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

Museum Objects and Collections Acquisition 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

The University of Alberta recognizes that the **acquisition of museum objects and collections**, through **field collecting, donation, purchase, transfer or exchange**, is a fundamental function which must complement the stated mission and aims of the institution as a whole, and the academic purpose of individual units. Objects acquired on behalf of the University of Alberta are intended as permanent additions to the University's teaching and research programs and to its historical record. However, it is neither legally, financially or professionally responsible for the University of Alberta to allow indiscriminate growth of collections. Therefore, the University of Alberta must carefully manage and monitor the processes for acquisitions of museum objects and collections.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is:

- to ensure the University has a consistent framework for acquiring museum objects and collections in order to facilitate compliance with legal, ethical and professional requirements and standards;
- to ensure donor satisfaction with all transactions associated with the donation process.

PROCEDURE

1. UNITS WITH REGISTERED COLLECTIONS OF MUSEUM OBJECTS

- a. Units with collections of museum objects registered with Museums and Collections Services as part of the University of Alberta Museums can acquire museum objects through field collecting, donation, purchase, transfer or exchange.
- b. Units must comply with the parameters and requirements defined in the Collection's approved **Acquisition Strategy** and **Management Strategy**.
- c. The Collection's approved *Acquisition Strategy* and *Management Strategy* will identify those items that the unit can acquire that do not necessitate notifying Museums and Collections Services in advance. For these items, the unit can proceed as per its approved *Acquisition Strategy* and *Management Strategy*. For all other items, Museums and Collections Services should be contacted.
- d. The Collection's approved *Acquisition Strategy* and *Management Strategy* will identify a financial threshold in terms of the total cost of any single acquisition of a museum object or collection of museum objects to the unit in terms of both financial and human resources required to accept, process and maintain the acquisition (including costs for appraisals, storage, conservation, transportation, etc.) and for which the unit has the financial signing authority to acquire the object(s).

e. Units wanting to acquire strategic acquisitions that exceed the financial threshold identified in the collection's *Acquisition Strategy* and *Management Strategy* must either decline the acquisition, or contact Museums and Collections Services to discuss the opportunity. The potential acquisition will be assessed against established criteria and approval to proceed provided or not. Museums and Collections Services will work with the unit to develop an appropriate course of action including identifying possible sources of funding and consulting with Facilities and Operations to determine infrastructure impacts.

f. The Collection's approved *Acquisition Strategy* and *Management Strategy* will identify any applicable collecting, import or export permit requirements specific to the type of material collected.

g. If the acquisition is or contains any material that is identified in the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)*, Museums and Collections Services should be contacted for more information, and/or to complete the necessary legal documentation.

h. If the acquisition is a donation and the donor requires a receipt for income tax purposes, the unit follows the *Appraisal of Museum Objects for Charitable Receipting Purposes Procedure*.

i. If a donor or seller requests Cultural Property Certification, or if the unit's Academic Curator responsible for the relevant collection recommends certification, the unit follows the *Certification of Museum Objects and Collections as Cultural Property Procedure*.

j. Acquisition through Transfer and/or Exchange

i A transfer or exchange may necessitate **deaccessioning**. See the *Deaccession and Disposition of Museum Objects and Collections Procedure*.

ii 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.

iii Transfers and exchanges will not take place between units and private individuals or units and private businesses. 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 Form* to Museums and Collections Services. The University of Alberta Museums Policy and Planning Committee will assess, on a case-by-case basis, any exceptions to this practice.

2. UNITS OR INDIVIDUAL STAFF OF UNITS WITHOUT REGISTERED COLLECTIONS OF MUSEUM OBJECTS

a. Units or individual staff of units that do not have collections of museum objects registered with Museums and Collections Services as part of the University of Alberta Museums cannot acquire museum objects or collections.

b. Units or individual staff of units that do not have registered collections and receive inquiries from potential donors of museum objects do not negotiate donations. They must contact the Executive Director, Museums and Collections Services or designate, prior to undertaking any negotiations.

c. The Executive Director, Museums and Collections Services, or designate, who will assess the donation in terms of Museums and Collections Policy will consult with:

i The appropriate Academic Curator;

ii Office of Advancement;

iii Risk Management;

iv Facilities and Operations;

v Offices on campus as appropriate.

d. Units or individual staff of units that wish to establish registered collections of museum objects must contact Museums and Collections Services (see the *Establishing New Collections of Museum Objects Procedure*).

3. DONORS AND POTENTIAL DONORS

a. Donors who wish to donate museum objects to the University of Alberta Museums should contact Museums and Collections Services or the appropriate unit with a registered collection, if known.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [▲Top]	
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.
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.
Field Collecting / Collection	The practice of studying objects in their original natural or cultural environment, and collecting them for the University of Alberta's teaching and research programs.
Donation	A voluntary transfer of property (e.g., financial gift, gift-in-kind , gift of fractional interest, gift with life interest) made with no direct expectation of goods or services in return. However, it is worth noting that many donors expect a receipt for income tax purposes. A donation must be offered by the donor, and approved by the University of Alberta. Ownership of the donated material must be irrevocably transferred to the University.
Purchase	The procurement of an object's legal ownership through the payment of

	money. The bill of sale is the official record of the transfer of title to the University of Alberta
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.
Exchange	The trading of objects between collections, which requires each object to be deaccessioned by the originating institution or unit and accessioned by the receiving institution or unit.
Acquisition Strategy	A document required of each registered collection at the University of Alberta that describes the scope and uses of the collection and principles of acquiring museum objects.
Management Strategy	A document required of each registered collection at the University of Alberta that describes management strategies to ensure the collection complies with University policy.
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.
Gift-in-Kind	Any voluntary donation of goods, other than a financial gift, made with no expectation of goods or services in return. Examples include donations of land, buildings, equipment, furniture, works of art, museum and collection objects, library and archival materials, and operating supplies.
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.

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