



Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Guidance

for section two – collections

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Introduction

This document is part of a set of guidance documents aimed to support museums that are preparing an application or return for Accreditation, to help them understand how their application or return will be assessed.

This document provides guidance on meeting the second section of the Accreditation Standard – collections – and should be read alongside the Accreditation Standard, the guidance introduction document, and the guidance documents for the two other sections of the standard – organisational health, and users and their experiences. All of these documents are available to download from the Arts Council’s website at www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/museums-and-libraries/museums/accreditation-scheme/

The Accreditation Standard states collections as one of three sections that a museum must meet to gain Accreditation. This section is broken down into eight requirements, and each of these is listed here, along with:

- 1. General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums**
- 2. Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types (where appropriate)**
The scales are explained fully in the main introduction to the guidance (see ‘Scalability indicators’, page 13). Scales will not apply to each requirement, and are intended as a guide only.
- 3. Documentation and information needed for this requirement and where that information may be found**
- 4. Questions about this requirement that should be considered as part of the assessment**
These questions are not the ones that will be asked on your application form and are not additional requirements. However, your assessor will be using them when considering the information you provide through an application or return form, so ensure each is addressed clearly and appropriately to your organisation, and be sure the assessor can identify your answers.

Some of the questions are marked QIS. This refers to the MGS Quality Improvement System¹, a simple self-assessment tool for Accredited museums and galleries which helps them continuously monitor the quality of their services. Where it is relevant, questions from the MGS Quality Improvement System have been included to provide additional value.

Collections within a museum must be managed in line with the museum’s statement of purpose, policies and strategic vision. Accredited museums are encouraged to work towards an integrated approach to collections management which is in proportion to their size, and closely aligned with their overall purpose.

¹ <http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/the-programmes/quality-improvement-system/>

Requirement 2.1

Satisfactory arrangements for the ownership of collections

‘The museum must take responsibility for all the collections it manages. It must be able to provide information on the size of the collections and the proportion of the collections owned by and on loan to it. Any risks relating to collections on loan to the museum should be dealt with through forward planning.’

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

- a) Accredited museums hold collections with known ownership. Organisations holding purely digital collections without a physical presence are not eligible for Accreditation (see eligibility on p.6 of Accreditation Standard).
- b) Often the governing body will own the majority of collections, although it may be the case that all, or a significant proportion of the collections are owned by a separate organisation or individual/s, for example a local authority or a separate collections trust. Museum policy documents, such as the collections development policy (requirement 2.2) should be clear regarding ownership arrangements of the current collections, and who will own new acquisitions to the collection.
- c) Where museums hold collections on loan, the periods must be appropriate and include regular review between the museum and the owner. The term permanent loan has no legal status and should be avoided. All loans must be subject to fixed term loan agreements meeting SPECTRUM standards (see requirement 2.4).
- d) Robust ownership and loan and/or management agreements are critical for the long-term sustainability of the museum. Museums must be aware of the risks associated with collections ownership, for example, the significance and quantity of the items owned or loaned/managed. The museum must demonstrate its awareness and management of associated risks (see requirement 1.4).

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museum types

There is no scaled assessment in this area.

Documentation and information needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Documentation and information needed	Where it may be found
Information on application/return form	Accession registers
Percentage of collection owned and on loan	Entry forms
Collections development policy (see requirement 2.2)	Object files Indexed collection catalogue Loan agreement Management agreements Constitutions Service Level Agreements Purchase confirmations

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

Is the museum aware of the ownership of its entire collection? If there are items on loan, are there up-to-date loan agreements in place? If not, how is the ownership of legacy loans being managed?

If the majority of the collection is on loan, has the museum provided an explanation for why this is? Is the loan secure?

Is the museum aware of associated risks, are they being managed appropriately?

Do collections with unclear ownership feature within the backlog plan (see requirement 2.5)?

