



Collections Development Policy

National Museums NI

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1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1 Museum's statement of purpose

1.1.1 The Board of Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as 'National Museums NI') is required under Article 4 (1) of the *Museums & Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998* (hereafter referred to as 'the Order'), to 'care for, preserve and add to the objects in its collections'.

1.1.2 The areas of interest to be covered by the organisation are defined in the Order, Article 4 (1) (d), as:

- art, history and science
- the culture and way of life of people; and
- the migration and settlement of people

Article 4 (2) states that 'the Board shall have particular regard to the heritage of Northern Ireland'.

1.1.3 National Museums NI (NMNI) also collects items of international significance that directly relate to the areas of interest outlined above; provide context, both historic and contemporary, for items already in the collection; and, demonstrate Northern Ireland's place in the world and the impact of world events on Northern Ireland.

1.1.4 NMNI's vision is:

Celebrate who we are: telling the stories of our past, challenging our present, shaping our future

1.1.5 NMNI's mission is:

- Develop, manage and care for our collections to benefit current and future generations
- Make our collections accessible to the widest possible audiences
- Play a leading role in the economic and social wellbeing and future of this place
- Build an organisation where people feel valued

1.2 Purpose of policy

1.2.1 This policy is part of the NMNI's Collections Management framework which consists of:

- Collections Development Policy, 2018
- Collections Information and Access Policy, 2018
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy, 2018

- 1.2.2 The purpose of the Collections Development Policy is to ensure that NMNI fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the acquisition and disposal of collections, in line with its statutory obligations, Corporate Strategy and annual business plans.
- 1.2.3 The constituent museum sites within NMNI are:
- Ulster Museum
 - Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
 - Ulster American Folk Park
- 1.2.4 All three sites within NMNI are Accredited Museums. The Accreditation Scheme is administered by Arts Council England (ACE) which sets nationally agreed standards for UK Museums.
- 1.2.5 In line with the Accreditation Scheme this policy details how NMNI will:
- Acquire new items for the collections
 - Dispose of items from the collections
 - Maintain best practice in the acquisition and disposal of collections
- 1.2.6 The Board of Trustees will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.2.7 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The Board of Trustees therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.2.8 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.2.9 NMNI recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as finances, staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.2.10 NMNI will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Board of Trustees or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.2.11 NMNI will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

1.3 Policy Implementation

- 1.3.1 NMNI's policies and procedures are informed by relevant legal and ethical frameworks, alongside appropriate national and international standards, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.3.2 Managers should ensure that the Collections Management framework and supporting procedures/plans are followed in the areas for which they are responsible.

The following strategies, plans and procedures, in particular, are relevant to this policy:

- Business Continuity Plan 2015
- Collections Care Incident Response and Recovery Guidelines 2012
- Collections Care and Conservation Plan 2015
- Digitisation Strategy 2010
- Digitisation Preservation Strategy 2011
- Disaster Planning: Maintaining Disaster Plans & Preparedness 2012
- Documentation Plan 2007, 2014
- Documentation and Loans Procedural Manuals 2010
- Energy Management Policy 2014
- Environmental Sustainability Policy Statement 2015
- Event Hire Policy: Ulster Museum 2012
- Event Hire Policy: Ulster Folk & Transport Museum 2014
- Exhibition Policy 2015
- Intellectual Rights Policy 2013
- ICT Strategy 2012-2015 ICT Strategy 2016-2020
- Integrated Pest Management Policy 2014
- Lending and Borrowing Policy 2017
- Major Incident and Emergency Plan 2018
- Research Strategy 2018
- Working Collections Policy 2014

1.3.3 Training, where relevant, will be provided to support the delivery of the Collections Development Policy.

1.3.4 All NMNI staff should strive to meet the responsibilities outlined within this policy.

1.4 Policy Review and Amendments

1.4.1 The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed in full at least once every three years.

- 1.4.2 Date at which this policy is due for review is on or before November 2021.
- 1.4.3 Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

2. History of the collections

- 2.1 NMNI was established as National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. It comprises three museums which were founded at different times and for different purposes. The summaries below are indicative, rather than comprehensive.

