



THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS

BOA Museum Documentation Policy 2019-2024

July 2019

Introduction

The College of Optometrists is the Professional, Scientific and Examining Body for Optometry in the United Kingdom, working for the public benefit. It was formed in 1980 by an amalgamation of the British Optical Association, the Scottish Association of Opticians and the examining function of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. It is registered as a charity and was granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation in 1995.

The College inherited the British Optical Association (BOA) Museum (founded 1901) from its predecessor body. The BOA Museum's *Mission Statement* is:

The collections of the British Optical Association Museum are a nationally important resource for learning about the history and practice of optometry, ophthalmic optics and related subjects, promoting the optometry profession and raising public awareness of its past and present importance to society.

This document sets out the museum policy of the College by which it will be guided in the documentation of its collections and associated information. The policy ensures that the museum's documentation activities provide it with useful and useable information, linked to the museum's *Statement of Purpose*, and meet ethical commitments and legal requirements.

This is the College's second Museum Documentation Policy. The first was approved in February 2014 and this plan is an updating and revision of that. The adoption and regular review of this policy is a requirement of the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme (*Accreditation Standard*, November 2018, section 5.1).

It operates alongside, and is to be read in conjunction with:

BOA Museum Forward Plan 2019-2021
BOA Museum Care and Conservation Policy 2019-2024
BOA Museum Collections Development Policy 2019-2024
BOA Museum Access Policy 2019-2024

Reference should also be made to the *College of Optometrists Data Protection Policy*. Unless otherwise stated, retention of museum collections documentation data is in perpetuity.

Name of museum: British Optical Association Museum (no 2069)

Name of governing body: The Board of Trustees, The College of Optometrists

Date on which this plan was approved by governing body: 17 July 2019

Policy review procedure: The museum documentation policy will be reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this plan is due for review: 17 July 2024

Any amendments made since the last full review are listed below:

July 2019

- Removal of reference to specific *BOA Museum Documentation Plan*.
 - Rewording of Key Principles in section 3.
 - References to the Spectrum Standard updated to Spectrum 5.0.
 - Policy on regular documentation audits introduced.
 - Reference added to letters and emails of enquiry.
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1. Introduction

The British Optical Association Museum is responsible for the long-term preservation of the College's heritage collections and their associated information.

This policy informs the *BOA Museum Forward Plan* and *BOA Museum Documentation Procedural Manual* and should be read in conjunction with those.

2. Statement of scope and purpose

The aim of this policy is to:

- Outline documentation measures that will maximise access to the museum collections, and the information inherent in or associated with them, for present and future users.
- Ensure that a range of necessary and appropriate documentation measures are identified and resourced, in line with the *BOA Museum Forward Plan*.
- This policy does not cover material held as part of the College Library, some of which does however, come under the day-to-day management of the Museum Curator.

3. Key principles

In accordance with the guidance on the *Accreditation Standard* (November 2018) the museum is committed to:

- Ensuring accountability for its collections.
- Maintaining at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and processes (as defined by the Spectrum 5.0 Standard).
- Extending access to its collection information to its community of users.
- Ensuring the physical security and long-term preservation of the collections documentation records, whether paper or digital, including back-up and secure storage.

4. Ensuring accountability for the collections

- The College is committed to enhancing its collections knowledge base, storing this information and making it as widely available as possible for use in engagement, learning and research.

- The Museum will ensure that it gathers and records sufficient information about the objects in its care so that each object for which it is legally responsible (including loans) can be (uniquely) identified and located.
- The Museum will record as much significant information about newly-arrived objects as it can, to be added to in the future.
- The museum undertakes to maintain a complete inventory record of the collection and to catalogue all new acquisitions within twelve months. It will denote any as-yet unprocessed material falling outside of this time period as constituting a 'backlog'.
- Information as to method of acquisition and donor, or purchase details, will be retained as part of the documentary record, accessible via an object's unique number. The reasons for an object's entry into the museum will be recorded as will, where relevant, the College's legal title to the object. Where agreed at the point of donation, the donor's name may be included in interpretative material.
- Information as to conservation or remedial restoration treatments applied to any object will also be retained as part of the documentary record, with the date an object was treated, and by whom, being recorded.
- Information on an object's current and permanent location will always be kept up to date within MIMSY XG, with the date an object was moved, and by whom, being recorded.
- Information on an object's use after it has entered the museum collection (for example as part of a display, temporary exhibition, loan or if featured in press coverage, broadcast or an academic work) will be recorded. More detailed information relating to loans will sometimes be retained for its historic interest, but in every case for not less than five years following the completion of the loan.
- The accuracy of documentation will be verified by regular collections audits, conducted on a random sampling basis. The priority for the policy period 2019-24 will be on auditing the two-dimensional material (paintings, prints and drawings, plus reproduction images).

