

Museum Accreditation Scheme

Science Museum Collecting Policy

Governing Body: The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum

Date approved by governing body: March 2010

Date at which policy due for review: March 2015

1. Museum's statement of purpose.

The Science Museum is part of the National Museum of Science & Industry (NMSI) whose purpose is set down in the National Heritage Act 1983 to 'care for, preserve and add to the objects in its collections, to secure that the objects are exhibited to the public, secure that the objects are available to persons seeking to inspect them in connection with study or research, and generally promote the public's enjoyment and understanding of science and technology and of the development of those subjects'.

The Museum uses its collections to fulfil its current strategy statement:

'Our purpose is to make sense of the science that shapes our lives. We aim to raise curiosity, release creativity and change the future. We engage our audiences in science, engineering, medicine, technology, design and enterprise. We are for people of all generations and backgrounds.'² More broadly, the Museum's ambition is 'to be the best place in the world for people to enjoy science'.³

2. Existing collections, including the subjects or themes and the periods of time and/or geographic areas to which the collections relate.

The origins of the Science Museum's collections lie in the science collections of the South Kensington Museum, founded in 1857, which later developed into the Victoria & Albert and Science Museums, formally separated in 1909. The Patent Office Museum and Special Loan Collection of Scientific Instruments, both housed on the site, were the foundations of the engineering and science collections respectively. The Museum became a major repository for the history of medicine with the transfer on permanent loan of the Wellcome Collection in 1976.

Scope of the Science Museum's collections and archives

The Science Museum cares for one of the world's pre-eminent collections in its field. The collections are currently curated in four main subject areas: physical sciences, medicine, information & communications technologies and engineering. The Museum Library and Archives cover broadly the same subject territory. They are capable of representing many themes, especially the significance of design and enterprise in science and technology. There are few relevant subject areas not represented within its 220,000-odd accessioned objects and 500,000-strong library and archive collections, which range from unique icons to everyday objects, revealing the significance of science and technology and their impact on the human and physical environment.

All germane subject areas are well represented in the collections from the 18th to the 20th Century, with areas of significant strength for earlier periods in some subject areas. The Museum's collections are international in scope and its future collecting ambitions are global,

¹ National Heritage Act, 1983, chapter 47, section 9.

² *The best place in the world for people to enjoy science* (Science Museum Strategy: 2009-2012), frontispiece.

³ The Museum of the Future: the Science Museum's Vision 2008-2015, p.3.

although the main strengths of the existing collections are in material from Western societies in general and Britain in particular.

The Museum and Library collections together encompass all media and categories of object, including: three-dimensional objects; contemporary and conventional artworks in all media, including electronic, mechanical and digital; technical drawings, maps and iconographic items; books, serials, archives (including company archives and material from notable scientists and engineers), trade literature and some audio visual materials, including films, videotapes, audio recordings; computer programmes and software.⁴

3. Criteria governing future acquisition policy including the subjects or themes, periods of time and/or geographic areas and any collections which will not be subject to further acquisition.

Collecting to support the Science Museum's strategy and vision and to develop the collections

Future collecting will support the Science Museum's strategy statement and vision as outlined in section 1 above. In line with this statement, acquisitions are proposed for addition to the collections because:

- New acquisitions represent key new scientific work or significant new products.
- Enhanced understanding of history or current practice persuades us that we need to tell new types of stories that the existing collections are unable to support.
- Audiences look to the Museum to represent new narratives (for example, we may wish better to represent non-western science and technology).

Within the four main subject areas of Science, Information and Communication Technologies, Medicine and Engineering,⁵ particular emphasis is placed on the acquisition of objects that reveal the significance of design, innovation and enterprise to science and technology.

The Museum will continue to add to its collections in their areas of core strength. Particular emphasis is placed on building the collections in material from the second half of the Twentieth Century onwards. Similarly, although it has historically concentrated collecting on objects and related items from the British Isles, the Museum increasingly aspires to collect globally in fields of relevance to its mission statement and subject strategies and to better represent non-Western science and technology. The Science Museum Library and Archives aims to collect to support the work of the Museum, so that its collecting ambitions 'will usually reflect and support the approach to collecting objects adopted by the Science Museum'.⁶

Focus on Active Collecting

Whilst the Science Museum collects both actively (via acquisition projects, exhibitions, by agent, commissioning and communicating with publics) and reactively (acquisitions selected from the mass of unsolicited offers), and collects for immediate use as well as for posterity, future efforts will concentrate on active collecting.

