of Department including environmental monitoring, integrated pest management (IPM), buildings management, display conditions, etc.

All staff and volunteers working with collections are appropriately trained in their handling and management, including any health and safety risks. New and/or inexperienced staff and volunteers are supervised when handling collections, and training and continuous professional development is supported.

Any concerns regarding the collections should be notified immediately to the relevant Heads of Department and escalated where appropriate to the Deputy Director of Libraries, Museums, Galleries. Procedures are incorporated into the relevant building Emergency Plans.

Researchers or other visitors working with the collections are advised on how to handle any material they are consulting and are appropriately supervised. Consultation of archive, manuscript material and special collections will normally take place in the Reading Room in Special Collections & Archives, or in situ in the stores in the Victoria Gallery & Museum and Garstang Museum for larger or fixed items.

Cultural Heritage Services staff are trained and experienced in preventative conservation techniques, with advice sought from external conservators and specialists where appropriate. Suitably trained and qualified external conservators are used for remedial conservation.

The suitability, qualifications and experience of external conservators are carefully considered. A professionally accredited conservator or a conservator listed on the Conservation Register of the Institute of Conservation (ICON) will normally be chosen. Assessments are conducted and conservation plans agreed before remedial conservation is undertaken. Where work takes place off-site, planning includes arrangements for tracking and location control, appropriate packing, transportation and insurance. Records are kept of all remedial conservation works.

5. Approaches to conservation

There are two types of conservation:

Preventative conservation seeks to minimise deterioration and damage by managing risks to items and collections. It is the most effective means of preserving the diverse range of objects and materials in the collections.

Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.

CHS aims to manage, handle, store and display the collections in such a way as to minimise the risk of damage and deterioration while facilitating access, enabling use and engagement, while ensuring long-term preservation.

The preventative conservation approach cannot eliminate the need for remedial or interventive conservation, as accidents or other incidents may occasionally occur and both existing collections and new acquisitions may already exhibit signs of damage.

The guiding principle for the remedial conservation of items in the collections is to minimise the amount of intervention required. Treatment methods will use stable and tested materials that

are, as far as possible, reversible, and do not compromise the intrinsic nature of the objects and its significance, or remove or diminish its evidential value.

6. Collections Management

Cultural Heritage Services are aware of the potential risks presented to collections by environmental factors, pests, handling, theft, storage and display materials and methods, disassociation, emergency situations (e.g. fire, flood, terrorist incident) and inadequate collections management or security. CHS is committed to mitigating these risks through robust collections and risk management.

The following systems and procedures are in place: further details are provided in the Collections Care and Conservation Plan.

6.1 Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

The risk of pest damage and/or infestation is managed and monitored through an integrated pest management programme, including regular checks and housekeeping, and quarantining where appropriate.

6.2 Environmental Monitoring, Control and Management

Relative humidity and temperature are continuously monitored in stores and the SCA reading room. In SCA's main store areas alerts are generated in the case of malfunction.

Lux levels are checked at regular intervals. Environmental control measures include dehumidification in display areas and stores and silica in exhibition cases.

6.3 Buildings Management

Regular inspections and a programme of maintenance is in place, including of storage and display areas.

6.4 Storage and Display Facilities

LMG is committed to evaluating its buildings and operations on an ongoing basis in order to continuously improve in these areas. This includes the identification of a programme of improvements, including where appropriate structural works, capital works and/or new facilities, to achieve well-designed storage and display facilities. Buildings, layout, materials and object containers and packaging (where appropriate) should provide protection from inappropriate environmental conditions, dust, pests and atmospheric pollutants; meet security standards; efficiently maximise storage space; and minimise unnecessary object movement and handling, while maintaining efficient access.

6.5 Collections Audits and Condition Checking

Regular inspections of objects and preservation assessment surveys, for reasons of security, conservation and collections management. The audit will involve reviewing items to verify collections policies are being followed and that LMG are discharging their responsibilities to the collections.

6.6 Programme of Preventative and Remedial Conservation

Implementation of identified priorities for preventative and remedial conservation. Prioritisation is based on findings from collection surveys and assessments, and will consider the urgency of the situation, the vulnerability of the object, significance assessments, access requirements (e.g. planned display, inclusion in teaching materials, consultation by researchers) and available resources (financial, capacity of specialist conservators).

6.7 Object Handling

Management of handling and moving to prevent damage through measures including staff training and guidance, including for packing and transport; minimisation of handling through arrangement of collections and stores; condition assessments and risk assessments; supervision of users and researchers; and mitigating measures including provision of book rests and physical and digital surrogates for consultation where appropriate, and use of appropriate equipment for photography and copying of archive material.

6.8 Access and use

Management of access and use to provide opportunities for engagement while minimising risks to the collections, through assessments of exhibitions, events, invigilated reader services and other activities. To protect original archive and manuscript material, physical or digital surrogates will be provided for consultation where available.

6.9 Documentation

CHS is committed to maintaining good practice and uses a variety of standards and guidelines to document its collections in accordance with the Collections Information Policy and related procedures, manuals and plans. The condition of items, including those which are lost or damaged, will be recorded as so in the relevant collection management system.

6.10 Loans

Suitable requirements for loans (object entry and object exit) including step-by-step recorded processes, environmental conditions, security, transport and insurance, are in place for both CHS items on loan and items on loan to CHS.

6.11 Security, Health and Safety and Emergency Planning

Assessment, identification and mitigation of risks, with measures including training, identification of hazards, CCTV, on-site security, intruder and fire alarm systems, regular inspections and testing, and Emergency and Business Continuity Plans, including Harwell Conservation Priority User subscription. Access to secure collections areas are restricted, and contractors and visitors to these areas are documented and accompanied by staff. All collections are insured.

6.12 Digital Materials

Digital items of Cultural Heritage Services are stored on onsite servers, which are managed by The University of Liverpool's IT Department and adhere to the University's minimum-security baseline as detailed in the [Information Security Policy](#). A digital preservation system, Preservica Enterprise edition, is used for the long-term security, accessibility and authenticity of digital

assets, including born digital material and digital surrogates. Content is preserved in accordance with industry standards, including NDSA (National Digital Stewardship Alliance) and OAIS (Open Archival Information Systems). Content is transformed into preservation formats, and ongoing usability and integrity of content is ensured.

7. Review

Policy review date: November 2026