2.2 Ulster Museum

- 2.2.1 The Ulster Museum is the oldest of the three, its collections originating with the formation and activities of the Belfast Natural History Society (1821), re-named the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society (1842), and the closely associated Belfast Naturalists' Field Club (1863). During most of the 19th century, their focus was on developing collections mainly in the area of natural history, but also archaeology and ethnography, and displaying these in the Belfast Museum which had been opened by the Society in 1831. Separately, in 1890, the opening, by the Belfast Town Council of the Belfast Art Gallery and Museum provided a catalyst for broader collections development, embracing not only art but also antiquities and a greater capacity for natural history specimens. A critical mass was created in 1910 when the collections of the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society were acquired by the Belfast Art Gallery and Museum. This led ultimately to the construction of a new building, the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery at Botanic Gardens, which opened in 1929, and the establishment, through the Museum Act (Northern Ireland) 1961, of the Ulster Museum as a national institution.
- 2.2.2 The nature and development of the Ulster Museum's collections reflect the above history. A number of 19th century natural historians, travellers and benefactors are particularly noteworthy. These include William Thompson (botany and ornithology), Sir James Emerson Tennant (entomology), Gordon A Thomson and George Benn (antiquities), and James McAdam (palaeontology). Embracing most, if not all, of these areas was Canon John Grainger who, shortly before his death in 1891, donated his complete collection of geological and zoological specimens, antiquities and art objects to the Belfast Art Gallery and Museum – as a result of which he has subsequently been referred to as 'The Father of the Ulster Museum'. All these subject areas have been enriched and enhanced by subsequent collecting, several aspects meriting mention. Critical to the development of the botany collection was the gift by The Queen's University of Belfast of its herbarium (1968). Field archaeology undertaken by museum staff generated much contextual material as well as finds of particular significance, including those from Mount Sandel, County Londonderry, excavated during the 1970s and revealing the earliest evidence of the Mesolithic in Ireland. Of international importance is the remarkable assemblage of silver and gold coins, jewellery, navigational equipment, cannon and everyday objects recovered

from the wreck of the Spanish Armada galleas *Girona* off the coast of County Antrim by a Belgian maritime archaeology team between 1967-9 and acquired by the Museum in 1972.

- 2.2.3 The collection and display of industrial archaeology formed part of the policy of the Ulster Museum from the 1960s, under the then Directorship of Mr William Seaby. The driving force for this activity was W.A. McCutcheon, who conducted new and intensive research into the subject matter between 1956 and 1968 and expressed his 'deep conviction of the relevance and validity of industrial archaeology'. From 1968 to 1974 this research was translated into new displays on engineering history at the Ulster Museum. Machinery and other material culture were accessioned into the permanent collection of the Ulster Museum, whilst archival material and photographs associated with McCutcheon's research were gifted to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). The Ulster Museum's collection includes material from all of the major industries for which the north of Ireland was once renowned, including linen production, heavy engineering, ship-building, rope making and brick making.
- 2.2.4 The development of the art collection was stimulated during the early part of the last century by some significant gifts and bequests. The former are exemplified through JMW Turner's *The Dawn of Christianity*, gifted in 1913, and 34 of his own works presented by the distinguished Belfast-born artist Sir John Lavery in 1929. The bequest of Sir Robert Lloyd Patterson, given to the Belfast Art Gallery and Museum in 1919, was significant in that the paintings were sold some ten years later, with the approval of the trustees of Lloyd Patterson, on condition that the proceeds be used to acquire other works representative of the contemporary British school. This was an important factor in the subsequent shaping of the collection which, through successive shifts in acquisition policy, has grown to encompass not just the work of Irish painters but also British, European and American, both historical and contemporary. Most recently, in 2012, the majority of items in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's collection of artworks, representing some forty years of contemporary art in Northern Ireland, were transferred to NMNI.
- 2.2.5 Beyond paintings, the art collections include rich holdings, both historical and contemporary, in the areas of costume, jewellery, silverware, glass and ceramics. Several aspects are worthy of note. The costume collection reflects a long-term and targeted approach to acquisition, focusing on the contemporary in particular, following the loss of the collection in a bomb attack in 1976. The bulk of the jewellery collection was the gift of Mrs Anne Hull Grundy, art and jewellery historian, who donated around 700 pieces dating from the sixteenth to the mid-20th century. The historic Irish silver collection has few equals, whilst, as a result of its contemporary collecting policy, the Museum now represents the only public collection of international contemporary applied art in Ireland.
- 2.2.6 Since 2016 the Ulster Museum has developed its history and art collections through 'Collecting the Troubles and Beyond', funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund's Collecting Cultures programme.