For the duration of the current collecting policy – until 2015 – active acquisition projects will specifically support the Museum's strategic vision and future public offerings by collecting in relevant and topical areas of concern. In particular, the Museum is concerned to broaden the

⁴ The Science Museum Library and Archives Collecting Policy provide more detail of the extent of and collecting ambitions of the Library. See the Science Museum Library and Archives Collecting Policy (2009-2014).

⁵ See Appendix 1: Outline Curatorial Key Themes

⁶ Science Museum Library and Archives Collecting Policy (2009-2014).

collections' coverage of: the sciences, their application and social impacts (forthcoming *Making of Modern Science* gallery); telecommunications and electronic technologies (forthcoming *Making of Modern Communications* gallery); climate change (a planned series of gallery interventions); cosmology (forthcoming *Sky Space* exhibition); and medicine (proposed new medical galleries).

In addition, in 1996 the Museum published its Arts policy, which commits it to commissioning art, works with every major capital project. It also has a long-term ambition to actively collect outstanding works of art that respond to, draw inspiration from and engage audiences with science, medicine, engineering and technology applications, histories and philosophies.

4. Limitations on collecting.

The Science Museum 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 (and other professional standards). It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and arrangements for care of collections.

Museum collections acquisitions will be resourced through donation, application of the collections purchase fund, specific grant aid and, occasionally, through public appeal. The Trustees will set a level for the annual contribution to the collections purchase fund and limits of authority for Museum Directors in the field of collecting.

The Museum's collections will be limited in overall volume in line with long-term resource capabilities. Within NMSI there will be no overall limit on size because partnerships and loans will create additional capability. However, the Trustees will expect the Directors to deliver collections that can be housed in the organisation's existing storage facilities in London, York, Bradford, Wroughton, Shildon and with collections partners.

5. Collecting policies of other museums.

The Science Museum 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.

Please see Appendix 2 for reference to specific museums, networks, libraries and archives collecting in similar areas to the Museum.

6. Policy review procedure.

The Science Museum's Acquisition and Disposal 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 renewal is noted above.

MLA Council will be notified of any significant changes to the Acquisition and Disposal policy and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

7. 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 governing body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

8. Exclusions and Acquisitions Procedures.

Exclusions

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

b. In particular, the Museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that it 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, the Museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. 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 (DCMS) in 2005.

d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that 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. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales 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, under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities. Scottish archaeological material cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to the Museum by the Crown. Where the Crown chooses to forego its title to a portable antiquity, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Science Museum, can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e will only be because the Museum is either:

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

In these cases the Museum 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. Should the Museum acquire human remains from the last 100 years it will follow the procedures in the Human Tissue Act, 2004. Otherwise, it will follow the DCMS *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums* issued in 2005.

Health and Safety

The Science Museum is committed to maintaining a safe environment for staff and visitors alike. The Museum complies with all relevant Health & Safety legislation relating to our collections, and considers the potential hazards of acquisitions with respect to the possible risks they pose to people in their acquisition, handling, storage and disposal.

To facilitate this, it will apply particularly close scrutiny to proposed acquisitions that contain any of the substances on the following list. It recognises however that the additional costs of acquiring and holding such objects will sometimes be justified by their significance and interpretive value. The Museum also holds the necessary licences to ensure that such objects are safely managed and maintained.

- Radioactive materials
- Hazardous chemicals
- Objects that contain hazardous materials, such as asbestos or mercury
- Biological hazards
- Controlled substances, namely dangerous drugs and scheduled poisons
- Firearms
- Human remains

Please see Appendix 3 for the Museum's policy regarding objects containing asbestos, radioactive materials and other hazardous materials.

Acquisition Procedures

The Science Museum's Collecting Board manages the process of adding new objects to the Museum's collections. The Board comprises the Chief Curator, the Principal Curators of Science, Medicine and Technology, a Senior Curator (who manages the business of the Board and chairs its meetings), the Registrar, the Storage and Logistics Manager, and a minute secretary.

