

Approval Date: August 28, 2008

Parent Policy: [Museums and Collections Policy](#)

Deaccession and Disposition of Museum Objects and Collections Procedure

Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Museums and Collections Services
Approver:	Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Scope:	Compliance with University procedure extends to all members of the University community.

Overview

Deaccessioning refers to the process of permanently removing accessioned **museum objects** or **collections** of museum objects from the University of Alberta's collections. The decision to **deaccession** museum objects is a serious one, requiring careful planning and analysis. There must always be a strong presumption against the permanent removal of **objects** to which the University has acquired title, particularly objects which have been certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board. However, from time to time it is necessary to deaccession museum objects to maintain the integrity of the collection.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is:

- to ensure that deaccessioning and disposition of museum objects and collections occurs consistently, at an institutional level, and in accordance with the goals, priorities and policies of the University of Alberta;
- to ensure that the permanent removal of objects or collections adheres to all applicable provincial, federal and international laws, agreements and treaties, and professional standards and ethics; and
- to sustain public accountability.

PROCEDURE

1. GENERAL

- a. This procedure applies to registered collections of museum objects at the University of Alberta.
- b. Anyone not authorized to act on behalf of a registered collection of museum objects that is considering disposition of museum objects must contact **Museums and Collections Services**.
- c. Museum objects or collections that have been certified as **cultural property** by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board cannot be deaccessioned and/or disposed of until a minimum of 25 years has passed from the date of the certification, unless it is being transferred to another **Category A designated** institution. A penalty tax will be imposed by the Canada Revenue Agency on institutions that dispose of **certified cultural property** to other than a Category A designated institution before this 25-year deadline has elapsed.
- d. The University may dispose of deaccessioned museum objects by **exchange, transfer, sale, repatriation or intentional discard**.

e. It is preferable that deaccessioned museum objects remain in the public domain, and University museums should offer approved deaccessions to other museums or appropriate public institutions as a gift, or for exchange or sale before considering commercial concerns or private individuals.

f. **Units** may receive monies as a result of deaccessioning, either as proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects, or settlements from insurance claims against lost or destroyed objects. These monies must be specifically designated for the registered collection from which the objects were deaccessioned and only for purposes of new **acquisitions** or care of collections.

g. Whenever possible, objects of significance to Canada deaccessioned from the University's collections should be retained in Canada and in the **public trust**.

h. It is unethical for University staff, their relatives and associates, or any individuals or organizations associated with the University to acquire or to benefit in any way from **disposals** from museum collections.

i. Under special circumstances, on a case-by-case basis, individuals leaving the University may retain duplicate specimens of material collected during their tenure, should these relate to their ongoing research. In such cases, appropriate compensation must be provided to the University. Museums and Collections Services should be contacted for further assistance.

j. As a courtesy, University museums should make every effort to notify relevant donors and/or living artists about the forthcoming disposals.

k. University museums may not dispose of collections by returning them to the original donors as a gift, however, museums may allow the original donor to purchase the material at current fair market value.

l. As a courtesy, University museums should allow living artists the first right of refusal to re-acquire their earlier works.

2. OBTAINING APPROVAL TO DEACCESSION MUSEUM OBJECT(S) OR COLLECTIONS

a. The **Academic Curator** of a Registered Collection of museum objects identifies a museum object(s) or collections(s) for deaccessioning that meets one of the criteria outlined in Appendix A and identifies an appropriate disposal method.

b. The Academic Curator completes a Request to Deaccession Museum Objects Form which requires authorization from the administrative head of the units and submits it to Museums and Collections Services.

c. The Executive Director, Museums and Collections Services, or designate assesses the request and identifies any conditions, legislation or encumbrances that may impact the decision to deaccession.

d. Museums and Collections Services consults with and obtains a written decision from applicable government agencies, legislating bodies, individuals or professional organizations that are required. These include but are not limited to artists who retain moral rights over art works, the Moveable Cultural Property Board Secretariat, and the Provincial Government.

e. Museums and Collections Services provides the Policy and Planning Committee with the Request to Deaccession Form along with supporting documentation. The Policy and Planning Committee assesses the request and by way of a formal motion, makes a recommendation to approve the request or not.

f. The Policy and Planning Committee's recommendation is forwarded to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) who approves or rejects the recommendation on behalf of the Board of Governors and notifies the Executive Director, Museums and Collections Services, and the Board of Governors.

g. Museums and Collections Services notifies the Policy and Planning Committee members and the Academic Curator of the decision.

h. If the request is approved, the Academic Curator ensures that all documents related to the decision to deaccession are maintained in the permanent registration record including correspondence, photographs, copies of damage reports, etc. and updates all manual and electronic records pertaining to the item indicating a change of status to “deaccessioned” and details the method of disposal. The revised records must be left in the system permanently.

i. If the request is not approved, Museums and Collections Services will work with the Academic Curator and the Policy and Planning Committee to determine an alternative course of action.

