1. Museum’s statement of purpose

The primary purposes of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology are to:

- Care for and enhance our outstanding collections of art, material culture, photographs and documents
- Make the collections accessible to audiences locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, including especially to members of originating communities
- Exhibit the collections, in the Museum itself, via the web, and through collaborations with other museums, within the UK and internationally
- Research, interpret and publish the collections; lead innovative and ambitious research programmes related to the intellectual challenges that they raise
- Offer engaging public programmes and increase participation in our diverse cultural offer, in particular by individuals who do not currently engage with museums or have limited opportunities to do so
- Provide and support teaching and research training using the collections

2. An overview of current collections

The Museum’s collections consist of archaeological and anthropological material from all parts of the world and from all periods of human history. The material in the Museum is organised into a number of key areas:

**Archaeology:** the Museum holds archaeological finds from every part of the inhabited world. They range from some of the very oldest – early hominid tools discovered by Louis Leakey in Olduvai Gorge – to modern Australian spear points knapped from glass. The collections include finds from major excavations crucial to the development of archaeology, such as those conducted by Kathleen Kenyon at Jericho in the Jordan valley, one of the oldest continually occupied cities in the world, and material from Star Carr in Yorkshire, excavated by Grahame Clark over 1949-51. MAA holds one of the finest pre-Columbian collections in Britain, including remarkably preserved early textiles; important prehistoric Arctic materials; wide-ranging collections relating to early research in southern Africa and Egypt; collections from Bronze Age Hungary; and – of special interest to local communities – the region’s most comprehensive collection of artefacts from Cambridgeshire and surrounds, spanning all phases of occupation from the Palaeolithic to the Post-Medieval periods.

**Anthropology:** MAA cares for artefacts from Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Americas, as well as material related to British and European folklore. Among the Museum’s most famous collections are those deriving from the voyages of Captain Cook to the Pacific in the 1770s. The Museum’s founding curator, Anatole von Hügel spent several years in Fiji and assembled the single most important collection of nineteenth-century Fijian material outside Fiji itself, and went on to be highly energetic, soliciting collections and donations from fieldworkers and travellers in many parts of the world. Major field collections include those made by Alfred Haddon during the 1898 Cambridge expedition to the Torres Strait, by Northcote W. Thomas from Nigeria and Sierra Leone, by Charles Hose from Sarawak, by Gregory Bateson from the Sepik River, Papua New Guinea, and by Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf in Nagaland.
Photography: MAA holds over 220,000 individual photographic objects, one of the largest and most significant collections of anthropological and archaeological collections of photographs in Britain. MAA has always held a collection of photographs, many related to artefacts in the collection, viewing them as important sources of information, but has only recently taken steps to regard them as a core collection. Our earliest photographs were taken in 1860 by Louis Allen Goss, a school inspector working in Rangoon, Burma. The collection includes material from the late 19th and early 20th century – when there was significant developments in the way photography was used – as well as recent works by contemporary anthropologists and artists. Many photographs are on regular display; the reserve collection can be seen by appointment.

Modern and Contemporary Art: Since the 1990s MAA has acquired works of modern and contemporary art, especially works that are relate to our historic collections, or that are otherwise relevant to the Museum. Since a surprising number of the historic objects that we hold were in fact distinctive, innovative creations, the much-debated distinctions between 'traditional craft', 'material culture', and 'art' have become less useful or meaningful. With the support of the Art Fund, among other bodies, the Museum is building a wide-ranging collection of sculpture, prints, paintings and digital and installation works that foreground indigenous perspectives from various parts of the world, and include works by British and other artists that respond to both anthropological and archaeological collections, and to western traditions of collecting and museum-making.

In addition to the long-term accessioned collections described above, the Museum maintains a number of other collections. Acquisition and disposal of material in relation to these collections is not necessarily managed according to procedures set out in relation to the core collections.

Archival Material: MAA’s accumulated archives are a rich resource that relates to the Museum’s collections, as well as to the history of the Museum itself and its role in the development of the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology. Among the archives are excavation notebooks and site plans from sites such as Jericho and Pat Carter’s excavations in Lesotho, the Fijian journals of Baron Anatole von Hugel, and the correspondence of museum staff and collectors.

Library: MAA maintains a small reference collection of books related to our collections. This is largely composed of publications such as exhibition catalogues sent to the Museum when items from the collection are published in them. The Museum also works closely with the Haddon library, the neighbouring library of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Handling Collections: MAA maintains a separate handling collection, which is used by education groups at the Museum and elsewhere, and provides loan boxes for use by schools and education groups.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The Museum’s policy is to collect anthropological material of research and aesthetic value, including not only artefacts but also photographic and other related records. The Museum also actively collects works of contemporary art that are relevant to the collections and the intellectual challenges they raise. These include, but are not limited to, works from communities represented in the Museum’s historic collections.
In archaeology, MAA’s historic collections from Cambridge and the surrounding region are the strongest in the region, and will continue to be supplemented by strategic acquisitions that complement our existing collections and enable us to provide a home for material of special significance. In practice this means that most acquisitions will involve material brought to our attention under the Treasure Act, through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, or by local archaeological units.

Legal and ethical considerations preclude the acquisition of most new archaeological material from outside the United Kingdom, though collections may still appropriately be acquired if special agreements are in place with relevant national and other authorities. Historic collections may also be appropriately acquired from time to time, including of photograph collections relating to archaeological work.