2.3 Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

- 2.3.1 The genesis of the Folk Museum lies in a memorandum prepared in 1943 about a post-war policy for the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery (see paragraph 2.2.1) in which the then Director, Sidney Stendall, advocated the creation of an open-air museum. This aspiration was pursued by his successor Wilfred Seaby and, following a favourable report presented to the Northern Ireland Parliament, the Ulster Folk Museum Act was passed in 1958. The Folk Museum's remit was to illustrate the ways of life, past and present, and the traditions of the people of Northern Ireland. Individuals influential to the development of the Folk Museum included, in addition to those mentioned above, Estyn Evans, a pioneer in the study of folk culture in Ireland, and its Directors, George Thompson and Alan Gailey.
- 2.3.2 The current site at Cultra, County Down, was purchased in 1961 with the first outdoor exhibit building, transplanted from Magilligan, County Londonderry, opened in 1964. There is a rural emphasis at the museum but there is also an urban nucleus such that the 54 buildings now situated across the 140 acre site capture both dimensions. The buildings offer a representative range of domestic houses reflecting regional variations throughout Ulster, as well as crafts such as blacksmithing, spade-making and weaving. They also reflect occupations and trades, and include illustrative examples of commercial and public premises, churches and schools.
- 2.3.3 In parallel with these developments, an equally wide-ranging body of material relating to ways of life and traditions was collected through targeted fieldwork over many years. This has not only complemented the buildings but also provided important evidence of the rich social fabric of Ulster and the day-to-day lives of people. It covers such areas as farming, crafts and domestic life through both objects and archives. The latter include rich collections of photographs, the most important of which are those taken by W A Green and R J Welch, and sound recordings covering oral and aural histories such as music, folk tales and linguistic diversity.
- 2.3.4 Alongside the emergence of the Folk Museum, a museum dedicated to transport was also being considered by the above-mentioned Wilfred Seaby, Director of the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery. A local committee of transport enthusiasts presented a number of vehicles, mainly rail, to the Belfast Museum on the understanding that they, together with other transport items already in the Museum's collection, would be maintained and developed. Between 1954 and 1956, two buildings were leased in Belfast to hold the growing collection. New premises at Witham Street, Belfast, were purchased in 1960, a curator was appointed in 1961 and the new Belfast Transport Museum, under Belfast Corporation control, was opened in June 1962. It remained under Corporation control until responsibility was transferred to the Trustees of the Folk Museum in 1967 through the Ulster Folk Museum Amendment Act. At the same time, the Dalchoolin site, located a short distance away from the Folk Museum, was acquired as the site for the new Transport Museum. In 1973, the official name of the institution was changed to The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum to reflect the amalgamation.

- 2.3.5 Today the Transport Museum lies within a 40-acre site, representing almost forty years of incremental development in the opening of a Transport Gallery in 1976, a Rail Gallery in 1993 and a Road Gallery (1995). Influential figures in the early development of the transport collections, particularly road and rail, included the first curator, Robert Beggs, and Robert Galbraith. These collections include extensive and representative holdings of Irish railway vehicles, significant items being received from the Ulster Transport Authority (now Translink) and Córas Iompair Éireann. Public and private road transport is reflected in items ranging from horse-drawn vehicles to a De Lorean car.
- 2.3.6 The collections also cover transport associated with sea and sky. Of particular significance in the former category are *Result*, a 19th century schooner, one of some 200 vessels comprising the UK National Historic Fleet and ship plans from Harland & Wolff, Belfast's major shipyard, including design drawings for *Titanic*. The latter includes items ranging from a Shorts SC.1 vertical take-off aircraft, a Rex McCandless designed autogyro to a Martin Baker ejector seat and a Merlin Spitfire engine.