Collections management policies

Collections are central to the function of a museum. The management of the collections within an Accredited museum is consistent with the statement of purpose, policies and strategic vision for the organisation. To do this effectively, and to allow for regular review and improvement, a coherent set of policy statements, plans and procedures should be put in place – a collections management framework. This will address collections development, information, access, care and conservation.

Clear policy statements are an important part of an effective collections management framework and efficient working practice. Policies set out the intention and direction of an organisation as expressed formally by the governing body and should relate clearly to the mission or purpose of the organisation. A policy statement does not have to be a long document; the policy must fit the needs of the organisation.

A number of collections' management policies may be presented in one integrated document. Alternatively, they may be presented as individual documents with cross-references to each other, where relevant.

A museum may have developed the required policies prior to applying for Accreditation, using different terms from those used here, this is acceptable to Accreditation. However, if policies do not follow the titles or subject divisions set out in the Accreditation Standard a museum must be able to demonstrate which document/s fulfil the requirement under each section of the standard. Your policies must clearly link to the overall purpose of the organisation.

Accreditation intends that museums should develop their collections management framework approach over a timescale appropriate to their own working cycles. This may mean that during the rollout of the Accreditation Standard (2011), returning participants do not have all policies fully in place at the time of assessment. If policies specified in documentation (see requirement 2.3), care and conservation (see requirement 2.4) and access (see requirement 3.2) are not in place at the time of assessment, the museum must submit a statement guiding the assessor to the page in its forward plan where the development of these policies is set out with a timeframe for completion, or a clear statement of intent with dates. Additional guidance has been provided on Collections Link².

New applicants for Accreditation must have all elements in place to achieve Accreditation.

² www.collectionslink.org.uk

Requirement 2.2

Development policy

'The museum must have an approved policy for developing collections (also known as an acquisition and disposal policy). The policy must include:

- 2.2.1 Statement of purpose
- 2.2.2 Overview of current collections
- 2.2.3 Future themes and collecting
- 2.2.4 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal
- 2.2.5 Information on the legal framework for acquisition and disposal'

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

a) Policy

This policy is of vital importance to help shape the museum's collections. The policy must reflect the nature of the museum and provide a clear statement of the governing body's intentions in the area of developing (acquiring and disposing), of collections. It should be publicly accessible. The policy will include:

Statement of purpose – refer to Accreditation requirement 1.1

Overview of current collections – describes the history of the collection outlining the entire collection; identify areas of strength and significance, as well as the unique nature of the museum. Depending on the size or diversity of the collection, the description may be divided into several or multiple collection descriptions. This section should clearly identify, and describe the makeup, scope and scale of the core collection.

Future themes and collecting – this is a chance to think about and set down clearly how the museum wishes its collection to grow – if at all. Where relevant, the policy should include reference to the need for collections information (documentation), collections care, and access issues to be taken into consideration when acquiring new items for the collection. This will best be done by cross-referencing to the policies or policy statements on documentation, collections care and collections access rather than repeating the relevant information.

Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal – the museum should set out its approach to rationalisation and disposal with reference to its entire current collections, and the MA Code of Ethics and MA Disposal Toolkit. This section may also confirm those parts of the collection which are closed, for example, where it will no longer seek to acquire items.

Information on the legal framework for acquisition and disposal – the policy should clearly state the legal constraints the museum is working under. This will vary and it is the responsibility of the museum to ensure that all relevant legislation and ethical codes are taken into consideration. The primary legal and ethical requirements are provided within the template (see below).

b) Proportion

The policy should be in proportion to resources available and the wider aims of the forward plan.

c) Template policy

All museums must provide an approved and in date collections development policy (or acquisition and disposal policy), based on the template policy, including all relevant clauses, or appropriate or legally required equivalents, for example, as directed by an Act of Parliament. Any changes to the template clauses must not reduce the requirement. The template is available from assessing organisations and Collections Link.

d) Policies based on the April 2008 (2010 revision) template acquisition and disposal policy

