

Collections Management Glossary

Accession: (1) An object acquired by a museum as part of its permanent collection; (2) the act of recording/processing an addition to the permanent collection; (3) one or more objects acquired at one time from one source constituting a single transaction between the museum and a source, or the transaction itself.

Accession Number: A control number, unique to an object, whose purpose is identification, not description.

Acid-free: A term loosely used for papers and other materials that are often pH neutral or alkaline buffered; could be any pH from 6 to 11.

Archives: (1) The non-current records of an organization or institution preserved because of their continuing value; (2) the agency responsible for selecting, preserving, and making available records determined to have permanent or continuing value; (3) building in which an archival institution is located.

Case: Strong, closed, waterproof box constructed from a variety of hard materials. Used to protect museum objects during periods of movement or in storage.

Climate control: The ability to adjust and regulate the temperature and relative humidity of a particular environment.

Condition: (1) the physical state of an object; (2) a contract provision or stipulation.

Conservation: Maximizing the endurance or minimizing the deterioration of an object through time, with as little change to the object as possible.

Conservator: Trained professional who treats objects to repair damage, maximize endurance, and minimize deterioration.

Deaccession: (1) an object that has been removed permanently from the museum collection; (2) formal removal of accessioned objects from the museum's permanent collection. Objects removed from the unaccessioned collections of the museum are not considered deaccessions, but need to go through a formal removal process.

Incoming loan: An object borrowed by an institution. It is an incoming loan from the perspective of the borrowing institution; such a loan could be an **outgoing loan** to the lending institution.

Integrated Pest Management: The selection, integration, and implementation of pest management methods based on predicted economic, ecological, and sociological consequences. A decision making process that helps one decide if a treatment is necessary and appropriate, where the treatment should be administered, when treatment should be applied, and what strategies should be integrated for immediate and long-term results.

Museum mounts: a support used to protect an artifact while on exhibit or in storage. (i.e.: hat stand, picture frame, etc...)



Outgoing loan: An object loaned by a museum to another institution. It is an outgoing loan from the perspective of the lending institution; such a loan would be an **incoming loan** to the borrowing institution.

Provenance: For works of art and historical objects, the background and history of ownership. The more common term for anthropological collections is “provenience” which defines an object in terms of the specific geographic location of origin. In scientific collections, the term “locality,” meaning specific geographic point of origin, is more acceptable.

Temperature: A degree of hotness or coldness.

Transportation: The act of shipping, conveying, carrying, or transporting by any means whatsoever and delivering or receiving for such shipment, conveyance, carriage, or transportation.

Ultraviolet filter: A filter that can be placed over windows, skylights, and fluorescent light tubes, between the light source and museum object, to remove or reduce harmful ultraviolet rays in the light.

Ultraviolet radiation: Radiation of wavelengths shorter than 400nm, found in light from the sun, sky, and most artificial light sources; it is invisible and has a strongly damaging effect on collections.

Source: Buck, Rebecca A., and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *The New Museum Registration Methods*. Washington: American Association of Museums, 1998. Print.