

COLLECTIONS TRUST ACCREDITATION GUIDANCE SHEET 3:

Collections Management Plans and Procedures

This guidance explains what the role of planning and plans, processes and procedures within a Collections Management Framework as set out in the *BSI Publicly Available Specification 197:2009 (PAS197)*. It also illustrates how the planning and procedures guidance in the *PAS197* relates to the UK Accreditation Standard 2011.

What are Plans?

A definition of Planning

'The process of setting goals, developing strategies, and outlining tasks and schedules to accomplish the goals. Planning also involves implementing plans and monitoring their progress.'

A definition of a plan

'A written account of an intended future course of action aimed at achieving specific goals or objectives within a specific timeframe. It explains in detail what needs to be done, when, how, and by whom.'

The **plan** is the documentation of the **planning** activity

What are Procedures?

PAS 197 definition of a process

'Set of interrelated or interacting activities which transform inputs into outputs'

PAS197 definition of procedure

'Specified way to carry out an activity or a process'

The **procedure** is the written, or recorded, description of a **process**

PAS197:2009 Collections Management planning and procedures and Accreditation

Plans and planning

PAS 197 describes a structured method for strategic Collections Management that will deliver improvement over time. At the heart of any improvement model is planning. *PAS197* does not prescribe how, or when to plan; all organisations differ in size and internal management and planning should always be appropriate to the organisation doing the planning.

PAS197 encourages planning at various levels in the organisation and at various stages in the Collections Management Framework cycle of improvement. Effective plans are working documents that are reviewed and updated as part of a specified planning cycle.

- At a strategic level – these might be:
- business plans
 - forward plans
 - strategic plans or strategic objectives
-

- At an operational level – this might include:
- departmental plans
 - project plans
 - subject specific plans
 - individual staff member work plans

Good Plans are SMART

- specific
- measurable
- achievable
- resourced
- Time-specific

There is written guidance on how to plan on Collections Link, see the *Further Resources* section at the end of this guidance sheet for links.

Processes and Procedures

PAS197 recommends the creation of written procedures for to help you to deliver specific outcomes, and to guide the day to day Collections Management work in a consistent manner.

Under each of the four Collections Management policy areas identified in the *PAS197* (Collections Development, Collections Information, Collections Access and Collections Care and Conservation) there are specific recommendations for developing written procedures to help you to deliver against your policies.

Written procedures make it easier for managers to review operations and track progress by providing a measurable method for everyday tasks, whilst enabling staff or volunteers to work with confidence within defined parameters.

PAS197 and the UK Accreditation Scheme

Plans and Planning

The UK Accreditation Scheme places great importance on effective planning as a driver for improvement and has some detailed requirements for forward planning for Accredited Museums.

These requirements are in *Accreditation Section 1, Governance* and will not be explored fully in this guidance sheet. For your information, the forward planning requirement for Accreditation is shown below and some resources offering further guidance on forward planning for museums are listed towards the end of this guidance Sheet.

Accreditation 2011

1.4 Effective Forward Planning

Accredited Museums plan effectively for organisational resilience and success. They have a consultative approach to forward planning and their approved forward plans include or address the following elements in appropriate detail:

- 1.4.1 the statement of purpose of the museum
- 1.4.2 a review of the previous plan
- 1.4.3 an analysis of the operating environment
- 1.4.4 consultation and analysis of views
- 1.4.5 its key aims
- 1.4.6 the specific objectives beneath each key aim
- 1.4.7 how it will achieve its objectives
- 1.4.8 a resource plan showing the people and money available to meet its objectives
- 1.4.9 the date the plan will be reviewed

This focus on planning is extended to *Accreditation Section 2.0 - Collections* with two requirements:

- A collections documentation plan for museums with documentation backlogs
- A collections care and conservation plan

As explained in the previous section of this guidance, PAS197 does not offer guidance on the content of specific plans but it does make recommendations on the content of policies in these specific areas. Effective plans written as part of an integrated framework should reflect the overall strategic direction of the organisation as stated in the policies, as well as linking clearly to the objectives set out in the overall forward plan for the museum.