5. Maintaining at least minimum standards in documentation procedures and processes (as defined by the Spectrum 5.0 Standard)

- The museum will operate its documentation procedures and processes in accordance with a *BOA Museum Documentation Procedural Manual*. This is important to ensure consistency of approach and will serve as a valuable tool in succession planning.
- The *BOA Museum Documentation Procedural Manual* will be shaped by the SPECTRUM 5.0 collections management standard.
- If, and when, a documentation backlog occurs, the museum will tackle it in accordance with an appropriately scheduled and resourced *Museum Documentation Plan*.
- The museum will record information about the collection within a specialist SPECTRUM-compliant collections management system (currently MIMSY XG). This will be the main documentation system, subject to nightly and weekly back-up, but additional information may be retained in manual systems, card indexes, photographs, information files etc.
- The exact nature of the collections management system will be subject to regular review to guard against obsolescence. Collections management software will be upgraded regularly in consultation with the supplier, Axiell. Key data may be off-printed for example the *Acquisitions Register*, updates to which will be printed and bound bi-annually.
- The Museum Curator will be responsible for maintaining and adding to the documentation record, but certain documentary tasks may be performed by approved volunteers or specialist contractors (for example, Axiell, suppliers of MIMSY XG).

6. Extending access to collections information to its community of users

- The collection will be searchable via the College website and museum staff will conduct searches on the manual or digitised data in response to public enquiries, within the confines of copyright, intellectual property rights and data protection legislation. The public (online) version of the database will be searchable only across pre-approved fields. Its existence will be publicised by a variety of other means including the Museum Publicity leaflet and notices placed within the museum displays.
- Access to the information files themselves will be granted to *bona fide* researchers where appropriate on prior application, likewise within the confines of data protection legislation.
- The collection will be interpreted online via curated content in the 'virtual galleries' on the museum section of the College website. Content placed thereon will draw the attention of users to the various documentation sources that exist and how they may be accessed for research.
- Images and text within and associated with the collections remain the copyright and intellectual property of the College unless otherwise stated. Copies and reproduction rights may be supplied upon application, for which a fee may be levied.
- Letters and emails containing enquiries about items in the collection will be retained, together with copies of responses, to facilitate the easier answering of similar and/or related enquiries at a future date.
- A Visitor Book will be maintained and full volumes retained as part of the collection.

7. Ensuring the physical security and long-term preservation of the collections documentation records, whether paper or digital, including back-up and secure storage

- Specific information on the current and permanent location of any object will be retained as part of the documentation record.
- The museum will use the documentation it holds on its collections to identify security risks.
- Where relevant, the collections management system will hold information on the security measures applied to a particular object or group of objects, for example concealed inscriptions, microdotting and soluble DNA.
- The College will insure its museum collection and the Museum will keep records of insurance values, which may currently comprise a mixture of figures calculated at collection or object-level. The latter type will be added to object records within MIMSY XG.
- The Museum will carry out periodic re-valuations of parts of the collection, acting on the advice of its insurance brokers.
- The museum will apply appropriate security measures to protect the integrity and condition of the documentation itself, viewing this as of equal importance to protecting the objects with which that documentation is associated.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed by 17 July 2024.

This policy will be published online as part of the museum website.

Submitted for approval by the Board of Trustees on
17 July 2019

I confirm that the above plan was so approved

Dr Mary-Ann Sherratt
Chair of the Board of Trustees