2.4 Ulster American Folk Park

- 2.4.1 The Ulster American Folk Park opened in 1976, two individuals - Eric Montgomery and Dr. Matthew T. Mellon - being particularly prominent in its establishment and early development. The former had been instrumental in setting up the Ulster Scot Historical Society (now the Ulster Historical Foundation) to undertake research into Ulster-American links. During the 1960s, with government support and the active cooperation of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Eric Montgomery developed proposals to restore the ancestral homes of notable Americans whose forebears had emigrated from Ulster. One such building was a County Tyrone farmhouse, birthplace of Judge Thomas Mellon, the banking and industrial magnate of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. This was the context in which Dr. Mellon expressed his interest and his support would lead to the restoration of the Mellon Farmstead and, ultimately, the creation of the Ulster American Folk Park.
- 2.4.2 The site, approx. 80 acres, seeks to tell the story of emigration from Ulster to America from the 17th to the 19th centuries and uses objects and buildings to reflect experiences in both places. Whilst the Ulster dimension is more developed, largely through eight vernacular buildings, significant progress has been made in correcting this imbalance by the importation and reconstruction of historic structures, now numbering five, from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Tennessee.
- 2.4.3 While objects in the collection cover primarily domestic life and crafts, and farming, they also cover areas which inform the wider story of emigration, the most noteworthy being the Paul Loudon-Brown White Star Line Collection acquired in 2010.

3. An overview of current collections

3.1 The collections of NMNI are estimated to be in the region of 1.4 million items. The collections are multidisciplinary, diverse and span all time periods, referencing Northern Ireland within and to the wider world. Historically, they have grown on the site-based framework of the Ulster Museum, the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum and the Ulster American Folk Park. However, since similar collection types can relate to more than one site, they are more appropriately classified within three broad and complementary subject areas. NMNI will continue to collect within these subject areas and the time periods and geographic areas to which they relate. The subject areas are:

- Art
- History
- Natural Sciences

3.2 Art

3.2.1 The art collections include fine and applied art and incorporate both historical and contemporary material, mainly within an Irish context but also including some significant international holdings. In excess of 11,000 works, the art collection contains paintings, sculptures, works on paper, glass, ceramics, silver and metalwork, jewellery, furniture, costume and textiles. These collections are significant at both a national and an international level.

3.3 History

3.3.1 The History collections reflect evidence of people and events from the earliest settlers, through the main archaeological and historical periods and up to the present day. They also include significant material from various world cultures.

- Archaeology, with a particular emphasis on material of northern Irish provenance, covers the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Medieval and post-Medieval (up to 1600) periods.
- The Modern History collections cover a range of objects relating to the political, social and economic history of Ireland, particularly Ulster, since 1600. These encompass archival materials (photographs, maps, paper ephemera), paintings, books, banners, costume, weaponry, coins, banknotes, medals and tokens.
- World Cultures, including material from various regions of the world, particularly in the Americas and the Pacific region, together with Egyptian, Greek and Roman material, and objects recovered from the Spanish Armada wrecks.
- The Emigration collections relate to the interpretation of our people in new places and are concerned primarily with social history surrounding the migration of people from Ulster and their settlement in North America from 1600 to the present day. These collections include: Ulster and American

domestic miscellanea, textiles and costume; Ulster and American furniture, craft tools and agricultural implements; and, emigrant-related buildings and associated building maintenance materials and fittings, drawings, photographs and other records.

- The Folk Life and Agriculture collections focus on ways of life and traditions of the people of Northern Ireland in a western European context from the late nineteenth century through to the early decades of the twentieth century. They include material culture representing buildings, domestic life, agriculture, craft and textiles, and non-material culture including traditional music and oral histories.
- The Transport, Industry and Technology collections cover all forms of transport built or used in Ireland, from the late eighteenth century to the present day, and the industrial heritage of Ulster. The non-material collections comprise oral and aural histories giving an insight into transport and industry in Ireland and local people who have contributed to the development of transport around the world. The collections are maritime, road, rail, aviation and industry and technology.

3.4 Natural Sciences

3.4.1 The Natural Sciences collections show particular emphasis on the botany, geology and zoology of the north of Ireland but also include material of international provenance:

- Botany, an amalgamation of the Queen's University of Belfast herbarium and that of the former Belfast Museum and Art Gallery as well as subsequent collecting.
- Geology, comprising mostly Irish geological material (rocks, fossils and minerals), as well as gemstones, meteorites and miscellaneous holdings such as microscope thin sections, micro-mounts and geological curiosities.
- Zoology, consisting of terrestrial invertebrates (mainly insects and molluscs), marine invertebrates and vertebrates (mainly birds and mammals).
- Related material includes a collection of manuscripts, drawings and contemporary wildlife art paintings, early and/or rare natural sciences books, transparencies and photographs, and data generated through fieldwork.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 Given the diverse nature of NMNI's collections it is not possible to establish a simple statement that covers all areas of collecting. Acquisition is aimed at building upon the strengths of the existing collections and establishing new collecting areas, where appropriate.

