



National Galleries Scotland

Physical Audit Policy

Version/Date

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

Principles

NGS carries out regular, scheduled audits of the objects, object-parts, accessories and groups of objects that are in our care.

Each audit has specified objectives and terms of reference, and we carry out audits of the core collections management areas such as condition, location, labelling, environment, and risk evaluation.

A physical audit might result in the need to update the associated record for the object.

Definitions

Physical audit: Inventory control checks: the physical examination of an object to verify its identity, condition and location.

Record audit: The examination of all related documentation and records to ensure the information is accurate, complete and standardised.

Legislation and ethics

NGS carries out audits as part of our requirements of accountability to the Scottish Government and the National Audit Office.

Relevant statutory requirements and codes of ethics include:

- National Heritage Act 1980: Section 16 (as amended by the Museums and Galleries Act 1992)
- National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985
- Part 6, Section 136 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007
- Museums Association: Code of Ethics for Museums 2008
- Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries, Third edition 2002
- 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

NGS is committed to carrying out regular audits, either stand-alone or as part of the rolling programme, including: condition of objects, object-parts and accessories; object tracking and



location changes; risk management; individual storage areas; major movements associated with exhibitions, with building projects or with emergencies; and environment.

We also carry out spot audits of isolated groups of objects or activities, for example to resolve a question or issue.

The physical audit assesses the physical status of objects, and ensures the record reflects the findings. This includes: whether the condition of the object has changed or deteriorated and whether it would be safe to move or examine it; that it is in the required location and environment; that the object is labelled correctly and clearly; and checking photographs associated with the object.

Where possible the audit is witnessed or checked by a person other than those responsible for the custody of the object.

We review the audit reports to assess, plan and resolve any actions that are required, and to improve future collections care and management.

We may combine audit projects with other collections management reviews, for example condition checking, valuations, photography, storage and/or environmental reviews, updating labelling. If it is deemed sufficient to check a sample selection of objects for a given audit, we select a different sample on subsequent audits.

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

Related policies

The following are related NGS policies:

- Object Entry and Pre-Entry Policy
- Loans In and Loans Out Policy
- Acquisition Policy
- Location and Movement Control Policy
- Art Handling and Technical Assessment Policy
- Art Transport Policy
- Conservation and Care Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Valuation Control Policy
- Record Audit Policy
- Storage Management Policy
- Damage and Loss Policy
- De-accession and Disposal Policy
- Retrospective Documentation Policy