
Advanced Certificate in Museum Project Management

Collections Management and Conservation

Collections Management refers to the systematic care and control of a museum's collections, including acquisition, documentation, conservation, storage, exhibition, and access. The goal of collections management is to ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of a museum's collections for the benefit of the public and future generations.

Collection Development Policy is a written document that outlines a museum's priorities and guidelines for the growth and management of its collections. It provides a framework for decision-making regarding the acquisition, deaccession, and disposal of objects, and ensures that the museum's collections align with its mission and values.

Acquisition is the process of obtaining new objects for a museum's collection. This can be done through donation, purchase, bequest, or field collection. The acquisition process involves careful consideration of the object's condition, authenticity, provenance, and relevance to the museum's collection and mission.

Documentation is the process of creating and maintaining records for each object in a museum's collection. This includes information about the object's provenance, acquisition, condition, treatment, and use. Documentation is essential for the proper management and care of a museum's collections, and also provides important context for researchers and the public.

Conservation is the process of preserving and protecting objects in a museum's collection. This includes preventive conservation, which aims to minimize damage and deterioration through proper handling, storage, and display; and interventive conservation, which involves the treatment of objects to stabilize their condition and prevent further damage.

Storage is the housing of a museum's collections when they are not on exhibit. Proper storage is essential for the long-term preservation of objects, and involves considerations such as environmental control, security, and accessibility.

Exhibition is the display of a museum's collections for the public to view and interact with. Exhibitions can be temporary or permanent, and can serve a variety of educational and interpretive purposes.

Access refers to the availability of a museum's collections to the public, researchers, and other stakeholders. This can be achieved through exhibitions, loans, publications, and online databases.

Deaccession is the process of removing an object from a museum's collection. This can be done for a variety of reasons, such as the object's condition, duplication, or lack of relevance to the museum's mission. Deaccessioning must be done in accordance with ethical guidelines and legal requirements.

Disposal is the final disposition of an object that has been deaccessioned. This can include transfer to another museum, sale, or destruction. Disposal must be done in a responsible and transparent manner, and

the proceeds from any sales must be used to support the museum's collections and mission.

Preventive Conservation is the practice of protecting and preserving objects in a museum's collection through environmental control, handling procedures, and storage and display methods. The goal of preventive conservation is to minimize damage and deterioration, and to ensure the long-term preservation of objects.

Interventive Conservation is the treatment of objects in a museum's collection to stabilize their condition and prevent further damage. This can include cleaning, repair, and stabilization, and may be performed by conservators or trained technicians.

Environmental Control is the management of temperature, humidity, light, and other environmental factors to create a stable and safe environment for a museum's collections. This is essential for the long-term preservation of objects, as extremes in temperature and humidity can cause damage and deterioration.

Handling Procedures are the procedures and guidelines for the safe handling of objects in a museum's collection. This includes considerations such as gloves, lifting techniques, and transport. Proper handling procedures are essential for the safety of both the objects and the staff.

Storage and Display Methods are the methods used for the storage and display of objects in a museum's collection. This includes considerations such as shelving, supports, and display cases. Proper storage and display methods are essential for the long-term preservation of objects, and must take into account factors such as environmental control, security, and accessibility.

Ethical Guidelines are the principles and standards that govern the conduct of museum professionals in the management and care of collections. These guidelines are established by professional organizations such as the American Alliance of Museums and the International Council of Museums, and provide a framework for decision-making and best practices.

Legal Requirements are the laws and regulations that govern the management and care of collections in a museum. These requirements vary by country and jurisdiction, and can include laws regarding deaccessioning, disposal, and cultural heritage.

Provenance is the history of ownership and custody of an object. Provenance is an important aspect of collections management, as it can provide important context and authenticity for an object.

Condition is the physical and chemical state of an object. Condition assessment is an important aspect of collections management, as it can provide information about the object's stability, potential for deterioration, and need for treatment.

Treatment is the interventive conservation of an object, including cleaning, repair, and stabilization. Treatment is performed by conservators or trained technicians, and must be done in accordance with ethical guidelines and legal requirements.

Authenticity is the certainty that an object is what it is claimed to be. Authenticity is an important aspect of collections management, as it can provide important context and value for an object.

Relevance is the relationship of an object to a museum's mission and collection. Relevance is an important consideration in collections management, as it can provide justification for the acquisition, preservation, and display of an object.

Mission is the purpose and focus of a museum. The mission statement provides a framework for decision-making in all aspects of museum operations, including collections management.

Values are the principles and beliefs that guide a museum's actions and decisions. Values are an important aspect of collections management, as they can provide a framework for decision-making regarding the acquisition, preservation, and display of objects.

In summary, collections management and conservation are essential components of museum operations, and involve a wide range of activities and considerations. From acquisition and documentation to conservation, storage, and access, museum professionals must carefully manage and care for their collections in order to ensure their long-term preservation and availability to the public. This requires a deep understanding of ethical guidelines, legal requirements, and best practices, as well as a commitment to ongoing learning and professional development. Whether working in a small historical society or a large national museum, collections managers and conservators play a critical role in preserving our cultural heritage for future generations.