It is each subject curator's responsibility to consider and selectively propose new acquisitions to the Museum's collections within their subject area. The Archivist has the same responsibility with respect to the Archives collection. Once a curator has completed the Museum's acquisition case form, the Collecting Board considers the form and approves or rejects the case for acquisition. The acquisition case form encodes:

- Relevance: cultural, social, environmental, economic, intellectual or psychological impact; relationship to new trends and developments; capacity for interpretation, discussion, debate or research with particular audiences.
- Use: capacity to tell a story – now or in the future - by exhibitions, web-products, broadcasts, popular and scholarly publications and other means; emphasis on human stories.
- Condition: state of completeness and condition; resources required for collections care and management; hazard content.
- Provenance: compliance with due diligence; ownership, origin, copyright and intellectual property rights, authenticity, special conditions attached

Once an acquisition has been approved by the Museum's Collecting Board, the Collections Registration team manage the transfer of title process. Once transfer of title is in place, the object is accessioned into the Museum's permanent collection, and its arrival instigated. All new accessions are placed in a designated quarantine area, and the conservation team formally condition-check them. The labelling or marking of objects with their accession number, and record photography is also covered at this stage. Finally, objects are placed into their home or designated location by the Logistics team.

9. Spoliation.

(In caring for its collections and considering acquisition and disposal) the Science Museum will use 'Spoilation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions', issued by the National Museum Directors' Conference in 1998, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

10. Repatriation and Restitution of human remains.

The Science Museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the Museum's professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums" issued by the DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The Museum 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 particular, when dealing with human remains it will consider the Human Tissue Act, 2004 and DCMS *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums* issued in 2005). This will mean that the procedures described in 12a-12d, 12g and 12s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

When remains or objects form part of the Wellcome Trust collections, decisions will be taken in consultation with the Trust (see appendix 4 for details).

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".

11. Management of archives.

As the Science Museum holds and intends to acquire archives, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

In addition, the Museum will be guided by relevant international and UK archival professional standards as prescribed by the International Council on Archives, the National Council on Archives and the Society of Archivists.

12. Disposal procedures.

Museum policy

The Science Museum's governing legislation – the National Heritage Act, 1983 – embodies a presumption against disposal.

a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

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. The Museum 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 12g-12s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 12g-12m and 12s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:

- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection,
- the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit),
- the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.

The disposal decision-making process

g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body 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 governing body of the museum acting on the advice of a Board of Survey (which is comprised of Museum professional staff) and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

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 MLA.

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, exchange or sale, directly to other Accredited museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

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 and media where appropriate.

m. The announcement relating to gift or sale 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 the Museum 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 12a-12d and 12g-12h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 12p-12s.

p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same 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, the museum 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 governing body 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.

Appendix 1: Outline Curatorial Key Themes.

Curatorial subject areas and collecting rationale

Curatorial expertise falls into four main subject areas: Science, Medicine, Information & Communication Technologies and Engineering. We place a particular stress on narratives about design and enterprise. Although the subject areas differ, curators in each subject area collect both to support the development of existing and new narratives and to safeguard our technological, scientific and medical heritage for the future.

In broad terms, we collect objects and related material that allow us to explore the creation and construction of scientific, medical and technological knowledge; their varied infrastructures and applications; and their impacts on and interactions with our world. The following brief statement of our key themes outlines the guidance that curators of all grades use to help select new acquisitions, especially those that are reactive to unsolicited offers:

Science: We collect objects that illustrate how scientific knowledge is created, how science is applied in other fields, and the impact of science on modern global society. Innovation and design – ranging from the development of scientific instruments, through industrial R&D to innovative scientific solutions to environmental problems – are key aspects of our collecting.

Medicine: We collect objects illustrating changing understandings of health and disease, and innovations in science and technology with the potential to transform our experience of them. We also seek out objects that inform reflection about the practices of modern medicine, including its tools and its settings, and those that illuminate how people make sense of suffering.

Information & Communication Technologies: We collect objects that reflect the development of ICTs (including all electronic technologies); the manner of their inception; their application and contexts; and the social meanings attached to them by users.

Engineering: We collect the material culture of human constructive activity, exploring: the development of engineering as a process – from designing and testing to manufacturing, embodying both traditional techniques as well as new insights; the expression and application of creativity in engineering and technology over time, place and space including highly refined (science-based) engineering and design as well as craft-based activities; the impact of engineering and technology on the human and physical environment and its ability to respond to global challenges.

