

Cultural Asset Management Procedure

Section 1 - Context

- (1) This procedure details the requirements for acquisition and management of RMIT cultural collection assets.
- (2) The procedure ensures that RMIT cultural collections are promoted, shared and made accessible in a culturally responsible way, and are only acquired when they:
- a. are significant to the development and enhancement of teaching and research
 - b. have an important connection to RMIT University or its antecedent institutions
 - c. are consistent with important domains of human knowledge, culture and endeavour
 - d. are in keeping with RMIT's commitment to Responsible Practice and respecting the responsibilities inherent in holding cultural collections on Kulin country, and in keeping with the principles of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

Section 2 - Authority

- (3) Authority for this document is established by the [Property Management Policy](#).

Section 3 - Scope

- (4) This procedure applies to cultural collection assets acquired and managed by RMIT University including, but not limited to, the RMIT University Art Collection, RMIT Australian Screen Research Collection and the RMIT Design Archives.

Section 4 - Procedure

Establishing a Cultural Collection or Archive

- (5) Cultural collections and archives may only be established following:
- a. a proposal to the RMIT Culture Advisory Panel and
 - b. formal approval by the Head, Cultural and Public Engagement.
- (6) Proposals must:
- a. express long-term commitment to collection management and sustainability
 - b. describe how the collection or archive will enhance RMIT's expressed goals
 - c. confirm that no other appropriate or duplicate collection or archive exists within the University for the same purpose.

Acquiring Items for a Cultural Collection or Archive

(7) An advisory panel will be established for each collection by the Head, Cultural and Public Engagement to oversee collection acquisition and development.

(8) All items of collectable or intrinsic significance which are permanently acquired by RMIT must have clear legal title. On acquisition, the title will pass to RMIT, and not to any person, department or school. If clear title cannot be provided, the proposed acquisition must not proceed.

(9) Collections and archives may loan items. The conditions of any loan must be clearly and contractually specified, and must:

- a. include the proposed term of the loan, and
- b. define the responsibilities for conservation, security and insurance.

(10) Permanent or long-term loans will not be accepted.

(11) RMIT recognises the moral rights of the creators of IP in accordance with relevant copyright law and the Intellectual Property Policy, including considerations of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

Managing a Cultural Collection or Archive

(12) Each collection and archive will operate in accordance with written Collection Guidelines.

(13) Guidelines must:

- a. outline the purpose of the collection or archive
- b. detail the proposed manner of acquisition
- c. detail the management and disposal of items
- d. detail relevant cultural considerations associated with a collection or archive
- e. be made accessible to the University community.

(14) Guidelines for the management of specific collections may only be created with the permission of the Head, Cultural and Public Engagement.

(15) All items acquired by RMIT must be placed within the appropriate collection or archive for ongoing management.

(16) Each item will be catalogued and stored and/or displayed in an appropriate manner to ensure access, security and ongoing preservation.

(17) The deaccessioning and disposal of an item or group of items from a recognised collection or archive must comply with the Collection Guidelines and be approved by the relevant collection advisory panel.

(18) The de-accessioning and/or disposal of any significant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural materials or artwork in instances where no artist intent has been recorded must be undertaken with consideration of and in consultation with appropriate community members and/or Traditional Owners of said item(s). In these instances, said parties will be given the opportunity to acquire the item(s), particularly those with identified historical, social and religious significance.

(19) Deaccessioning of the entire holdings of a recognised collection or archive may only occur following formal endorsement of a proposal by the relevant Collection Advisory Panel, with final approval by the Vice-Chancellor.

(20) Funds realised from the deaccessioning and disposal of an item will be used solely for the benefit of the collection

or archive from which the item was deaccessioned.

Managing Cultural Gifts and Donations

(21) Gifts to a collection or archive will be encouraged, provided such gifts fall within the its specific Collection Guidelines. RMIT has the right to accept or refuse such offers of gifts.

(22) Gifts will only be accepted where the donor has legal title to the work and the gift is transferred from the donor to RMIT without conditions.

(23) RMIT supports the use of the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Programme to facilitate donations.

Ethics

(24) RMIT University, employees, contractors, students and volunteers responsible for cultural collection assets will be guided by the RMIT Code of Conduct and the codes of ethics published by relevant peak bodies.

Review and Reporting

(25) The Manager, Cultural Collections, will review each Collection Guideline at least every five years to ensure its relevance to the University’s expressed goals, in accordance with the RMIT [Policy Governance Policy](#).

(26) Collection Advisory Panels will report annually to the Head, Cultural and Public Engagement as part of the annual review cycle.

Section 5 - Resources

(27) Refer to the following documents which are established in accordance with this Procedure:

- a. [Cultural Collection Asset Guideline: RMIT University Art Collection](#)
- b. [Cultural Collection Asset Guideline: RMIT Design Archives](#)
- c. [Cultural Collection Asset Guideline: RMIT Australian Screen Research Collection](#)

Section 6 - Definitions

Acquisition	Taking legal possession and ownership of an item or group of items through purchase, bequest, donation, commission, transfer, creation, exchange, or collection.
Collection (or archive)	A coherent group of items that have historic, aesthetic, scientific, research or social significance to the University or its teaching program, where ownership is clearly vested in the University and where approval for continuance has been granted by the University.
Cultural collection asset	Something that has value because of its contribution to the creativity, knowledge, traditions, culture, meaning and vitality of a community or the University.
Cultural gift	A cultural gift has the following characteristics: there is a transfer of property to RMIT for its own benefit or of its students; it is made voluntarily it does not provide a “material benefit” to the donor it is motivated by philanthropic intent, and generosity, on the part of the donor it is not monetary of nature (these are managed under the Philanthropy and Fundraising Policy)
Cultural Gifts Program	The Australian Government’s program of tax incentives for culturally significant gifts to Australia’s public collections (formerly known as “Taxation Incentives for the Arts Scheme”). Eligibility is restricted to institutions registered as DGRs.

Cultural responsibility	A person may be considered 'culturally responsible' when they translate the knowledge, skills and awareness of cultural differences and similarities within, among and between groups into their personal and professional life, thinking, and practice in a consistent and meaningful way so that all groups are treated with respect.
Deaccession	The official removal of an item from a library, museum, or art gallery collection.
Disposal	The physical removal of an item from a collection, after it has been formally deaccessioned following specified steps as defined in the relevant Collection Guidelines.
Loan	The temporary physical transfer of an item for a specified period, from one institution to another, between units within the University, or from individuals to the University, where there is no transfer of ownership.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	13th January 2025
Review Date	20th October 2025
Approval Authority	Manager, Central Policy
Approval Date	13th January 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Saskia Loer Hansen Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President - International and Engagement
Policy Author	Amy Harrington Director, Philanthropy and Public Engagement
Enquiries Contact	Cultural Collections