Where an acquisition and disposal policy compliant with the April 2008 (2010 revision) template policy is provided by an existing participant as part of an Accreditation return, and this policy remains in date at the point of return, then this policy will be compliant for that return assessment. An 'area for improvement' will be applied to ensure that at next review the policy is revised to comply with the Accreditation Standard (ed.2011).

e) Identification of the required clauses

If the policy or the required clauses are spread throughout a larger document or more than one document then identification of the required clauses must be clear and straightforward, and the internal policy references must have been altered to relate to that document. This may occur where a museum has separate policies for individual elements covered by the template, such as a spoliation policy, and due diligence policy etc, or where a policy covers the majority of clauses but additional site specific clauses are located elsewhere.

f) When collections are owned by a separate organisation

Where a loan or management agreement specifies that the collections owner needs to approve or ratify this policy, evidence of approval/ ratification from both parties will be required for Accreditation.

g) Library, archive and handling collections

All museums hold accessioned museum collections, while some also include archival, library, handling or other types of collections. The collections development policy should include all collections held by the museum with clear identification of which standards apply, for example, Accreditation and SPECTRUM for museum collections, BS5454/PD5454 or SCAM Code of Practice or equivalent for archival collections.

Handling collections may include objects which are part of the long-term accessioned collection and those which are not. Both may be managed differently to other parts of the long-term accessioned collections, and these differences in use and management should be clear within the policy.

h) Museums unable to acquire or dispose on legal groups

If the museum is legally unable to acquire or dispose, or the governing body has taken this decision, the policy must explain the situation. In these cases it is acceptable for the policy not to include some or all of the required disposal clauses. However, museums should recognise that a policy never to dispose may be unsustainable in the longer term. Policy clauses detailing disposal due to deterioration or destruction should be retained.

Where museums have discrete collections, such as an historic 'closed' collection, and a subsidiary, but equally long-term supporting collection where collecting is permitted, the policy should reflect this situation.

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types

National museums:

Disposal process and requirements for many national museums will be directed by their governing constitution. This should guide the collections development policy. Accreditation clauses should not contradict the governing constitution. National museums may publish the elements of the collections development policy separately, such as a spoliation statement, a due diligence policy, an acquisition strategy or policy, a disposal policy etc.

Nationally styled museums:

Must have a substantial collection in relation to its stated objectives. 'Substantial collection' means that the collection is a significant and fully representative collection of national importance and international interest. It should directly reflect the existing status of the museum and provide substantial evidence to support its use of the word 'national' or equivalent. The policy and practice of the museum must be to collect a range of objects of national scope and importance and associated information in its particular fields.

Documentation and information needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Documentation and information needed	Where it may be found
<p>Information on application/return form</p> <p>Collections development policy</p> <p>Governance document (see requirement 1.2)</p> <p>Evidence of approval</p>	<p>Collections development policy with any appendices</p>

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

Has the policy been approved by the correct body, committee or individual with evidenced powers of approval?

Does the policy fit with the statement of purpose for the museum?

Is the policy compliant with the required clauses stated within the template? Do any additional (non-required) elements alter or reduce the meaning of the required clauses?

If constitutional make up does not permit the inclusion of all required clauses, are sufficient safeguards in place to ensure the long-term preservation and use of the collection, and responsibility for acquisition and disposal procedures as outlined within the template?

Does the description of collections provide a clear overview to guide future acquisitions and/or disposal as appropriate? It is rigorous? How well does the museum develop its collections?

How have collecting remits of other museums, local record offices, archives been defined?

Is the approach to collecting sustainable?

Is the policy publicly available? If so, how?

Requirement 2.3

Documentation policy

'The museum must be guided by a documentation policy statement. This may be part of a wider collections information policy.'

