



museum of **maa**  
and archaeology  
anthropology

**University of Cambridge**

**Museum of Archaeology and  
Anthropology**

**Collections Care and  
Conservation Policy**

**(2019  
Reviewed March 2022)**

**Approval Date: March 2022  
Review Date: March 2025**



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## **1. Statement of Purpose**

The primary purpose of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology is to care for, and enhance access to, knowledge and the relevance of, our outstanding University collections of Archaeological and Anthropological objects, photographs and documents.

We aim to:

- Make the collections accessible to audiences locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, including 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 and contemporary social and environmental issues
- Present 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 using the collections

Maintain a respectful and engaging environment for our staff, volunteers and audiences

## **2. Care and Conservation Policy**

Caring for heritage in order that it will be available for future generations is fundamental to MAA's purpose and both preventative and remedial conservation will be used to ensure the long-term preservation of the artefacts in our care.

- Preventive conservation covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects and specimens and structures.
- Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.

The ongoing need to actively care for the Museum's collections will be reflected in MAA's Forward Plan and the associated Action Plan and Budget. MAA's Induction Programme, Emergency Plan, Collections Development Policy and Access Statement will also be informed by the needs of the collections and these policies will be mindful of this Policy and the related Care and Conservation Plan.

MAA's approach to Collections Care and Conservation is guided by:

- Museums Association Code of Ethics
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- COSHH Regulations 2002

This Policy has been informed by the following standards and frameworks:

- PAS 197:2009 'Code of practice for cultural collections management'

- PAS 198: 2012 'Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections'
- BS5454/PD5454 'Recommendations for storage and exhibition of archival documents'
- Spectrum

In addition, MAA is committed to using Benchmarks in Collection Care as a means of identifying priorities for improvements in Collections Care. Collections Managers at MAA completed a benchmarking exercise in November 2013, and have developed the current Conservation and Collections Care Plan on the basis of this.

Priorities for remedial conservation are based on a risk management approach to collections care. Resources at MAA are limited, so the allocation of these will take into account the significance of individual items, many of which are both nationally and internationally important.

MAA staff and the wider University of Cambridge Museums team, which provides conservation support to MAA, have considerable expertise and experience in specialised collections care. Museum staff includes four academic curators, three collections managers, two collections assistants and a senior technician, as well as research assistants and postdoctoral fellows who have, in some cases, extensive museum and collections care experience. The UCM Conservator of Organic Materials provides further specialist support for MAA.

MAA's staff will also seek out other sources of appropriately qualified and experienced advice as necessary. Remedial conservation work will always be carried out under the supervision of a professional conservator. When conservation advice or services are needed the Museum will seek to employ a professionally accredited (ACR) conservator or conservation practice that is included on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON).<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with MAA's Environmental Sustainability Statement, low-impact approaches to conservation will be used wherever possible. The Museum will use environmental monitoring systems to ensure that high energy consumption climate control systems controls are only used where this is essential to the preservation of the collections.

Care of collections is a primary duty of MAA and all Museum Committee members, staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of the Museum's induction programme.

### **3. Date of review**

MAA will be mindful of new developments in collections care and will review this Policy at least once every five years. The next review will be due in **May 2024**.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <http://www.conservationregister.com>