The UK Museum Collections Management Standard

Cataloguing procedure

SPECTRUM 4.0
Cataloguing procedure

**Definition**

The compilation and maintenance of key information, formally identifying and describing objects. It may include information concerning the provenance of objects and also collections management documentation e.g. details of acquisition, conservation, exhibition and loan history, and location history. It need not bring together in one location everything known about an object, but should provide cross-references to any other relevant information source known to the organisation.

**Minimum Standard**

The organisation must have a policy covering the cataloguing of objects. Refer to **Policies and Legal Context** chapter for general guidance on collections management policies. See also *Cataloguing: SPECTRUM Advice* for guidance about cataloguing policy decisions.

Cataloguing information must:

- Provide a level of description sufficient to identify an object or group of objects and its differences from other, similar objects;
- Provide an historic archive relating to an object or cross-references to sources where information can be found;
- Be held in a system that allows convenient access, e.g. using indexes or free-text retrieval.

**Cataloguing is a SPECTRUM Primary Procedure.** This means that in order to meet the documentation requirements for the Museum Accreditation Scheme an organisation must reach the SPECTRUM Minimum Standard for this procedure.
Create a record for each object or group of objects. Make sure these records are accessible by object number.

**Catalogue entry must include:**
- Object number
- Object name
- Number of items or parts
- Brief physical description
- Acquisition method, date and source
- Location information
- Reference to images

Depending on the information available, catalogue should also include:
- Curatorial responsibility
- Information about creation of the record (date, info., source)
- Identification information
- Object description info.
- Field collection information
- Content and subject information
- Product information
- Other historical information
- References to published bibliographic information
- References to collections management information

Collections Management system

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**Linked Procedures**
- Object identification
- Acquisition
- Object location
- Reference
- Date
- Organisation
- People
- Person
- Location
- Address

**Information**
- Object identification
- Object description
- Object production
- Object history and association
- Owners contribution
- Viewers contribution
- Reference
- Date
- Organisation
- People
- Person
- Place
- Amendment history
Further detailed guidance on the Cataloguing procedure can be found in the *Cataloguing: SPECTRUM Advice* available on Collections Link.
Details of the Units of Information required in this procedure can be found in SPECTRUM 4.0 Appendix 1, *Information Requirements* available on Collections Link.