Archives Information Policy

REVISION	REVISION DATE	OWNER	REFERENCE	COMMENT
00	July 2017	Archives & Records Manager	ARC-POL-004	New policy

Archives Information Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles used by the Royal Armouries Archive Service in the documentation and cataloguing of tis collections. It reflects the common processes shared with other types of cultural collections, as well as the specific requirements of archives management.

2. Relationships with other policies

This policy supplements the:

- Information and Records Management Policy, which deals with the retention and disposal of the Royal Armouries current and semi-current records, and the Archives Development Policy, which deals with the acquisition, disposal and deaccessioning of records,
- Collections Information Policy, which deals with the documentation and cataloguing of the objects in the Royal Armouries collection.

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure that activities associated with the management of the archives are recorded according to the best practice,
- to provide guidance on how to arrange and catalogue the archives in order to maximize their value as an information and research resource using appropriate tools and adhering to international standards.

4. Documentation and Cataloguing Standards

The following standards will apply to documenting and cataloguing the archives:

- SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard,
- ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description (International Council on Archives),
- Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names (National Council on Archives),
- ISAAR(CPF) (International Council on Archives),
- ISDF (International Council on Archives).

5. Collections Information

The Museum uses SPECTRUM, the UK Museum Collections Management Standard, in order to ensure a consistent approach to documenting its collections management activities. The Archives will meet the minimum standards of collections information for the following primary procedures:

- object entry
- acquisition **
- loans in
- loans out
- location and movement control
- cataloguing **
- object exit
- retrospective documentation **

The Archives will also aim to meet the minimum standards for the following additional procedures established in SPECTRUM: the UK Museum Collections Management Standard:

- inventory control
- insurance and indemnity management
- valuation control
- audit
- loss and damage **
- de-accession and disposal **
- object condition checking and technical assessment **
- Conservation and collections care **

** For additional information on the following see below.

6. Accessions

The acquisition of archives by purchase, loan, gift or bequest, exchange or transfer will be recorded in the Archives Accession Register.

7. Acquisition

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In addition to information recorded in the Provenance tab in the Archives Module of the EMu Collections Management System, a summary of the information relating to the acquisition of archives should be recorded in the Immediate Source field of the ISAD(G) Identity tab and the Appraisal Information field of the ISAD(G) Content tab.

8. Cataloguing

Archives should be catalogued in the Archives Module of the EMu Collections Management System. The main tabs used for archives catalogue records are:

- ISAD(G) Identity tab
- ISAD(G) Content tab
- ISAD(G) Allied Materials tab

In addition archival hierarchies should be expressed using the:

- Related Objects tab
- Parts tab [read only]

The following fields are mandatory and must be completed if the information is present for a summary record:

- Reference code
- Title
- Name of Creator
- Dates of Creation
- Extent of the Unit of Description
- Level of description
- Conditions Governing Access
- Language of Material

9. Loss and Damage, Condition

In addition to information recorded in the Condition tab in the Archives Module of the EMu Collections Management System, a summary of the information relating to any condition, loss and damage to archives should be recorded in the Physical/Technical Description field and the Access Conditions field (if appropriate) of the ISAD(G) Content tab.

10. De-accession and disposal

In addition to information recorded in the Inventory Check tab in the Archives Module of the EMu Collections Management System, a summary of the information relating to the de-accessioning or disposal of archives should be recorded in the Appraisal Information field of the ISAD(G) Content tab.

11. Conservation and Collections Care

Details of any conservation work carried out and any recommendations on collections care should be recorded in the Conservation module, and a summary of any relevant information included in the Physical/Technical Description field and the Access Conditions field (if appropriate) of the ISAD(G) Content tab.

12. Multi-Media

Where appropriate the Multi-Media module and the associated Multi-Media tab in the Archives Module in the EMu Collections Management System will be used to relate any digital records (born digital and digitised) associated with archives.

13. Retrospective Cataloguing Programme

The Museum is committed to identifying and addressing any backlogs in cataloguing. The Archives Information Review (updated 2016) identified for (1) Royal Armouries records, (2) MOD records, and (3) other collections:

- whether the collection/series is catalogued on EMu Collections Management System,
- what percentage of the collection/series is catalogued on EMu, and
- what level the collection/series is catalogued to.

The review also identified:

- where excel spreadsheets exist for (1) Royal Armouries records
- where excel spreadsheets, handlists, indexes or other finding aids exist for (2) MOD records, and
- where images, surrogates or transcriptions exist for (3) other collections.

The accompanying Action Plan sets priorities for the retrospective cataloguing programme over the period 2015-17, and recommends that the strategy should be:

- to complete (as a minimum) collection/series level descriptions for all archival collections,
- to continue to update the records of collections relating to First World War Archives,
- to prioritise the cataloguing of those collections identified as having the highest relevance, informational value and use/potential use,
- to make full use of any existing Excel spreadsheets, hand lists or other finding aids relating to important archival collections to speed up the cataloguing process, and
- to add value to the catalogue records by linking them to any multi-media, surrogates and transcriptions.

14. Retrospective Accessioning Programme

The Museum will take advantage of the development of the Archives catalogue in the EMu Collections Management System:

- to undertake the retrospective accessioning of archives acquired by purchase, loan, gift or bequest, exchange or transfer;
- to complete any periods of missing depositor details or gaps in accessions information; and
- to identify any issues in the ownership of archives, and/or their associated intellectual property rights.

15.   Review

This document will be reviewed annually and updates in corporate policy and plan, legislation and international conventions, documentation and cataloguing standards will be amended or added where relevant.

This document will be reviewed by the Archives and Records Manager and approved by the Head of Collections and the Director-General and Master of the Armouries.

16.   Risk Management

The associated risk of non-compliance with this policy is:

Impact of non-compliance: High

Likelihood of non-compliance: High

17. Effective date

This policy is effective from the date of signing.

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Director General & Master of the Armouries

Date………………………