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

- a) The aim of a documentation policy is to ensure that the museum fulfils its responsibilities in relation to security, management and access of collections. The policy should aim to:
 - improve accountability for collections
 - maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information
 - extend access to collection information
 - strengthen the security of the collections
- b) The policy should be in proportion to resources available and the wider forward plan.
- c) Where the operation of a museum has been outsourced to a third party, there should be a clear relationship between the management agreement and the collections documentation policy. Mechanisms for audit of collections documentation and condition (see requirement 2.4) against the required standards set by the management agreement should be explicit in the management agreement.
- d) The policy statement will include a commitment to record sufficient information about the objects in the care of the museum so that each object that it is legally responsible for (including loans as well as long-term collections), can be identified and located. A commitment to back up records and to store them securely should also be included.
- e) Measures should be in place to ensure the physical security and long-term preservation of all documentation records, whether paper or computerised. Computerised records should be backed up regularly.
- f) The policy should consider the potential obsolescence of electronic systems to ensure long term accessibility of the information held. For example, will the system currently used remain accessible in 10 years time?

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types

There is no scaled assessment in this area.

Documentation and information needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Documentation and information needed	Where it may be found
Information on application/return form	Collections management framework
Documentation or information policy	Documentation or information policy
Approval of policy	

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

Is it appropriate?
Is it SPECTRUM compliant?
Does the policy reflect the requirements of a management agreement (where museum operations are outsourced)?

Requirement 2.4

Care and conservation policy

'The museum must have an approved policy statement to guide its approach to collections care and conservation.'

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

- a) Caring for the collections is a fundamental duty for all museums. Policies for the care of the collection should be based on a combination of preventative and remedial conservation, both designed to ensure long-term preservation. Preventative 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.
- b) The policy should be in proportion to resources available and the wider forward plan.
- c) Where the operation of a museum has been outsourced to a third party, there should be a clear relationship between the management agreement and the collections care and conservation policy. Mechanisms for audit of collections condition against the required standards set by the agreement should be explicit in the agreement.
- d) The policy should make reference to plans and policies that impact on care and conservation, for example, forward planning, emergency planning etc.
- e) Areas of the collection that require separate policies, for example, working historic machinery, should be identified and policies written.
- f) Policies should take into consideration other relevant standards and frameworks, for example BS5454/PD5454 'Recommendations for storage and exhibition of archival documents', [Benchmarks in Collection Care](#), [SPECTRUM](#) procedures
- g) The museum should receive regular advice from a conservator or collection care adviser, or other appropriately qualified/experienced person on the museum's approach to collection care activities. Remedial conservation work should be carried out by or under the supervision of a conservator.

- h) The policy should state the criteria it will adopt in selecting private/freelance conservators. Where a museum employs a professional conservator, the policy should make reference to how their skills are utilised. Any conservator or conservation practice that is contracted to provide advice or services should be included on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON) and, where available, a professionally accredited conservator should be used.
- i) All workforce members and freelance staff working to support the care and conservation of the collection must be aware and follow all policies and procedures.

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types

There is no scaled assessment in this area.

Documentation and information needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Documentation and information needed	Where it may be found
Information on application/return form	Collections management framework
Collections care and conservation policy	Care and conservation policy
Approval of policy	

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

Does the policy fit with the statement of purpose and key aims of the museum?

Does the policy reflect the requirements of a management agreement (where museum operations are outsourced)?

Is the policy consistent with its occupancy of premises?

Does the policy link effectively with the museum's approach to environmental sustainability (see guidance – section one: 1.10)?

Requirement 2.5

Collections management plans

Documentation plan

‘The museum must have plans to improve its collections documentation and documentation systems.’

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

- a) Accreditation requirements relating to documentation planning are applicable only where the museum has a retrospective documentation backlog.
- b) The plan for backlogs must be appropriate to the museum, the scale of the backlogs, and the resources available. The documentation plan should clearly support the collections development policy (see requirement 2.2), to support effective growth and/or rationalisation of the collection.
- c) A retrospective documentation backlog refers to that group of items without secure ownership or information records, and that may not be recorded within the museum’s accession register. Retrospective documentation plans for Accreditation should be split into four sections based on SPECTRUM:

2.5A (stage one):

Ensuring all documentation procedures are in place and used (see requirement 2.7). Development and implementation of effective documentation procedures must have been completed at point of application or return for museums to achieve full Accreditation.

