

GUIDE TO MANAGING HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Forms

Sample acquisition procedure for artefacts

Acquisition Committee

The Acquisition Committee consists of three members nominated by the Committee of Management.

The Acquisition Committee approves all items donated or purchased for the museum collection.

All recommendations made by the Acquisition Committee are documented and retained by the society. At monthly meetings the Committee of Management will be informed of decisions made by Acquisitions Committee.

Collection Criteria

The Acquisition Committee considers the following criteria before approving the acquisition of an item for the museum collection.

Relevance

Is the item relevant to the museum's aims and objectives?

Does it fall within the scope of the museum's collection policy?

Documentation

How much information is available on the item or collection of items?

Priority will be given to items with associated documentation and support material.

Condition

Badly damaged material will not normally be accepted in the collection.

Storage

Is there safe, secure storage space available to store the item?

Display

Can the item be displayed?

Are there any legal or conservation restrictions that prevent the item being displayed?

Duplication

Items that are duplicates of items already in the collection will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition and / or historic value. The inferior duplicate items may be considered for deaccessioning.

Legal Requirements

Is there a clear title to the item?

Can the donor / vendor legally donate or sell the item?

Documentation and record keeping

The museum aims at all times to maintain an effective documentation system.

All record of gift forms, acquisition forms and catalogue information must be kept in the museum files.

Acquisition of Artefacts

When a donor (either the owner or agent) brings or offers the item to the museum:

1. The donor fills in an acquisition form which includes:
 - name and contact details of the owner or agent
 - detailed description of the item
 - date item is brought to the museum
 - signed declaration regarding the donation of item to the museum by donor
 - signature of member receiving the donation.
2. An Object Information form should be completed to provide additional information
3. A receipt for the item is issued to the owner or agent. (This receipt records that the museum is holding the item while inclusion of the item in the museum collection is assessed and that leaving the item at the museum does not constitute acceptance of the item into the museum collection.)
4. The item is immediately tagged detailing when item was acquired and donor details.
5. The item and related documentation are kept for the Acquisition Committee to assess

Accessing Items for Museum Collection

1. The Acquisition Committee meets to assess the donation for inclusion in the museum collection and documents their decision.
2. Donors are sent an acknowledgement letter plus two Record of Gift forms. One form will be signed by the donor and returned to the museum to be filed in the donor file. The donor retains the second form.
3. The item will be processed and catalogued.
4. Unaccepted items must be returned to the donor. If the item is not claimed within 90 days it will become the property of the museum which arranges for the appropriate disposal of the item

Documents

- Sample Society Collection Policy for Artefacts
- Sample Society Customer Relations Guidelines

Forms

- Acquisition Form
- Object Information Form
- Acquisition Receipt
- Record of Gift Form
- Acquisition Tags

Review of Sample Society Acquisition Procedure for Artefacts

The Committee of Management will review the Sample Society Acquisition Procedure for Artefacts every three years, or as required.

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