

COLLECTIONS POLICY FRAMEWORK

Revision	Revision Date	Revision Owner	Reference	Comment
00 - New	September 2015	Registrar	COL-POL-029-00	New policy to meet legal and ethical standards, and to respond to changes in corporate policy
01	November 2016	Registrar	COL-POL-029-00	Amendments following Collections colleagues' comments
02	June 2019	Director of Collections and Head of Collections Services	COL-POL-029-00	Rewrite to reflect collections department structure & up to date standards
03	March 2023	Registrar	COL-POL-029-00	Spectrum updated and procedure names updated in Framework
04	March 2025	Head of Collection Services and Registrar	COL-POL-029-00	Reviewed and updated

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05	May 2025	Director of Collections, Research and Learning	COL-POL-029- 00	Amendments following Trustee meeting and Sub- Committee meeting
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1. Introduction

Armed with Hope and understanding - We use our collection to explore the complex role of arms and armour throughout humanity's past and present.

The collection is at the heart of all the Museum's activity. By definition, the Royal Armouries (the Museum) has a long-term purpose and holds the collection in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives.

Our Vision for the Royal Armouries' Collection: The Museum will develop a collection which demonstrates that every nation and every community has been shaped to a greater or lesser extent by force of arms, and every right or freedom has at some point been won, lost or regained through conflict. Arms and armour are among the products of human endeavour which have had the greatest impact on the history of the world: thanks to humanity's relentless desire for advantage in defence and attack, they have been pivotal in forming and re-forming the cultural and geopolitical shape of civilisations. They have shaped all our past and will continue to shape our future. What we learn from our collective understanding of them is far from an academic exercise. It is central to understanding what it means to be human and to shaping peaceful and productive futures.

2. Legal Framework

The Museum is subject to, and takes seriously international and national laws and statutes, codes of ethics and standards in the course of preserving the national collection of arms and armour, retaining public respect and reputation. The key Act governing the Museum's activities is the National Heritage Act 1983 (as amended by the Museums & Galleries Act 1992), which requires the Board of Trustees of the Royal Armouries to maintain and exhibit a national collection of arms, armour and associated objects, and to maintain a record relating to arms and armour and to the Tower of London. The Act requires the Royal Armouries to care for, preserve and add objects to the collections, as well as to exhibit them to the public, make them available for study and research, and generally promote the public's enjoyment and understanding of arms and armour.

Other Acts include, but not exclusively:

- Firearms Act 1968 (and subsequent amendments)
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, UNESCO 1970
- Sale of Goods Act 1979 (and subsequent amendments)
- Limitations Act 1980 (and subsequent amendments)
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (and subsequent amendments)
- Disability Act 1995

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- Treasure Act 1996 (and subsequent amendments) including Coroners and Justice Act
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (and subsequent amendments)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002
- Iraqi Cultural Property Law 2002 (and subsequent amendments)
- Dealing in Cultural Goods Offences Act 2003 (and subsequent amendments)
- Ivory Act 2018 (and subsequent amendments)

3. Ethical standards and guidance

The Museum is committed to carrying out all its activities ethically and morally (see the Royal Armouries' *Ethics Policy*), adhering to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics, the Museums Association (MA) Code of Ethics and including, but not exclusively the following standards, guidelines and best practice:

- Combating Illicit Trade: Due Diligence Guidelines for Museums, Libraries and Archives on Collecting and Borrowing Cultural Material (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2005)
- BS EN 17820 -2023 Conservation of Cultural Heritage Specifications for the management of moveable cultural heritage collections
- Place of Deposit for Archives
- Museum Accreditation Standards, Arts Council England
- Archive Accreditation Standards
- SPECTRUM 5.1 the UK Museum Collections Management Standard
- CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) guidelines

4. Knowledge

- 4.1 Knowledge of the collection is essential for its effective and efficient management and development.
- 4.2 Collections staff at all levels have an unrivalled opportunity to study objects in their care and to develop knowledge not easily acquired by non-Museum staff. Staff accordingly have a duty, as part of their job, to acquire knowledge of objects in the collection, their care, conservation and management, and the whole field to which the objects relate, and to ensure that their accumulated knowledge is retained by the Museum as far as reasonably practicable.
- 4.3 It is essential that all collections staff develop the museological skills necessary to handle, inspect, display and store the classes of object within our collection.