2.5B (stage two):

Producing an inventory of appropriate detail of the material identified as a potential backlog; this could be to item or group level. Completion of an inventory of those items that may form a backlog should be undertaken within a reasonable period, which normally means a maximum of two years.

2.5C (stage three):

A discrepancy checking stage, using the stage two inventory, to check whether any items identified as part of the backlog have previously been accessioned and subsequently lost/misplaced/mis-assigned. Completion of this stage will permit the actual backlog volume to be clarified.

2.5D (stage four):

Undertaking SPECTRUM procedures for those items within the backlog selected for long-term retention within the primary collection. Once the inventory and discrepancy stages have been completed robustly and effectively, items within the backlog which are not appropriate for accessioning and long-term retention may be considered for disposal. Records for those items within the backlog selected for accessioning should be noted as 'found within the museum' or similar if research into ownership is not completed, or not possible. Museums should resolve the backlog within five years following the completion of stage two.

Where backlogs exist, museums will receive 'areas for improvement' based on this section. Museums should aim to resolve their identified backlogs within the timescales given, which will be based on the museums own documentation plan. Where timescales are not met, museums must be able to demonstrate through a forward planning process why this is the case, and how the backlog will be addressed.

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types

There is no scalability in this section.

Documentation and information needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Documentation and information needed	Where it may be found
Information on application/return form	Documentation plan
Documentation plan (where appropriate)	Collections management framework

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

Is the plan coherent?

Are the timescales appropriate?

Does the plan include general collections audit and/or documentation enrichment activity? If so, these elements should be separate to the primary documentation backlog plan.

Requirement 2.6

Care and conservation plan

‘The museum must have plans to help deliver improvements to collections care and conservation in line with the collections care and conservation policy.’

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

- a) The collections care and conservation plan may be part of a wider document within the collections management framework adopted by the museum.
- b) Museums will have a planned programme to institute improvements in collection care, ensuring that necessary improvements are made over time, on the basis of priority. Periodic reviews are held to evaluate the condition of the collection and summarise priorities for improvements. Recommendations for action are produced and an action plan is formulated for carrying out the priorities identified as necessary within a specified time period.
- c) The plan should include planned action relating to the following elements:
 1. **Collections condition overview:** to ensure that awareness of the condition and needs of all items in the collection is maintained.

An appropriate programme is in place to ensure that a visual inspection of all the collections is carried out. Sensitive or vulnerable items are identified, and appropriate action planned.

2. **Environmental monitoring:** to alert staff to potentially damaging environmental conditions; an appropriate programme is in place to measure relative humidity, temperature and light levels (visible and ultraviolet), in galleries and stores.

Any environmental data collected, such as spot measures of temperature and humidity or light levels, is recorded, evaluated and retained. Monitoring can be carried out using simple as well as sophisticated instruments. Any monitoring equipment is stored and calibrated as recommended by the manufacturer.

- 3. Environmental control:** to ensure that collections are not at risk of damage from unsuitable environmental conditions.

The collection is housed such that it is protected from potentially harmful environmental conditions. The museum has determined the level of control of the environment (temperature, relative humidity, light and pollutants), which it wishes to achieve, and measures are taken to control the environment to these levels. Control can be achieved using simple as well as sophisticated measures; simple measures to be taken are closing doors, moving lights, providing entrance mats and controlling temperature and light levels.

Material is displayed and stored away from sources of heating, air conditioning vents and windows, or otherwise protected from their damaging effects.

