

MUSEUM – CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

Approved by Collection Committee on 30 April 2019
Due for revision in May 2024

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Document history and review: Care and Conservation Policy

Name of museum: Royal College of Music Museum

Name of governing body: The Council of the Royal College of Music, delegated to the Collections Committee

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 30 April 2019

Policy review procedure: The collections development policy will be published and reviewed regularly and at least once every five years. It will be published on the Museum website (www.rcm.ac.uk/museum).

Date at which this policy is due for review: Collections Committee, May 2024

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

This document follows Accreditation Standard developed by Arts Council England in 2011.

1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

The Royal College of Music Museum manages, preserves, interprets and displays a Designated collection of musical instruments, paintings, sculptures, early prints and drawings, photographs and memorabilia relating to music.

The museum supports formal and informal learning through heritage, promoting onsite and online access to the RCM's collections for the RCM's student and professorial body, as well as reaching new and wider audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

Through partnership and collaboration, the Museum undertakes, promotes and supports research and knowledge exchange on the collections and in the field of music and material culture.

In accordance with the Museums Association Code of Ethics, section 6, the Royal College of Music Museum commits to:

1.1 Publish, implement and regularly review a forward-looking collections policy approved by the governing body, which specifies standards of care.

1.2 Protect all items from loss, damage and physical deterioration, wherever they are.

1.3 Pay due regard to safeguarding collections and the public's right of access whenever museum premises are used for functions.

1.4 Make provision for safeguarding collections whenever buildings housing them are closed or isolated, whether this is planned or unexpected.

2. Conservation staff

The RCM employs a specialist Conservator for conservation of its musical instruments and advise on other areas of the collections. External conservators and specialists are consulted and appointed as required.

3. Guiding principles

The Care and Conservation Policy is based on a combination of preventive conservation (measures to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects) and remedial conservation (measures which involve treatments to stabilise or improve the condition of an artefact).

3.1 The Care and Conservation Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Museum's other policies, plans and emergency procedures.

3.2 The Care and Conservation Policy will be reviewed by the Collections Committee regularly and at least once every five years.

3.3 A Conservation Management Plan accompanies this policy.

4. Aims of the Care and Conservation Policy

The aims of the RCM Museum Care and Conservation Policy are that for every artefact in its collection (whether in store, on display or on loan to or from another institution or individual) the museum will:

4.1 Take steps to slow down deterioration and prevent damage to artefacts.

4.2 Provide systems and equipment that monitor the environment, the artefacts and the buildings in which they are stored.

- 4.3 Control and improve the environment and the buildings in which they are stored.
- 4.4 Regularly seek professional advice from the Museum Conservator or other appropriate specialists.
- 4.5 Ensure that all members of staff working with the museum collection are aware of and follow all policies and procedures.

5. Collections Conditions Overview

The Curator and Conservator survey and visually inspect the conditions of the collections on display to identify areas for improvement in line with best practice as defined by Benchmarks in Collections Care and BS5454/PD5454 'Recommendations for storage and exhibition of archival documents' and CIMCIM's recommendations for the conservation of musical instruments

(http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/cimcim/pdf/Publication_No._1__1993__Recommendations_for_the_conservation_of_musical_instruments_in_collections.pdf).

6. Preventive conservation

The RCM Museum will provide suitable conditions in which collections may be kept for their long-term preservation. This will be monitored daily by collections staff and the RCM Maintenance team. This includes environmental control and basic housekeeping.

7. Handling, movement and transportation of artefacts

All museum staff are trained in basic object handling procedures. Procedures relating to the packing and transport of objects are outlined in the RCM Conservation Management Plan and Loans Procedures documents (Section 4).

8. Emergency planning

The Museum's Emergency Plan and the wider RCM Incident Management and Recovery Plan are reviewed every year.

9. Remedial conservation

The Museum Conservator, or their delegate, undertake the basic cleaning, maintenance and minor conservation treatment of artefacts. The Museum can rely on external conservators for more advanced treatment or advice.

10. Playing

Maintenance and tuning of playable instruments is undertaken regularly by the Museum Conservator under the supervision of the Curator.