4.2 Ten inter-related guiding principles underpin our approach to collections development. Collecting during the 2018-2023 period will be directed towards achieving public value by:

- Strengthening existing collecting areas
- Bridging identified gaps in existing collection areas and acquiring items not currently represented in the collections
- Acquiring items of particular national and international significance (individually or by association)
- Acquiring items that are rare and represent the best examples of their kind
- Acquiring items which support capital development plans
- Enhancing the permanent exhibitions across NMNI sites
- Supporting the temporary and special exhibition programmes
- Supporting research activity
- Improving the diversity and representativeness of the collections, through collecting associated with the nine protective categories as identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)
- Ensuring the relevance of the collections, through the pursuit of active and informed contemporary collecting

4.3 In addition to the guiding principles outlined in 4.2, the following limiting factors will normally apply:

- Items will not be acquired unless suitable environmental conditions are available for storage
- Items will not be acquired if conservation or remedial treatment to make the acquisition suitable for long-term storage cannot be carried out to a defined programme of work determined before acquisition
- Larger items will not be acquired unless the storage space to contain the material and the long-term resources to maintain them are clearly defined before acquisition
- Where curatorial expertise is absent, for the interim, a cautious approach to acquisition will prevail and the presumption will be against acquisition
- Material will only be acquired if it is well provenanced and has a well-documented recent history

4.4 The themes and priorities for future collecting are outlined below under each collecting area.

4.4.1 **Art**

Collecting priorities are:

Fine Art

- Pre-20th Century European art
- Irish art from 17th century to Contemporary
- British art from 17th century to Contemporary
- International 20th Century art
- Contemporary art, with particular emphasis on lens-based practice
- **Troubles Art:**
 - Significant contemporary Irish and International artworks that are artistic responses to the Troubles
 - Artworks that respond to the legacy of the Troubles
 - Contextual artworks that represent other work by an artist already held within the Troubles Art collection
 - Artworks that contextualise the Troubles Art collection in the broader scope of conflict art
- **The Olive Letitia Nelson Bequest**
The Olive Letitia Nelson Bequest is for the specific purpose of purchasing prints and drawings:
 - Old Master drawings, to support and contextualise existing strengths within the collection
 - Irish works on paper, historic, 20th Century and Contemporary
 - British works on paper, historic, 20th Century and Contemporary
 - International works on paper, 20th Century and Contemporary
 - Works by women artists, including Irish artists and surrealist artists

Applied Art

- **Historic Applied Art**
 - Significant works of historic Irish applied art (Late 17th century to 20th century)
 - Significant items reflecting high quality and importance in the development of the applied arts
 - Material representative of external influences on Irish applied art
 - Important examples of works of art that fill gaps in the current historic applied art collections including; Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau and Art Deco
- **Contemporary Applied Art**
 - Significant contemporary Irish and International works of applied art
 - Contemporary reinterpretations of historic applied art techniques or designs
 - Artworks that reflect new technology and materials
 - Internationally important applied art artists that are not currently represented in the collection

- Annually, one 'International Designer outfit' by a successful international designer whose work reflects one of the key looks of the coming season's fashions
- Annually, one 'High Street' outfit, bought in a Belfast shop or online, which reflects what is popular and available and actually worn in contemporary Northern Ireland

4.4.2 History

Collecting priorities are:

Archaeology

- Items declared treasure under *The Treasure Act (1996)*
- Selected items reported under *The Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*
- Material of Viking origin
- Material of Roman origin

Modern History

- Material associated with the development of Northern Ireland with particular emphasis on partition, civil and political conflict, de-industrialisation and social and cultural identity
- Contemporary photographic collections, with a particular focus on images by women and by international press photographers working in Northern Ireland from 1969, and those depicting under-represented areas in Ulster and Northern Ireland
- Important cameras which relate to the photographic collections held by NMNI
- Original and printed political cartoons of the 19th and 20th centuries
- Material relating to the Suffrage movement in Ireland and women's involvement in Trade Unionism

Emigration

Collecting will support the proposed redevelopment of the Ulster American Folk Park.