MAA recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections meets the requirements of relevant accreditation standards.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

MAA has a long-term purpose and possesses permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The Museum Committee accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museum’s collection. Disposals would however be considered where the following criteria apply:

- Research reveals that items do not fall within the categories described in this policy.
- Items have been damaged or have deteriorated beyond the Museum’s ability to repair them.
- Items are discovered to pose a threat to health and safety.
- Items have been identified as spoliated during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period.
- Items have been subject to a request for repatriation or restitution.

Where disposal is being considered this will be carried out in accordance with the disposal procedures, outlined below in clauses 13(a) to 13(s). MAA will also be guided by the Museums Association ‘Disposal Toolkit’, 2008.¹

5. Limitations on collecting

MAA 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.

6. Collecting policies of other museums

MAA 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.

¹ Available at: http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=15852
Specific reference is made to the following organisations:

- Relevant national museums such as the British Museum, the V&A and the Tate
- Other University of Cambridge Museums, such as the Fitzwilliam Museum
- The Pitt Rivers Museum
- The Horniman Museum
- The Royal Anthropological Institute
- Museum of Cambridge

7. Policy review procedure

The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above. Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

8. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

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

9. Acquisition procedures

a. MAA will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the responsible curator is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

b. In particular, MAA will not acquire any object or specimen 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 the United Kingdom).

c. 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, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, MAA will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The curators and the governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.²

d. MAA will not acquire unmodified biological and geological material. It will also not acquire modified artefactual biological and geological material by any direct or indirect means if material 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.

e. MAA will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the responsible curator has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures. In England, Wales

and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996. In Scotland similar finds should be reported through the Treasure Trove procedure.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- 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
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970

In these cases MAA will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

g. As MAA holds or intends to acquire human remains under 100 years old, it will obtain the necessary licence under the Human Tissue Act 2004.

10. Spoliation

MAA will use the statement of principles ‘Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period’, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.³

11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

The Museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the Museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the ‘Guidance for the care of human remains in museums’ issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The University of Cambridge will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. In the case of proposals or requests for the return of human remains, or artefacts incorporating human remains, the University Council will be guided by the recommendation of the University of Cambridge’s Human Remains Advisory Panel. This will mean that the procedures described in 13a-13d, 13g and 13s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the ‘Guidance for the care of human remains in museums’.⁴

Proposals or requests for the return of human remains, or artefacts incorporating human remains, from MAA collections, should be directed to the University of Cambridge Registrary’s Office. Full details of the procedure entailed are available at: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/secretariat/remains/

³ Available at: http://www.culturalpropertyadvice.gov.uk/public_collections/looted_art
⁴ Available at: http://www.culturalpropertyadvice.gov.uk/public_collections/human_remains
Proposals or requests for the return of artefacts, not incorporating human remains, will be considered by the Museum Committee, according to guidelines formally approved by the Committee on 5 February 2014.5

12. Management of archives

As MAA holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, the Museum’s governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).6

13. Disposal procedures

Disposal preliminaries

a. The Museum Committee will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency, unless there are strong reasons of cultural sensitivity why this should not be the case.

b. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body 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.

c. MAA will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

d. 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.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of 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).

f. The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

The disposal decision-making process

g. The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Museum Committee 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.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

h. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, 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 Museum Committee acting on the advice of its professional curatorial staff, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

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5 See Appendix
6 Available at: http://www.archivesandmuseums.org.uk/scam/code.pdf
Use of proceeds of sale

i. Any monies received by the Museum’s 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 the Arts Council England.

j. 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.

Disposal by gift or sale

k. 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, or to museums of equivalent standing in the countries from which the material originates.

l. 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.

m. The announcement 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.

Disposal by exchange

n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that MAA will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.

p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in similar or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.

q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, MAA will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals, where appropriate.

r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the Museum’s collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for
comments to be received. At the end of this period, the Museum Committee must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

**Documenting disposal**

s. 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 deaccession and disposal.⁷

⁷ Available at:
Appendix

University of Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Guidelines for Consideration of Requests for Return of Cultural Property

Proposals or requests for the return of human remains, or artefacts incorporating human remains, from MAA collections, should be directed to the University of Cambridge Registry’s Office. Full details of the procedure entailed are available at: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/secretariat/remains/

A Proposals or requests for the return of artefacts, not incorporating human remains, will be considered by the Museum Committee, after evaluation by the Curators. Decisions by the Museum Committee shall be regarded as final except in the case of requests concerning human remains. Each item shall be considered individually.

B The following issues need to be considered in every case:

1 If the request concerns one or more objects from a collection, what will be the effects on that collection as a whole?

2 What is the importance of each item, assessed in terms of
   a General cultural and historical significance
   b Reasons for return (cultural, historical, sociological, political)
   c Rarity
   d Reasons for retention
   e Possible alternatives (eg substitution of a copy, or another object, from this or another museum)?

3 How was the object collected/excavated and acquired by this Museum? How does this compare with established practice and legal requirements, both now and at the time of acquisition?

4 What is the status of the body or individual making the request? Is there any direct relationship between this body or individual and the object or objects in question?

5 What is the standing and competence of the institution, if any, where the object would be kept?

6 How would the object’s availability for study be affected if it were returned? Are there implications for its documentation?

7 What action can this Museum take to foster links with the applicant institution and/or the country concerned?

8 Are there any constraints, legal or otherwise, on its removal from this Museum’s collections?

9 If the object is to be returned, is it to be a gift, exchange, or loan?

10 What are the implications, if any, vis-à-vis the Museum’s agreed disposals policy?

C The Museum Committee shall re-examine these guidelines after five years.