DOCUMENTATION POLICY

Approved by Collection Committee on 22 October 2024
Due for revision in October 2029
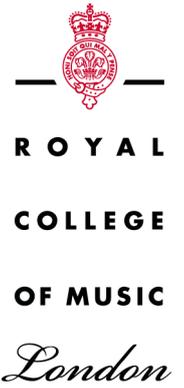
ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC
London

Table of Contents

1. Document history and review: Documentation Policy

Name of museum: Royal College of Music Museum

Name of governing body: The Council of the Royal College of Music, delegated to the Collections Committee

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: Approved by Collection Committee on behalf of Senate on 22 October 2024

Policy review procedure: The Documentation Policy will be published and reviewed at least once every five years. It will be published on the Museum website.

Date at which this policy is due for review: October 2029

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

2. Introduction

This policy covers how the Royal College of Music Museum obtains, records, maintains and makes accessible information about its collections. The Museum's collection includes both the physical collection and its related documentation. This documentation includes, in addition to historic and technical data, information relating to collection management activities. Access to the Museum's collections is the key driver behind documentation. This access is facilitated by accurate, accountable and accessible information recorded through efficient and effective means.

3. Collections Documentation Policy

3.1. For every object accessioned in the collection:

    3.1.1. The Museum has documentary proof of legal title that also meets ethical standards.

    3.1.2. There is an accurate record in the Accession Register. The Accession Register will contain fields for the accession number, entry number, date/source/method of acquisition, and key identifying information and notes about the items accessioned.

3.2. The accession number uniquely identifies the object with that register entry.

3.3. The object is labelled with that number.

3.4. The number creates a robust link with all associated paperwork and documentation, including location records.

3.5. All documentation and procedures meet at least the nine primary standards as specified in Spectrum 5.0 – the UK Standard for Collections Management, and all accessioned items have at least an inventory-level record.

3.6. The associated *Documentation Plan*, *Documentation Procedures Manual*, and *Collections Management System Manual* give details concerning the daily management of these standards.

3.7. A printed Accession Register will be produced annually.

3.8. Gaps and backlogs in documentation are monitored by the Museum and considered in reviews of the *Documentation Plan*. Programmes to complete cataloguing gaps will be commissioned to ensure accuracy and completeness of documentation.

3.9. Access to object information will be provided where possible. Such access will take into account the confidentiality or security implications of some types of information. Access to information will also be provided to the public through electronic communications where possible.

3.10. Documentation must be physically secure. The Accession Register should be made using archival quality materials. Duplicate records should be made and maintained at a separate site from the originals.

3.11. The Museum will ensure the long-term accessibility of documentation held in electronic form. Information will be protected from the impact of potential obsolescence in electronic systems. Where documentation is held in

electronic systems, a copy should be kept in a secure place, protected from fire and water. The policy and all associated electronic documentation are backed-up on the RCM's ICT system every night.

4. The Documentation Policy

4.1. The Museum, led by the Curator, will make sure that these aims continue to be met for all new acquisitions.

4.2. This policy sits alongside the Acquisition and Disposal Policy and all other policy documents.

4.3. The policy applies to all loans to the Museum, with loan numbers applied in place of accession numbers.

4.4. The implementation of this policy is described in the *Documentation Plan*, and the *Documentation Procedures Manual*. The major objective of the *Documentation Plan* is the documentation of all objects or groups of objects held in the Museum's custody – both accessioned and unaccessioned collections.

* *