



CCAHA specializes in the treatment of art and historic artifacts on paper and provides preservation education, training, and consultation. Established in 1977, CCAHA is the largest nonprofit conservation lab in the country.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PLANS

An institution's collections care and business practices are defined by its written policies, procedures, and plans. Institutional memory is often lost through staff changes, but best practices are encoded in these important documents.

Having these written documents in place is essential for collecting cultural institutions, for the following reasons:

- Written policies **establish standards** for collections stewardship and define institutional principles. These documents form the **foundation of all collections management and stewardship activities**.
- Written policies aid institutions in making **systematic and ethical decisions** for matters involving their collections.
- Many policies provide a **legal framework** for collections management and care activities.
- Written procedures **guide staff in collections care activities and protocols**, and enable tasks to be undertaken **consistently and efficiently**.
- Policies, procedures, and plans **delegate responsibilities** to staff, board, and other representatives of an institution, giving them the **authority to perform their necessary duties**.
- Some policies and plans are publically available documents, which assist with **explaining facets of the institution's purpose and activities to users, visitors, potential donors, and other stakeholders**.

<i>What's the difference?</i>	
Plan	An agenda that lays out the course of events that an institution hopes to or will accomplish, usually over a given period of time. May include targets or goals, or may just be an intended schedule.
Policy	Clearly establishes the principles and standards that regulate an institution's activities. Identifies what needs to be done and provides a framework to help staff make decisions. Policy statements must be approved by the governing authority. ¹
Procedure	Provide the mechanism and details for implementing a policy. A series of specific instructions. Does not have to be approved by the governing authority. ²

For definitions of some of the plans, policies, and procedures that are among the most important for collecting cultural institutions to implement, see the following pages.

¹ Simmons, John E. *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2006.

² Ibid.

POLICY, PROCEDURE, OR PLAN	DEFINITION
Access Policy	Stipulates who is allowed to visit and use an institution's information and/or collections, and under what terms.
Acquisition Policy	States the type of materials an institution will accept, outlines the means by which an institution obtains custody, right, or title, and identifies any conditions or terms related to the above. While this policy does identify the general scope of an institution's collections, it is not as detailed in this area as a Collections Development Policy.

What's the difference?

Accession	<p><i>Noun</i> – Materials obtained by an institution, with full physical and legal ownership transferred to the institution.</p> <p><i>Verb</i> – The process of physically accepting, legally documenting, and recording in writing the transfer of materials and their titles into some log of an institution's holdings, such as a database or catalog.</p>
Acquisition	<p><i>Noun</i> – Materials obtained by an institution, with or without transfer of ownership.</p> <p><i>Verb</i> – The process of accepting such materials.</p>
While an object may be considered an " <i>acquisition</i> " if it comes to an institution as a potential gift/purchase that may later be returned, or even if it stays at an institution but is never formally considered part of the permanent collection, " <i>accession</i> " suggests the legal transfer of title.	

POLICY, PROCEDURE, OR PLAN	DEFINITION
Collections Development Policy	A conceptual framework that states an institution's collecting focus, including how collections will support an institution's mission, core areas in which a strong collection already exists and an institution will continue to collect, and gaps – mission-driven areas that are underrepresented in the current holdings. Scopes are defined, including geographical range, date range, subject matter, and formats accepted and represented. May identify areas in which institutions do not wish to collect more and/or build collections. If relevant, describes cooperative relationships that may exist with other collecting institutions.
Collections Management Policy	<p>A consolidated series of policies that address activities related to the administration of collections. These policies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Purpose and Collecting Goals • Acquisition and Accession • Deaccession and Disposal • Incoming and Outgoing Loans • Documentation and Record Keeping • Collections Care • Access and Use • Risk Management • Intellectual Property • Ethics

POLICY, PROCEDURE, OR PLAN	DEFINITION
Deaccession Policy	<p>Outlines the process by which an institution permanently removes previously accessioned materials from its permanent collection. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential reasons for deaccession • The means by which material may be removed (such as transferred to a different type of collection within the same institution, offered to another institution, sold, or destroyed) • Mechanisms for removing the material intellectually from a collection • Ethical and legal considerations • Directions for the use of proceeds that may be generated

What's the difference?

Deaccession Physical and intellectual removal of material that has previously been accessioned from a collection.

Disposal Physical removal of material from a collection.

In order for material to be *deaccessioned*, it must have been *accessioned* in the first place. Removing materials that were never fully accessioned does not always require pursuit of the full deaccession process.