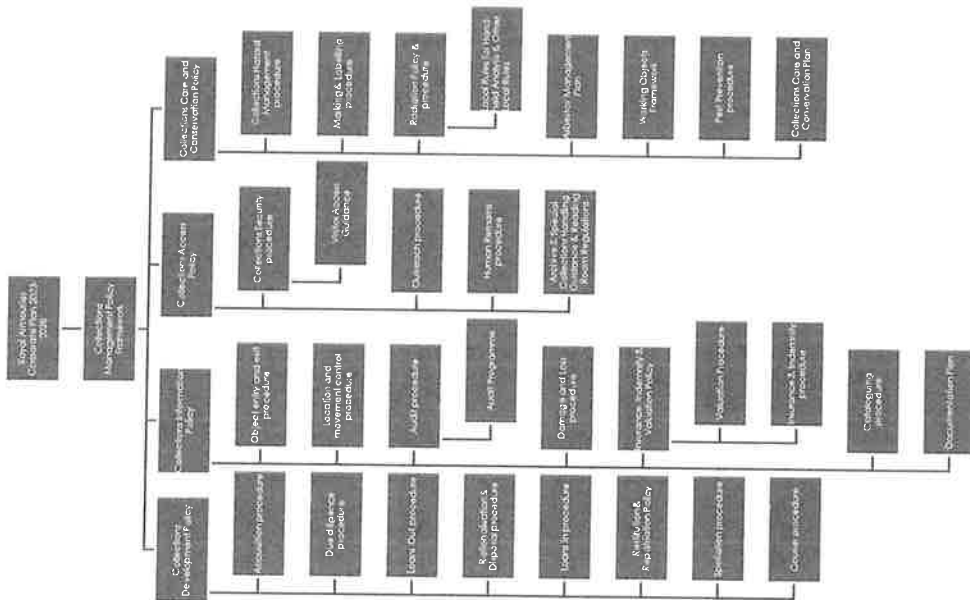
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- 4.4 The requirements for security and risk must be thoroughly understood, while striking the appropriate balance with the public's right of access.
- 4.5 It is essential that conservation and collections care staff develop and retain specialised conservation, historic craft, and engineering skills necessary to understand and preserve the collection.
- 4.6 It is crucial that the Museum develops and retains knowledge and capabilities for analysis and interpretation of historic materials and conservation; either in house or through partnerships.
- 4.7 Staff are required to have and develop knowledge in information retrieval, documentation, collections management systems and related technologies, which are increasingly necessary for the efficient management of collections. Office skills such as the use of databases are essential.
- 4.8 It is essential that collections staff develop expert knowledge and are able to provide advice to outside bodies:
 - 4.8.1 The Museum's collection and its network of day-to-day working relationships are international in scope and an awareness of various cultures, languages and sensitivities is key.
 - 4.8.2 Designated staff are appointed as Expert Advisers to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and are members of the Advisory Council of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art.
 - 4.8.3 Collections staff are required to provide an information service to the public and professionals worldwide.
 - 4.8.4 The Museum will endeavour to capture and continue expert knowledge through succession planning.

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5 Collections Management Policy Framework

In order to care for the collection to the highest standards, to meet and deliver the corporate aims, statutory obligations and relevant sector standards, the Royal Armouries has adopted the following policies and procedural framework. All policies are agreed and approved by the Board of Trustees, with all procedures being agreed by the Senior Collections team.



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6 Audit and Review

This document will be reviewed from time to time, but at least every five years, and specifically following updates in corporate policy and plan, legislation and international conventions.

This document will be reviewed by a panel of collections staff and agreed by the Director of Collections, Research and Learning, before submission to the Board of Trustees for approval.

7 Risk Management

The associated risk of non-compliance with this policy is:

Impact of non-compliance: High

Likelihood of non-compliance: Low

8 Effective date

This policy is effective from the date of signing.


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Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date.....12 June 2025

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