The overall exposure of all light-sensitive material to light is reduced as much as possible. Blinds, shutters, curtains and/or ultraviolet filters are used to reduce visible and ultraviolet light in all areas housing such collections. Sunlight does not fall directly on any light-sensitive material while on display.

Vulnerable items in the collection are protected from excessive dust by being housed in appropriate enclosures such as cupboards or cases.

Windows and doors can be closed so that the building provides some protection from airborne pollutants, both gaseous and particulate.

- 4. Provision of suitable building:** to ensure that the building contributes towards providing appropriate environmental conditions for the different elements of the collection.

Buildings used to house collections are sufficiently robust and well constructed to be fit for the purpose of housing the collections. They therefore provide sufficient protection from the elements and are of appropriate strength and quality of construction. Floors, particularly in storage areas are capable of safely supporting the load. Buildings used to house collections are regularly inspected; potential threats to collections from, for example, leaky roofs, poor wiring, internal pipe work, blocked gutters and ill-fitting windows or doors, are identified and assessed during these inspections, and a programme is put in place to remedy identified faults. Plant and equipment is inspected periodically. Buildings that are unoccupied for parts of the year are visited and inspected regularly.

Accreditation recognises that for open air, industrial, transport and social history museums, where an historic or replica building is used as an exhibit or housing for exhibits, not all the requirements above may be achievable, however, the care and long-term preservation of any collections located within the buildings must be appropriately considered.

5. **Housekeeping:** to reduce the likelihood of pest infestation and damage to material from mould or from abrasive or acidic particles, by careful cleaning of collections and the areas in which they are housed.

All display and storage areas and storage furniture are cleaned and inspected regularly. Advice has been sought as to the appropriate techniques, materials and equipment used for display and storage and for cleaning storage areas, for example, in avoiding the potential damage to photographic images from chlorine or peroxides released by some commercial cleaning products, or ozone from photocopiers and printers.

All incoming material and acquisitions are examined for signs of infestation, dampness or mould. Advice is sought on appropriate remedial action and action is taken to deal with any problems identified. All items which show signs of pest infestation are kept isolated from the rest of the collection until treated. Advice is sought and action is taken on appropriate treatments.

Display and storage areas are monitored for the presence of insects and rodents, and traps are regularly checked. Trapped insects are identified.

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types

Independent museums, types one and two

a basic conservation plan should explain the arrangements for: frequency of monitoring, resources, review periods, accessing professional conservation advice, maintaining the building, housekeeping, monitoring the environment and maintaining the equipment.

Independent museums, type three, local authority and university museums:

the conservation plan should explain the arrangements for: frequency of monitoring, resources, review periods, accessing professional conservation advice, maintaining the building, housekeeping, monitoring the environment and maintaining the equipment, surveying the collections and establishing a planned programme of remedial and preventive conservation work (for example, regular condition surveys).

National museums:

the conservation plan should outline the procedures that are followed by professional conservators within the staff complement in the following areas: frequency of monitoring, resources, review periods, accessing professional conservation advice, maintaining the building, housekeeping, monitoring the environment, maintaining the equipment, surveying the collections and establishing a planned programme of remedial and preventive conservation work (for example, regular condition surveys). It should also indicate the arrangements for engaging freelance/contract conservators; it should also reference the arrangements for maintaining the building(s).

Nationally styled museums:

refer to local authority and university museums

Documentation needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Documentation and information needed	Where it may be found
<p>Information on application/return form</p> <p>Collections care and conservation plan or plans</p>	<p>Collections management framework documents (see requirement 2.1)</p> <p>Collections care and conservation policy (see requirement 2.4)</p> <p>Collections care and conservation plan or plans (see requirement 2.6)</p> <p>Forward plan (see requirement 1.4)</p>