POLICY, PROCEDURE, OR PLAN	DEFINITION
Digitization and/or Reformatting Policy	<p>Delineates an institution's priorities and selection criteria for choosing which material to digitize/reformat, explores the digital asset management plan once electronic surrogates have been created and must be stored, and may explain basic procedural information such as care and handling while digitizing. This policy should also include at least a statement regarding intellectual property of items that are digitized and their surrogates that are created.</p>
Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan	<p>A plan for institutions to use in the event of an emergency or disaster to ensure safety, coordinated response, and open communication. While the health and safety of individuals will always be of utmost importance, this plan should also identify how collections will be dealt with in such an event. The plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities and chain of command • Contact information for individuals involved with the operations of an institution (such as staff, volunteers, board members, etc.), responders at other institutions, contractors, and vendors • Salvage priorities and locations for collections • Floor plans of the building(s) including important locations such as fire extinguishers, emergency shut-offs, emergency supply kits, etc. • Evacuation plans • Health and safety issues to address • Procedures for collections assessment and salvage • Funding recovery efforts (including insurance information) • Plans for business continuity and restoring normal operations • Any other information valid and necessary for responding to an emergency or disaster.

POLICY, PROCEDURE, OR PLAN	DEFINITION
Exhibition Policy	<p>Outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities and responsibilities for planning exhibitions and executing their installation • Timelines and rotation schedules • Environmental specifications (including levels of light, temperature, and relative humidity) • Specifications for exhibition cases, support, and mount materials • Security issues for materials that will be on public display in an institution.
Handling Guidelines	<p>Provides individuals who will physically use collections material with tips for the safe care of these objects while they are being used for research, shelved, cleaned, reproduced, moved, or touched for any other reason. May delineate different guidelines and stipulations based on different categories of materials, e.g. rare books vs. circulating books. Often developed in conjunction with, or as part of, an institution's <i>Access Policy</i>.</p>
Housekeeping Guidelines	<p>Should contain both plans and procedures related to the organization and cleaning of an institution's building and collections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Housekeeping plans</i> outline schedules for frequency of cleaning, responsibilities and authorities for handling, identification of what areas and materials will be cleaned, etc. • <i>Housekeeping procedures</i> state the actions that should be taken while performing cleaning, with guidelines separated by format/type of material (e.g. collections vs. non-historic furnishings in office spaces).
Integrated Pest Management Policy	<p>Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a means of dealing with living pests, such as insects and rodents, using non-chemical methods. IPM focuses on preventing future pest infestations as well as managing infestations that may already be present through means such as controlling the climate, food sources, and building entry points. This policy sets a schedule of monitoring, housekeeping, and identification of pests that may be found.</p>
Intellectual Property Policy	<p>Outlines an institution's principles and responsibilities regarding the rights governing use and ownership of creative works (including copyright, trademarks, patents, publicity rights, and performance rights). Includes acceptable uses for the content of collections, as well as mechanisms by which users must request various permissions.</p>
Maintenance Plan	<p>A written schedule outlining building inspection and preventive maintenance activities that should occur on a routine basis. Inspections and activities can be annual, more frequent (seasonal or cyclical), or less frequent (in the case of major projects like replacing a building's roof or painting a building's exterior).</p>

POLICY, PROCEDURE, OR PLAN	DEFINITION
Mission Statement	Communicates an organization's identity by defining its purpose, role, responsibility, and goals. Usually a brief sentence or few in length. As differentiated from a <i>Vision Statement</i> , which is more future-oriented and idealistic in focus.
Preservation Plan	A guiding document that provides timelines and decisions regarding staffing, collections management activities, environmental conditions, security and emergency preparedness, exhibition planning, and conservation treatment for the collections. Assigns responsibilities and determines measurable outcomes for collections care. Distinguished from a more broadly-defined <i>Strategic Plan</i> in that it focuses primarily on collections.
Processing/Cataloging Procedures	Instructions for completing an institution's chosen method(s) of gaining intellectual control over its collections. Provides information on not only recognized standards within a field, but procedures an institution has developed in-house to ensure consistency and completeness as different staff members, volunteers, student workers, and/or interns work on projects. Outlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of description collections or items within collections will be given (from collection-level inventories to item-level cataloging) • Type of description and documentation method employed • Actions that will be taken with materials throughout the process (e.g. placing documents in acid free folders, scanning as part of the process, removing staples, etc.)
Strategic Plan	A guiding document, institution-wide or division-wide in focus. Sets goals, provides timelines for completion, assigns responsibilities, and determines measurable outcomes. May be related to all aspects of an institution's functions, not just collections care. Often based on the relatively short, foreseeable future, such as a five-year plan.
Vision Statement	Defines what an organization hopes to be and become, stating the ideal and reflecting its priorities. As differentiated from a <i>Mission Statement</i> , which is more present-minded and definably goal-oriented in focus.

SOURCES

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