University of Cambridge

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Documentation Policy

(2014)

Approval Date: 5 February 2014
Review Date: May 2017

Introduction

The aim of this documentation policy is to ensure that the Museum fulfils its responsibilities in relation to security, management and access of collections and associated information. This policy aims to:

- · Improve accountability for collections
- · Maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation
- · Extend access to collection information
- · Strengthen the security of the collections

Documentation is the key to making best use of the Museum's collection, both by preserving the information that makes objects interesting and useful to visitors and users and by enabling staff to manage the collections effectively.

The Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (MAA) obtains information from many sources including donors, visitors, students, researchers and representatives of source and descent communities, as well as through research by staff and volunteers. The policy outlined below will ensure that MAA can provide appropriate public access to this information and that it is permanently associated with the relevant items in the museum's collection.

Where possible and appropriate, MAA will respect the wishes of representatives of source and descent communities in relation to recording and making accessible information regarding artefacts, photographs and archival documents in the Museum's care.

Policy

MAA is committed to managing its collections in accordance with the Arts Council England Accreditation Scheme and the Museums Association's Code of Ethics, as well as legal frameworks in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information. It will:

- Maintain Accreditation standards in relation to the SPECTRUM Collections Management Standard, specifically by meeting the minimum standards for the SPECTURM primary procedures: Object Entry, Acquisition, Loan in, Loan out, Location and movement control, Cataloguing, Object Exit. Procedures are set out in the Documentation Procedural Manual.

- Record sufficient information about the objects in its care to ensure that each object that it is legally responsible for (including loans as well as long-term collections) can be identified and located.

- Create a back-up copy of these records and information regularly, and store this securely at a separate location.

- Extend access to collections information by providing and maintaining an information retrieval system and by continuing to seek to improve public awareness as indicated in the Museum's Access Policy.

- Strengthen the security of the collections in order to ensure that key paper records are securely stored in environmental conditions that will ensure their physical security and long-term preservation. Computerised records will be similarly held and backed up regularly.

- MAA will regularly review its electronic systems against the risk of obsolescence in order to ensure long term accessibility of the information held.

MAA staff will be mindful of new developments in documentation standards and will review this policy at least once every five years.