




Collections Information & Documentation Policy

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Responsibility: Director of Collections & Access

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1.0 NMI collections information & documentation policy

This National Museum of Ireland (NMI) policy addresses all aspects of collections information at the National Museum of Ireland. It acts as a framework to ensure comprehensive documentation of museum heritage objects and the management of this information. This policy is focused on museum heritage objects and their data. There is a separate policy for Loans of museum heritage objects. There are also separate policies for NMI Archives, and for NMI Library.

2.0 Legislative basis

The NMI manages its collections of Museum Heritage Objects under powers conferred by section 11 of the **National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997**. This states that:

11 (2) - The Board shall have all such powers as it considers necessary or expedient for the performance of its functions under this Act including, but without prejudice to the foregoing, the following powers:

(e) to promote research and scholarship,

(f) to disseminate and promote the dissemination of literature and information relating to the collection of the Museum,

(n) to catalogue the museum heritage objects in the collection of the Museum.

The term “museum heritage object” is defined in the 1997 Act under Part I Section 2 as:

a) any object in the collection of the Museum on the Museum establishment day,

b)

c) any object (including archaeological objects, objects relating to the decorative arts or natural sciences or to history or industry or folklife) over 25 years old considered appropriate by the Board for inclusion in the collection of the Museum concerning human life in Ireland, the natural history of Ireland, and of the relations of Ireland with other countries, and

d) any other similar objects;

This policy is in place in order for the Board of NMI to fulfil its statutory role to catalogue the objects in its care, to manage these objects effectively, to document the condition of objects and their treatments, and to make information on these objects available.

3.0 Documentation of museum heritage objects

NMI is committed to SPECTRUM 5.0, an international standard for museum collections management.

1. NMI will maintain a SPECTRUM-compliant Documentation Procedural Manual. This suite of procedures describes how museum records are created, maintained, and secured, in order to ensure accountability, consistency and continuity of practice.
2. NMI will maintain a SPECTRUM -compliant Entry/Exit Record system to record the entry/exit of all museum heritage objects into/out of the museum except as loans (see **Loans Policy**).
3. NMI will maintain its system of Accessions Registers and maintain secure copies of all records relating to acquisition and accession of all the objects in the collection, past or present.
4. NMI will follow a written Collections Documentation Strategy to address the capture of historic information relating to the museum heritage objects in its care and to develop records beyond inventory standard to minimum catalogue and full catalogue standards.
5. NMI will continue to follow the Inventory Plan to ensure database entries for all collections in its care to the Spectrum Inventory Standard.

4.0 Collections information management

NMI manages the data relating to the collections in its care with the aim of ensuring that systems are secure from inappropriate access, robust in terms of long-term stability and reliability, and grow steadily in quality as a valuable information resource and management tool.

1. NMI will ensure that paper records relating to museum heritage objects are created using stable materials, stored, secured, and handled appropriately and preserved as appropriate.
2. NMI will ensure that digital systems support SPECTRUM requirements.
3. Procedures will be maintained to manage location and movement control.
4. Systems will be maintained to support audit, and track deletions or editing of digital records and associated policies and procedure followed.
5. Systems will be maintained to record, maintain and centralise all collections information, including all information relating to collections care and management.
6. To facilitate the accurate input and retrieval of documentation information, the NMI will ensure that all staff responsible for inputting and maintaining collection information will receive relevant training in cataloguing procedures and data standards.

5.0 Collections information access

NMI manages the data relating to the collections in its care with the aim of ensuring that systems support open access to information of a non-sensitive nature to share data resources widely to a broad range of users. Access to information stored in NMI's CMS is managed by this policy and in line with SPECTRUM 5.0. Please note that Personal Data is managed in line with NMI's Data Protection Policy.

1. NMI will work towards placing collections information online in line with NMI's Public Access Standard.
2. Where information has yet to be published online, NMI will provide researchers with information from its systems, once appraised. NMI curatorial divisions have specific procedures to access information that reflect the nature of each discipline. Please contact the Duty Officers for more information.
3. Sensitive information or information that increases risks to collections including personal data, storage location, commercially sensitive information, insurance, and some provenance information may be restricted.
4. Where possible, NMI will establish copyright and title of museum heritage objects in advance of releasing images and information on open platforms and will record them in its collections management database.
5. Any requests for access to Axiell information beyond that available according to NMI's Public Access Standard must apply in writing to the Research Committee, through the auspices of the Director of Collections and Access.
6. The Research Committee will be chaired by the Director of Collections and Access and will have two internal nominees – one from Registration and the other from Curatorial (2-year rotation), and one external nominee (2-year rotation).