Processes and Procedures

Accreditation requires museums to put in place the primary SPECTRUM procedures for museum documentation and to compile a written procedural manual to ensure consistent application of the procedures. This is in line with PAS197 guidance on written procedures for collections information.

There is no requirement in Accreditation for written procedures in the other three Collections Management policy areas.

Collections Management Plans and procedures for Accreditation

Collections Documentation Plan

A museum should be accountable for all items in its care and the SPECTRUM primary procedures are regarded as the minimum set of procedures for creating a basic documentation system. If these procedures are in place and up-to-date you will have a searchable system that can list and locate all the items for which you are legally responsible.

If you have a documentation backlog, the Accreditation Standard requires you to have an up-to-date documentation plan. For Accreditation purposes, a backlog is defined as a group (or groups) of collections items which lack adequate records in one or more of the SPECTRUM primary procedures.

The plan may be referred to as a documentation backlog plan or a retrospective documentation plan. You may include this specific plan within a wider plan for improving your documentation standards beyond the minimum required for Accreditation and you should ensure that your plan refers to, and is written in line with, the Collections Documentation policy and the overall mission for the organisation.

There are a number of useful resources providing detailed guidance on documentation backlog planning on the Collections Link website. See the *Section Further Resources* at the end of this guidance for links.

Accreditation 2011 – the requirement

2.5 Documentation Plan

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

Collections Care and Conservation Plan

Accreditation guidance states that the collections care and conservation plan should include planned action relating to the following elements:

- Collections condition overview
- Environmental monitoring
- Environmental control
- Provision of suitable buildings
- Housekeeping
- Professional advice and remedial conservation

Museums will find the publication *Benchmarks in Collection Care 2.0* a useful tool for assessing their current collections care and conservation plans and procedures. A link is provided in the Section - *Further Resources*.

Accreditation 2011 – the requirement

2.6 Collections 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

Collections Documentation Procedures

Written procedures can be useful in many areas of Collections Management work but for Accreditation there is a specific requirement for museums to maintain Documentation Procedures to SPECTRUM minimum standards in seven 'primary procedure' areas only. The primary procedures are listed below in the Accreditation requirement box.

These procedures need to be backed up by a written procedural manual which may be inspected by an Accreditation assessor on request. There is detailed guidance on how to develop and write a documentation procedure manual, and one collections trust fact sheet for each SPECTRUM primary procedure on Collections Link. The links to these fact sheets are given at the end of this guidance sheet in the *Further Resources Section* at the end.

Accreditation 2011 –the requirement

2.7 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:

- Object Entry
- Acquisition
- Location and Movement Control
- Cataloguing
- Object Exit
- Loans out
- Loans in

Further Resources

Accreditation: The UK Standard for Museums and Galleries, 2011, MLA (2011)

Accreditation: The UK Standard for Museums and Galleries – Assessment Guidance, MLA (2011)

PAS197:2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management, BSi (2009)

Collections Management – a practical guide, Hillhouse, S. (2009), Collections Trust

<http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/shop/product/view/2/9>

Collections Link - <http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/>

South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries, Forward Planning Toolkit

<http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/discover/governance/1018-swfed-forward-planning-toolkit>

Producing a Forward Plan, Davies, S. (1996) Museums and Galleries Commission

<http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/museum-accreditation/482-producing-a-forward-plan>

SPECTRUM 4.0 <http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/spectrum/1003-spectrum>

Collections Trust Fact Sheet – Retrospective Documentation and making an inventory

<http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/museum-accreditation/627-retrospective-documentation-and-making-an-inventory> There are other relevant fact sheets in the Museum Accreditation section of Collections Link

Benchmarks in Collection Care 2.0 <http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/benchmarks-for-collections-care/752-introduction-to-benchmarks-20>

Who is this Guidance for?

This guidance sheet has been written for museums aiming to meet the standard set out in the UK Accreditation Scheme for Museums. Along with the linked guidance sheets listed below, it provides a basic guide to the *PAS197:2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management (PAS197:2009)* and to key elements of *Section 2.0 Collections, Accreditation 2011*

This guidance is accompanied by two other related guidance sheets which are also available on Collections Link:

Guidance Sheet 1 - Collections Management Framework

Guidance Sheet 2 - Collections Management - Policies.