Objects and archival material (including audio and video recordings) that tell the story of emigration to North America and address gaps in the existing collection:

- 20th and 21st material, from post the Second World War to the present day
- Material relating to emigrants with an Ulster Catholic background
- Material relating to emigrants with a working-class Ulster Protestant background
- Material relating to female emigrants

- Material relating to emigrants in all nine protective categories as identified in Section 75
- Material relating to emigration from Ulster to Canada
- Material relating to emigration from Ulster to urban areas

Folk Life and Agriculture

- Examples of design and contemporary crafts by Irish designers which reflect traditional skills used in the historic collections, such as weaving, embroidery, quilting, millinery, glove making and tailoring
- Historic examples of occupational costume
- Costume and textiles relating to Ulster's sporting heritage
- Historic and contemporary material relating to the story of Irish dance
- Examples of marching band uniforms and other related material and oral histories
- Public health material and oral histories
- Material which supports and enriches the interpretation of the historic buildings on the Folk Museum site

Transport, Industry and Technology

- Vehicles and associated material built in Ireland or typically used in Ireland. Current priorities are Irish cars and motorsport vehicles, horse-drawn and motorised goods/commercial vehicles and goods/industrial railway vehicles
- Vehicles invented in Ireland or by Irish emigrants and associated material
- Irish transport and travel memorabilia, including promotional and marketing materials
- Vehicles and associated memorabilia marketed as Ulster or Ireland models
- Models and paintings of aspects of transport not currently represented in the existing collection, where it is impractical to collect the real specimen
- Non-material culture - video recordings relating to the social histories of the Transport, Industry and Technology collections
- Two-dimensional, ephemeral material which gives context to the Transport, Industry and Technology collections
- Items relating to *Titanic* in her social, economic and cultural context, including material that illustrates Belfast's industrial and maritime history
- Items relating to the schooner *Result* and to the Carrickfergus shipyards

4.4.3 Natural Sciences

Collecting priorities are:

Geology

- Distinctive Irish rock types including granites and gneisses
- Unusual and rare Irish fossils, such as those that show exceptional preservation or preserve evidence that contributes significantly to understanding the palaeobiology of the organism or the palaeoenvironment in which it lived
- Mineral species and meteorite types not currently represented in the collections
- Unusual rock types from around the world
- High quality display items that augment existing displays.

Zoology

- Vertebrates - Irish birds and mammals not currently represented in the collections.
- Marine invertebrates - Nudibranch molluscs, Sponges, Hydroids, Tunicates, Echinoderms, Anthozoa
- Invertebrates:
 - Any Irish First specimens particularly found in Northern Ireland.
 - Any Irish fauna species in which the museum has no or very limited number of specimens
 - United kingdom material for comparative material
 - Any Type material specimens
 - Insect material collected from local and historical entomologists

4.5 The collections are a resource for NMNI and must be used to underpin all of our activities. We are committed to broadening access to the collections through exhibitions, digitisation, online resources, loans, outreach, events and publications, at a popular and academic level.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 NMNI recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well-managed collection.

5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

- 5.3 Each object or collection recommended for disposal will be categorised as follows to assist the decision making process with regard to the method and consequence of disposal of the objects or collections:

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 1

Objects or collections which fall outside the remit of the National Museums NI as defined in *The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998*.

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 2

Human remains, memorials and votive objects (see section 10). Disposal may be considered following a request for the return of remains or artefacts and each request will be considered taking into account the future care of the object or collections and any religious, social or political sensitivities which may apply.

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 3

Duplicates, bearing in mind that similar or identical items created or assembled as part of a set, group or sequence may have individual significance.

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 4

Objects which present a hazard to the collections or human health where the resources required for treatment or control outweigh the importance of the object. Unless the accepting organisation can undertake treatment or control, then destruction should be carried out.

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 5

Objects subjected to accidental damage or wilful destruction. Specialist advice and a condition report, prepared by a conservator experienced in a relevant medium, must indicate that the damage is irreparable or that the resources required for treatment outweigh the importance of the object.

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 6

Where an original medium has deteriorated to a useless or dangerous state and a copy has been prepared on an alternative stable medium. Examples are nitrate film or magnetic audio tape.

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 7

Objects or collections falling under Spoliation (see section 14).

DISPOSAL CATEGORY 8

Objects that are assessed and judged to fit more appropriately with the collecting policies, role and purpose of other Accredited museums (in the first instance) or suitable organisations.