3. DISPOSITION THROUGH EXCHANGE OR TRANSFER

a. Units may transfer or exchange objects with other registered collections at the University of Alberta, or institutions and government agencies dedicated to the preservation of natural or cultural heritage.

b. If a request for return of cultural property has been approved, the cultural objects and/or human remains may be disposed of through transfer to the claimants. See Return of Cultural Property and Repatriation of Museum Objects Procedure.

c. Transfers and exchanges will not take place between units and private individuals or units and private businesses. The **University of Alberta Museums Policy and Planning Committee** will assess, on a case-by-case basis, any exceptions to this practice. If a unit wishes to transfer or exchange a museum object or collection with a private individual or a private business a rationale must be provided in writing and submitted with a Request to Deaccession Museum Objects and Collections Form to Museums and Collections Services.

d. If objects are to be transferred or exchanged with institutions outside Canada, Museums and Collections Services should be contacted to identify any legal requirements or documents that must be completed.

e. Any University identification labels and **accession**/catalogue numbers should be removed from the object(s).

f. All other processes detailed in the collection’s approved **Acquisition and Management Strategy** for acquisitions (if an exchange) or transfers should be implemented.

4. DISPOSITION THROUGH SALE

a. Museums and Collections Services should be contacted to ensure proposed sale is compliant with policy, legislation, codes of ethics and any other relevant regulations and conducted as per the University’s Surplus Assets Disposal Procedure.

b. Fair-market value of objects to be offered for sale must be determined. See Appraisal of Museum Objects for Charitable Receipting Purposes Procedure.

c. Potential purchasers, either museum or related organizations, or individuals should be identified as per the general guidelines listed in Section 1 of this procedure.

5. DISPOSITION OF OBJECTS AFFECTED BY VANDALISM OR DAMAGE

a. Remove any University identification labels and accession/catalogue numbers from the object(s).

b. In the presence of witnesses, destroy the object and dispose of the remains in such a manner that the object cannot be retrieved and restored. This process must be documented through photographs and a brief written account that is signed and dated by the witness and retained in the file. When fine or decorative arts must be disposed of in this manner, the artist/maker must be contacted and a signed Waiver of **Moral Rights** Form obtained.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended

institution-wide use. [▲Top]	
Museum objects / Museum objects and collections	<p>Museum objects and collections are rare and unique, and hence irreplaceable, or represent declining or limited resources. The museum objects and collections governed by this policy shall include, but may not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - objects acquired by University staff and students, current and past, as part of their teaching, research or curatorial activities at the University, and for which the University holds title; - objects acquired by the University that relate to its mission, history, and teaching and research programs, and for which the University holds title; - objects acquired by University staff and students, but which are the property of the Crown and are held at the University; - information resources that provide documentation for an object or collection. <p>Exceptions to the above include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - living material; and - objects that may normally require replacement after study or research.
Collection(s)	Related objects and the information resources associated with them may be designated as a collection. A unit may have one or more collections of museum objects within its jurisdiction.
Deaccession	The process of formally removing an object from the permanent collection or an object that has been permanently removed from the collection. The first stage, "deaccessioning," is the formal review and decision-making process that leads to the removal of objects from the collection and to the formal adjustment of registration records. The second stage, "disposition," is the actual discard or transfer of ownership and possession of deaccessioned objects.
Object(s)	An artifact or specimen. Artifacts are objects created, manufactured or produced by humans; a product of human art, craft or workmanship. A specimen is an individual or part that serves as an example of a class or whole; refers to an individual plant or animal or piece or a mineral, etc. collected and used for scientific or educational purposes.
Museum(s)	A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment. (Source: Alberta Museums Association)
Museums and Collections Services	The unit charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the University of Alberta is in compliance with this policy and associated procedures.
Cultural Property	Any item that, regardless of its place of origin, may be considered important from an archaeological, prehistorical, historical, artistic or scientific perspective, can be considered "cultural property."
Category "A" Designation	Designation of institutions and public authorities under the <i>Cultural Property Export and Import Act</i> is a means of ensuring that institutions applying for cultural property grants and loans, or for Cultural Property Income Tax Certificates (T871s), meet certain legal, curatorial and environmental requirements. Category 'A' designation is granted for an

