

Spectrum



The UK Museum Collections Management Standard

Retrospective documentation procedure

SPECTRUM 4.0

Collections
Trust

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Retrospective documentation procedure

Definition

The improvement of the standard of information about objects and collections to meet SPECTRUM Minimum Standards by the documentation of new information for existing objects and collections.

Minimum Standard





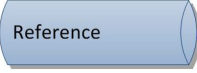
The organisation must have a policy on retrospective documentation. Refer to ***Policies and Legal Context*** chapter for general guidance on collections management policies. See also *Retrospective Documentation: SPECTRUM Advice* for guidance about Retrospective documentation policy decisions.

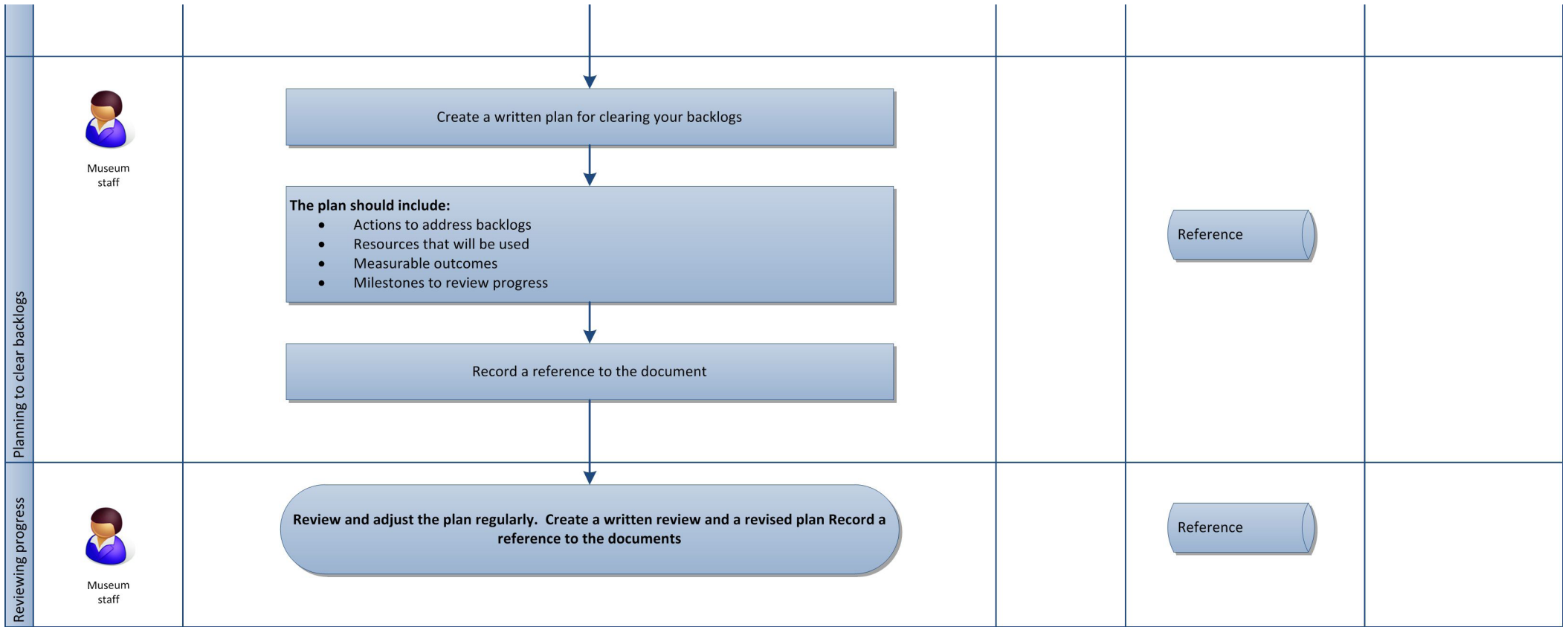
The procedure for retrospective documentation must:

- Define the purposes of the organisation's documentation system. The primary purpose should be to establish accountability and access;
- Define the organisation's understanding of the backlogs it has;
- Work towards reducing its backlog;
- Review progress on reducing the backlog on a regular basis;
- Work towards an overall improvement in the quality of information held about objects and collections;
- Review progress on the overall improvement in the quality of information on a regular basis.

Retrospective Documentation 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.

Retrospective documentation

	People	Process	Linked Procedures	Information	System
Define organisation's purpose and policy	 <p>Museum staff</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Define the purpose of your museum's documentation system and create a documentation or information policy (or review your existing policy) </p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p> When defining the purpose/creating the policy you will need to consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who the clients/users of the documentation system are • Who operates the systems • What the organisation is aiming to achieve • The organisation's mission statement • The needs of the governing body • The legal restraints, Accreditation scheme requirements, and funders requirements </p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>			
Define organisation's backlogs	 <p>Museum staff</p>	<p> Research and define your backlogs. These might include the following types of backlog: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural – incomplete procedures • Core information – basic inventory of all objects • Accessioning – backlog of unaccessioned material • Cataloguing – You may have a definition of a minimum catalogue entry defined in your policy • Museum Accreditation – Check the requirements of the Accreditation scheme • Cultural diversity – you may wish to apply the Revisiting Collections methodology to part of your collections documentation system. </p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Create a written definition of the types of backlogs in your museum Record a reference to the document </p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>			



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.