



National Galleries Scotland Cataloguing Policy

Version/Date

Senior Management Team: Collections approved this policy: 12th February 2014

Principles

NGS maintains detailed information for all objects or groups of objects in our care. These objects are usually part of the NGS collections but we may also maintain catalogue records for other objects such as long-term loans, short-term loans for NGS exhibitions where we are preparing catalogue entries, or non-NGS objects on our premises for which we are providing special curatorial expertise.

We keep this information securely and in a structured way that still enables easy and reliable access.

The information includes provenance information and details of acquisition, reproduction rights, conservation, exhibition and loan history, location history and bibliographical references.

Definitions

Cataloguing: The compilation and maintenance of key information that formally and uniquely identifies and describes an object or group of objects.

Core details: The essential key details that NGS must record for all objects, in a formalised way, including measurements, artist, provenance, reproduction rights, special conditions, brief description.

Extended details: Additional information, such as a longer description that is prepared for a published catalogue, research findings, bibliographical references.

Ethics and legislation

Cataloguing provides essential evidence required for due diligence, for audit and accountability, and for accessibility.

Relevant statutory requirements and codes of ethics include:

- National Heritage Act 1980: Section 16 (as amended by the Museums and Galleries Act 1992)
- Part 6, Section 136 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007
- Museums Association: Code of Ethics for Museums 2008
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums 2013

Standards

This policy is part of the Collections Management set of policies that form a requirement of PAS197 and Spectrum as part of the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme.



Control measures

We hold all cataloguing information centrally and securely on an industry-standard database (MIMSY). Only authorised persons can maintain cataloguing records.

Only suitably qualified persons with subject knowledge or expertise can research and create the catalogue information, and the details must be substantiated. Relevant information may also be contributed by other individuals with specialist knowledge and/or expertise.

Each object and object-part has a unique identifier and location, and a clear and substantiated provenance with evidence of due diligence. The level of description is sufficient to identify an object or object-part and to distinguish it from other, similar objects. We update the record on an ongoing basis, for example to record its condition history or location history.

We add extended details to the central record to collect related information about the object, when new information becomes available, when further narrative is needed, or when a published catalogue is prepared. We also keep associated information on file for future reference or research, or references to sources for this information.

For accessions we aim to complete the core details of the catalogue record within 4 months, or within 6 months if the object needs conservation work or if there are unresolved legal, ethical or financial issues.

Related policies

The following are related NGS policies:

- Acquisition Policy
- Inventory Control Policy
- Rights and Reproduction Management Policy
- Valuation Control Policy
- Record Audit Policy
- De-accession and Disposal Policy
- Retrospective Documentation Policy
- Due Diligence Policy