- 5.4 Objects, materials or collections which have not formally entered the holdings of the NMNI by the process of accessioning are exempted from the provisions of this policy. In the event that disposal of such items, including unidentified loans or unsolicited donations, should become necessary, a separate procedure will be followed within the UK Documentation Procedural Standard (Spectrum).

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

6.1 In matters of collections acquisition and disposal, NMNI will, where appropriate, take account of:

- The principles outlined in the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics for Museums*, 2015, Section 2 – Stewardship of Collections, and the Museums Association's *Disposals Toolkit*
- International Council of Museums *Code of Ethics for Museums*, 2013, Section 2.
- The standards and practices required by the Arts Council England (ACE) Accreditation Scheme
- *The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998*
- The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, Department for Communities (DfC) and National Museums Northern Ireland

6.2 The relevant legal and ethical frameworks, under which NMNI's policies and procedures are informed, alongside appropriate national and international standards, set out in Appendix 1.

7.0 Collecting policies of other museums

7.1 NMNI will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

- Accredited museums and galleries in Northern Ireland where relevant and appropriate in regard to the subject areas represented in the collections of National Museums NI
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- British Film Institute
- British Library Sound Archive
- Imperial War Museums
- Irish Museum of Modern Art
- National Army Museum
- National Gallery
- National Portrait Gallery
- National Museum of Science and Industry
- Natural History Museum
- National Maritime Museum
- National Museums Scotland
- National Galleries of Scotland
- National Museums Wales

- National Museums Liverpool
- National Museum of Ireland
- National Gallery of Ireland
- Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
- Royal Armouries
- Royal Museums Greenwich
- Science Museum Group
- Tate
- The British Museum
- Victoria and Albert Museum

7.3 NMNI is open to exploring the possibilities of joint acquisition agreements.

8. Archive Holdings

8.1 As NMNI holds and intends to acquire relevant archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

8.2 NMNI will adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in its acquisition, care, management and use of the archives collection.

9. Acquisition

9.1 Authority for the acquisition of objects normally rests with the Chief Executive Officer of NMNI acting on recommendations from relevant collections staff.

9.2 Where the value of a proposed purchase is £100,000 or above and/or the Head of Collections Care has identified particular resource implications associated with the acquisition, final authority will be referred to the Board of Trustees of NMNI.

9.3 In line with best practice guidelines, NMNI operates a rigorous specimen acquisition process for both purchases and donations. This process is informed, at all stages, by specialist opinions of curatorial, collections management and collections care staff.

9.4 The rationale for the acquisition of objects will be made within the framework of our statutory responsibilities (1.1.1-1.1.2), mission (1.1.4), themes and priorities for future collecting (4).

9.5 The acquisition of objects by purchase is, and will be, constrained by the financial allocation to the Specimen Purchase Fund. The decision to acquire will, therefore, take account of the priority of each proposed acquisition against the availability of funds for purchase and maintenance.

- 9.6 NMNI will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 9.7 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1 November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, NMNI will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10. Human Remains

- 10.1 As NMNI holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

11. Biological and geological material

- 11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, NMNI will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12. Archaeological material

- 12.1 NMNI will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
- 12.2 In Northern Ireland there is a legal requirement under *The Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995* to report the discovery of archaeological finds within a 14-day period to the Ulster Museum, which is one of three relevant authorities, specified in the legislation: the Ulster Museum, the Department of Environment and the Police.
- 12.3 The reporting of potential treasure finds must be made to one of the relevant authorities in 12.2 and the Coroner as set out in *The Treasure Act 1996* (as amended by the *Coroners & Justice Act 2009*).
- 12.4 NMNI will adhere to the *The Treasure Act 1996: Northern Ireland Code of Practice, 2002*.

13. Exceptions

Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because NMNI is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases NMNI will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. NMNI will document when these exceptions occur.

14. Spoliation

NMNI will use 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions', issued by the National Museum Directors' Council in 1998, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

NMNI's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. NMNI will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' (DCMS, 2005).

16. Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All curators will actively undertake disposal assessments and projects as part of normal collections development activity. Such work will be aligned to the NMNI Documentation Plan and the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee and by Arts Council England as part of the Accreditation process.
- 16.2 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum Primary Procedures on disposal and the Museums Association's Disposal Toolkit: Guidelines for Museums.
- 16.3 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

- 16.4 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, NMNI will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.5 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by transfer to the support collection, gift, sale, return to donor, recycling, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.6 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by National Museums NI only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 16.7 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by transfer to the support collection, gift, exchange, sale, return to donor, recycling or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.8 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. Consideration will be given as to whether it can be used in the support collection of NMNI or it will be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.9 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the Museums Association's (MA) *Find an Object* web listing service, an announcement in the MA's *Museums Journal* or in other specialist publications and websites (as appropriate).
- 16.10 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

- 16.11 Any monies received by NMNI's governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 16.12 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.13 Full records will be kept of all decisions on deaccessioning and disposal and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with Spectrum Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.14 The nature of disposal by exchange means that NMNI will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 16.15 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-16.5 will apply.
- 16.16 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.17 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, NMNI will place a notice on the MA's *Find an Object* web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal* or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.18 Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.19 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the Board of Trustees, on the recommendation of professional staff, may decide to destroy it.
- 16.20 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.21 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.22 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.23 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairman
Board of Trustees
National Museums Northern Ireland

Appendix 1: Legal, Ethical and Standards Framework

NMNI's Collections Management framework is informed by legislation, ethical codes and appropriate sectoral standards.

A. Legislation applying to all Collections Management Policies

- Copyright Act 1911 and 1956
- The Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923
- Disposal of Documents Order 1925
- Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, as amended
- Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- The Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009)
- Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, as amended
- Fair Employment & Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Sections 76 Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Schedule 9 Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003
- Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003
- Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended DDA (Northern Ireland) Order 2006
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, as amended
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, The Wildlife (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- The Requirements of HM Customs & Revenue

B. Ethical codes applying to all Collections Management Policies

- UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, ratified Nov 2002
- CITES – 'Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora' 1973/79
- Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions, National Museum Directors Conference 1998
- Combating Illicit Trade: Due Diligence Guidelines for Museums, Libraries and Archives on collecting and borrowing Cultural Material, DCMS 2005
- Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums, DCMS 2005

- Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association 2015
- UK Export Licensing for Cultural Goods – Procedures and guidance for exporters of works of art and other culture goods, Arts Council England 2011
- ICOM code of Ethics for Museums 2013 (including the ICOM 'Red List')

C. Sectorial standards applying to all Collections Management Policies

- PAS197:2009: Code of practice for cultural collections management, British Standards Institute
- Spectrum 5.0: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard 2017

D. Collections Information and Access Policy

D.1 Documentation and Cataloguing Standards

- Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002)
- ISAD(g): General International Standard Archival Description, International Council on Archives 2007
- Spectrum 5.0: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard 2017
- Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules ('AACR', Joint Steering Committee, 2nd ed., 2002 revision): international library documentation standard. Superseded by AACR2 and Resource Description and Access ('RDA', 2010, revisions through 2013)

D.2 Lending

- Loans between National and Non-national Museums – New standard and practical guidelines, National Museum Directors' Council 2003
- UK Registrars Group, Courier Guidelines 2nd Edition 2004
- Effective Collections, Simple Loans Administration. Museums Association Supported by Esmée Fairburn Foundation. 1st Edition 2007
- Immunity from Seizure legislation (Part 6 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcements Act 2007)
- UK Registrars Group, Standard Facilities Report 2008
- UK Registrars Group, Standard Facilities Report: Display Case supplement 2008
- UK Registrar' Group, Standard Facilities Report: Security Supplement 2008
- Bizot Group Loans Guidelines (revised) 2009
- Government Indemnity Scheme, Guidelines for National Institutions 2012
- Smarter Loans: Principles for lending and borrowing from UK museums, Museums Association 2012

D.3 Collections Care and Conservation Policy

- European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Professional Guidelines 2002
- National Museum Directors Conference , guiding principles for reducing museums' carbon footprint 2010
- Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.0, Alex Dawson (ed.), Museums, Libraries and Archives 2011

- PAS 198:2012 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections, British Standards Institute
- PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials British Standards Institute
- Joint International Institute for Conservation (IIC) of Historic and Artistic Works – International Council of Museums (ICOM), Conservation Committee (CC) Declaration on Environmental Guidelines 2014
- Institute of Conservation (Icon) Code of Conduct and Professional Standards 2014
- RAPT (Risk Awareness Profiling Tool), www.raptonline.org.uk