	indefinite period of time to institutions and public authorities that are well established and meet all of the criteria for designation. They are eligible to make applications to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board to have cultural property acquisitions certified for income tax purposes and to apply for Movable Cultural Property Grants to assist with the acquisition of cultural property objects that exist outside Canada or that are threatened with export.
Certification of / Certified Cultural Property	Objects determined by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board to be of outstanding significance and national importance.
Exchange	The trading of objects between collections, which requires each object to be deaccessioned by the originating institution and accessioned by the receiving institution or unit.
Transfer	The physical relocation and conveyance of title of an object from one institution or unit to another without a fee. The object must first be deaccessioned by the originating institution or unit, and accessioned by the receiving institution or unit.
Sale	Transfer of legal title through the payment of money. As a method of disposition for deaccessioned objects, sales may only be made to other museums or similarly mandated public institutions, or by means of public auction.
Repatriation	The process of restoring or returning objects to the culture, nationality or country of origin. Repatriation can be requested by representatives of the object's culture, nationality or country or it can be initiated by the museum. The process can be undertaken on legal and/or moral grounds.
Intentional Discard	The intentional destruction of a deaccessioned object because it has been damaged beyond repair.
Unit(s)	A designation used to denote academic and non-academic Departments, Faculties, Schools, Institutes and Centres at the University of Alberta.
Acquisition	The appropriately documented transfer of title (that is, legal ownership and responsibility) that accompanies any object acquired by the University of Alberta, whether through field collection, donation, purchase, transfer, exchange or any other method.
Public Trust	The obligation placed on trustees to maintain and preserve cultural and natural resources and to ensure that these resources remain in the public domain for the benefit of current and future generations.
Disposal	The permanent, physical removal of a deaccessioned object or collection of objects from the University of Alberta's collections, through the means of exchange, transfer, sale or intentional discard.
Academic Curator	An Academic Curator is designated by the Administrative Head of a unit from among continuing academic staff. The Academic Curator represents the interests of a registered collection of museum objects and ensures that University of Alberta policies and procedures are implemented including the registered collection's Acquisition and Management Strategy.
University of Alberta Museums Policy and Planning Committee	A standing committee of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) with campus-wide representation, that advises on matters relating to the University of Alberta museums and collections.
Accession	Any object or collection of objects acquired by the University of Alberta at one time from a single source as a permanent addition to its collections; or the process of formally accepting an object into the University's permanent collections.
Acquisition and Management Strategy	A document required of each registered collection at the University of Alberta that describes the scope and uses of the collection, principles for

	acquiring museum objects, and management strategies to ensure the collection complies with University policy.
Moral Rights	An artist/author retains moral rights over a work even if he or she has sold the copyright. This means that no one, including the person who owns the copyright, is allowed to distort, mutilate or otherwise modify the work in a way that is prejudicial to the artist's honour or reputation. The artist's name must be associated with the work as its author. In addition, the work may not be used in association with a product, service, cause or institution in a way that is prejudicial to the artist's honour or reputation without his or her permission. Moral rights cannot be sold or transferred to anyone else, but they can be waived with the sale or transfer of copyright, or at a later date. A contract of sale or transfer may include a waiver clause.

FORMS

Should a link fail, please contact uappol@ualberta.ca. [[▲Top](#)]

[Request to Deaccession Museum Objects Form](#)

[Transfer Agreement Form](#)

[Waiver of Moral Rights Form](#)

RELATED LINKS

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[Asset Disposal Procedure - Direct Sales to Departing Staff](#) (UAPPOL)

[Asset Disposal Procedure - Gift to Staff Member or Donation to Registered Charity](#) (UAPPOL)

[Asset Disposal Procedure - Stolen or Lost](#) (UAPPOL)

[Asset Disposal Procedure - Transfer to Another Institution](#) (UAPPOL)

[Asset Procedure - Transfer or Sale \(Internal\) to Another University Unit](#) (UAPPOL)

[Equipment Asset Disposal Procedure - Surplus](#) (UAPPOL)