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

<p>Is the plan appropriate to the organisations size?</p> <p>Does the plan include an overview of current collections care and conservation?</p> <p>Does the plan include timescales?</p> <p>Is the plan realistic?</p> <p>What is the plan based on? Has a Benchmarks or similar survey been undertaken to guide its development?</p> <p>Are resources in place to support this approach?</p> <p>What maintenance and cleaning schedules are in place at the museum both internally and externally?</p> <p>Do staff have mechanisms in place to deal with 'on the spot' issues regarding maintenance and cleaning? Does the museum's cleaning schedule link to collection care and conservation policy and plan? What maintenance schedules for displays, interactive and other interpretative tools are in place at the museum?</p> <p>Are all workforce members and freelance staff involved in the care and conservation of the collection aware and trained to adhere to the plan?</p>

Requirement 2.7

Collections management procedures

Documentation procedures

The primary SPECTRUM procedures must be in place in the form of a documentation procedural manual that is available for inspection on request.

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

The primary SPECTRUM procedures are:

- object entry
- acquisition
- location and movement control
- marking and/or labelling
- cataloguing
- object exit
- loans out
- loans in

As part of acquisition, the museum must have a security copy of the accession register. This is crucial for the following reasons:

- emergency situations: should the museum suffer a catastrophic incident, such as flood or fire, a security copy will allow the museum to identify what has been lost, or what needs to be searched for, replaced or restored.
- theft and fraud: a security copy will ensure that the governing body has a secure record of its collection and associated information should any items go missing; the security copy will be static and non-changeable other than through extraordinary means.

Museums with an electronic security copy of the accession register must evidence appropriate digital security with auditable change logs. A regular but non-auditable back up of your collections database will not be accepted; further information available through SPECTRUM.

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types

There is no scalability in this section.

Documentation needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Documentation and information needed	Where it may be found
Information on application/return form	Documentation procedural manual

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

Is the manual up to date? Does it set out the museum's documentation practices and procedures?

Does the manual include:

- object entry
- acquisition (a) an accession register
- acquisition (b) security copy of the accession register
- acquisition (c) marking and/or labelling
- location and movement control
- cataloguing (a) provision of appropriate indexing
- object exit
- loans in
- loans out

Are the procedures being implemented?

How is the manual communicated to the workforce?

Requirement 2.8

Expert assessment of security arrangements

'The museum must obtain expert security advice for stored and exhibited collections at least every five years, and earlier if needed. It must plan to act on the advice over time.'

General guidance on this requirement, relevant to all museums

- a) The appropriate source of advice will vary according to the size of the organisation and composition of its collection.
- b) Security advice must be sought for all premises containing collections.
- c) Security advice must consider arrangements for the workforce and visitors, as well as collections.
- d) Advice from the National Security Adviser at Arts Council England in respect of the Government Indemnity Scheme is accepted as evidence of external experts; however, museums must be clear for what building or section of a building the advice has been provided. Those areas not considered by the national security team should receive security reviews through alternate means.

Scaled guidance on this requirement, relevant to specific museum types

Independent museums:

requests for a visit from your local police liaison or community officer, and any ensuing recommendations will be sufficient evidence. Where police officers are not able to write a formal report, the museum should take notes of verbal recommendations during the visit, taking appropriate action.

Local authority museums:

may utilise the support of local police liaison or community officers, and may also benefit from council-appointed security teams. Regular expert advice and security reviews should be evidenced.

National museums, nationally styled museums:

will likely hold significant or valuable collections in greater numbers and concentrations than smaller museums. It is therefore expected that they will employ expert security advice, either as a member of the workforce, or through regular external consultant advice.

University museums:

may benefit from the support of university security teams, in addition to police liaison officers. Security reviews should be evidenced.

Documentation needed for this requirement and where that information may be found

Required documentation	Where evidence may be found
Information on application or return form	Security report
Evidence of a security review within the previous five years	Notes from security report

Questions about this requirement that will be considered as part of the assessment

Does the review consider all premises containing collections?

Did the review look at security of workforce and visitors, as well as collections on display and in store?

How are any recommendations being implemented?

Is the timescale for implementing recommendations appropriate?