Appendix 2: Reference to specific museums, networks, libraries and archives.

Museums and networks

The following is a non-comprehensive list of museums and networks that could collect in areas overlapping with the Science Museum:

Partner museums of the NMSI: National Media Museum, National Railway Museum.

Other national museums including: National Museums of Scotland; Amgueddfa Cymru National Museums Wales); British Museum; Imperial War Museum; National Army Museum; National Maritime Museum; National Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland; National Museums Liverpool; Natural History Museum; Royal Air Force Museum; Royal Armouries; Victoria & Albert Museum.

Other regional museums including:⁷ Museum of London; National Motor Museum, Beaulieu; Design Museum; Geffrye Museum; Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum; Historic Dockyard, Chatham; Royal Naval Museum; Museum of Design in Plastics.

Other museum members in the Science, Technology and Industry Specialist Subject Network (STI-SSN) including: Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester, Tyne & Wear Museums.

Networks including: the Rural Museums Network, the UK Marine Conservation Strategy Group and the UK Motor Museums Network.

Libraries and Archives

Three main types of library and archives may collect in similar areas to the Science Museum Library: other museums; academic institutions and libraries; and national libraries and archives and other national institutions:

Other museum libraries including: Museum of the History of Science, Oxford; Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester; Wellcome Library

Academic libraries including: Senate House; Cambridge University Library; Bodleian Library.

National Libraries and other national institutions including: British Library; National Library of Wales; National Library of Scotland; The National Archives; The Royal Society; The Royal Society of Medicine.

Appendix 3: Note on objects containing asbestos, radioactive materials and other hazardous materials.

The Science Museum will not normally acquire objects containing any form of asbestos or radioactive material or containing radioactive sources. All objects intended for acquisition will be checked initially by thorough research, inquiry and physical monitoring. A strong case giving the justification from the relevant acquirer and the resource implications from the Conservation and Collections Care section will need to be submitted for discussion before any decision is made or the object is brought onto museum premises.

⁷ Please see the MLA web site for full details of regional museums participating in the MLA accreditation scheme at:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/raising_standards/~media/Files/pdf/2009/Accreditation_Participants_England_09_09.ashx

If any object is considered to present too great a risk to store or display safely and the resource implications of doing this are too high, it will not be recommended for acquisition. The Director of the Science Museum, following advice from the Collecting Board, will make the final decision. If any object known to contain asbestos or radioactive materials is acquired for the collection, it will be managed in accordance with the legal requirements in line with the NMSI Asbestos Management Policy and the NMSI Management Policy for Radioactive Materials.

Any chemicals and other hazardous materials are managed in accordance with NMSI policy and in accordance with COSHH - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002 (COSHH) regulations.

Appendix 4: The Science Museum's policy on the restitution and repatriation of human remains.

The Science Museum's human remains policy covers all remains within the collections, ranging from human tissues to objects containing modified human remains. The Museum complies with the license requirements as established by the Human Tissue Authority for the storage and display of human remains under 100 years old, and follows the DCMS Guidance for all other remains.

Government guidelines on the retention of indigenous materials, and requests for restitution or repatriation act as the catalyst for considering whether the disputed remains or object(s) should remain in the collections. If, on investigation, any object turns out to have been illegally gained, as defined by the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Prevention of the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, then the Museum will return the object to its rightful owner. If not, then the Museum will consider how the contested object best fits with the acquisition and disposal guidelines. The policy suggests a series of issues that need to be considered to help this decision-making. If the Museum decides that it wishes to retain the contested object then the request for restitution or repatriation will be refused. If the Museum decides to dispose of the object, then restitution or repatriation is considered alongside other options for disposal. Decisions about remains of objects that form part of the Wellcome Trust collections are made in consultation with the Trust, who remain the legal owners of such material.

Appendix 5: Governing Principles

The following is a list of legislation, guidelines and standards which the NMSI must adhere to when dispensing its core functions and activities, and which govern or influence the policy set down in this document. Further, specific information about the scope and relevance of this legislation may be found on-line or via other sources:

- National Heritage Act (1983)
- Museum's Association Code of Ethics (2007)
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1970)
- Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003
- Treasure Act 1996
- Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums (DCMS, 2005)
- Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions (NMDC, 1998)

- Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002)