

University Collections Policy

Section 1 - Overview & Scope

(1) The collections of the University of New England enrich our University environment and form an inseparable part of the teaching, learning, research and outreach at UNE.

(2) This Policy and the overarching Rules apply to all collection activities of the University of New England, including collections of an object, group of objects, digital material or entire holdings of a museum or collection at the University.

(3) Within this Policy:

- a. Part A deals with establishing new and reviewing existing collections;
- b. Part B focuses on the standards and expectations for ongoing management of University Collections;
- c. Part C focuses on the promotion and use of University Collections; and
- d. Part D outlines the approach to compliance for University Collections and summarises key roles, responsibilities and authorities.

Part A - Establishing and Reviewing a University Collection

Establishment of a new University Collection

(4) Approval of a collection is required as each collection represents a commitment by the University to resource, care for and manage the collection in compliance with relevant regulations and standards.

(5) To establish a new University Collection, a University Representative should seek endorsement from the proposed Custodian and advice from the University Collections Committee prior to seeking approval from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer.

(6) The process to establish a new University Collection involves (refer also Table 1):

- a. preparation of a proposal regarding a new Collection;
- b. assessment of a proposal by the Custodian and, if supported, by the University Collections Committee and Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer or delegate; and
- c. a decision to approve or disapprove the establishment of a new Collection by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer or delegate.

(7) Where a new collection is approved:

- a. the details of the proposed collection will be added to the University Collections Register, which will include at minimum: the name, status (i.e. pending, current, de-accessioned, disposed or temporary), notes and dates of status changes, assigned manager(s), and the location within UNE's Records Management System (RMS) of the collection's records.
- b. the Custodian will assign a Collections Manager to be responsible for the Collection; and

- c. the Collections Manager will proceed, within agreed resources, to organise facilities and establish collection management plans (see guidelines in Part B).

Table 1 - Guidance re new ongoing collection establishment process

1. Proposal	2. Assessment of Proposal	3. Decision
<p>Proposer to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. description of the proposed collection 2. confirmation a new collection is required 3. identify if the collection is ongoing or temporary 4. contribution to UNE including expectations for usage and access 5. compliance requirements and specific risks associated with the collection 6. resource estimates (facilities care, staff or volunteers time, administration) and funding or research grants or other contribution options 7. confirm proposed Custodian (typically Director or Faculty Dean or delegate) and Collection management arrangements. 	<p>Proposed Custodian: Consider the proposal including if the collection is</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. lawful, is aligned with UNE's object and purpose and would be valued by the University Community 2. able to be resourced for the collection period 3. able to be maintained to the requisite standard 4. to be used and accessed to further education or community outreach; and 5. endorse or not endorse the proposal to the University Collections Committee 	<p>Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer or delegate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the recommendation and proposal 2. Approve or disapprove establishment of collection. <p>If approved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Associate Director University Collections to add collection to UNE's Collections Register. 2. Custodian to assign a Collections Manager. 3. Collections Manager to establish the collection including management plans.
<p>Tip: The Associate Director University Collections at UNE can be consulted about new collections proposals.</p>	<p>University Collections Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. review the report from the proposer and proposed Custodian 2. prepare an advice for the Vice-Chancellor regarding the proposed collection 	

Review and Assessment of a University Collection

(8) The University's Collections will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain fit for purpose, including that they:

- a. remain aligned with UNE's object and with contemporary regulations and standards;
- b. are being used to support teaching, research and outreach, for students, researchers or community; and
- c. are able to be kept and cared for in a manner that is appropriate for that collection and have allocated resources.

(9) The process of review would typically involve:

- a. an annual assessment report from the Collections Manager to the Custodian. Periodically a more detailed review of a collection may be commissioned;
- b. a report of assessment outcomes and any recommendations being endorsed by the Custodian and provided to the University Collections Committee;
- c. advice from the University Collections Committee to the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer regarding the University's Collections assessments and reviews; and
- d. depending on the recommendations of the report, the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer may
 - i. NOTE the assessment or review; or
 - ii. APPROVE or DISAPPROVE one or more of the recommendations.

(10) An approval for a UNE collection may be rescinded by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer consistent with the University's disposal or deaccession process.

Part B - Managing Collections

Tenets of University Collections Management

(11) The University may, where consistent with laws and regulations, collect and maintain cultural and historical objects/assets, scientific specimens, scholarly information, documents and images for the benefit of the University's students, staff and wider community.

(12) The University provides care, access, research and exhibition of collections and actively engages in interpretation and exploration of holdings, protecting and maintaining their value and significance.

(13) The University will undertake quality assurance to ensure collections are managed in accordance with this Policy and Associated information to ensure acceptable conduct in acquisition, care, use and cataloguing of collections, that is consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and standards.

(14) The University will only acquire items that enrich learning, teaching, research and outreach and are acquired through ethical collecting practices recognising relevance, provenance and clear legal title.

(15) A Custodian, normally a Executive Dean of Faculty or senior officer of administration unit, or Director Library Services and University Librarian, must be appointed to provide oversight and accountability for each collecting area, so as to support University vision and strategies. The Custodian is also responsible for appointing the Collections Manager.

Collection Management Responsibilities

(16) Collections Manager responsibilities include management of changes in the collection itself, administration and support of the collection, management of facilities and processes for facilitating use and access.

Collections	Administration	Support	Facilities and Access
1. Accessioning 2. Significance 3. Loans and Transfers 4. De-accessioning 5. Disposal 6. Loss or damage of items	1. Have management procedures 2. Documentation (Record keeping) 3. Manage compliance 4. Valuation 5. Assess risk of collection including care and use 6. Resource plan 7. Regular self-assessment and periodic review	1. Assigning responsibility for management tasks 2. Staff or volunteer training and induction and supervision	1. Facility (physical or digital) security and fit for purpose 2. Storage and display 3. Care and maintenance 4. Exhibitions 5. Outreach

Collections

(17) Accessioning: The University of New England will formally accession every item it acquires by documenting key information and assigning it a unique registration number/identifier and label.

- The University has the right to refuse (or seek external advice) donations, gifts, or other offers of collectable items when accession standards are not able to be met.
- The University may have in place a number of programs to support or encourage acquisition, for example the Cultural Gifts Program.

(18) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Materials: The University of New England recognises its responsibilities towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in respect to the cultural materials currently held in its Collections. The University will consider community and regulatory guidance and sector exempla (such as policy of the National Museum of Australia relating to [Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral human](#)

[remains management and repatriation](#)) for the management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ancestral remains, secret/sacred items and cultural heritage material and specific responsibilities to care for collections (including repatriation to original or otherwise transfer of ownership) as appropriate.

(19) Significance: Determining significance of collections is an aid to good management and informed decision making. It is a vital tool in sustainable management, assessing the relative importance of items and collections, and helping to focus resources and ensuring that the most significant items have priority for curatorial, conservation, research, exhibition and access programs. The University of New England will undertake as appropriate significance assessments of major collections as an effective way of taking stock of the strengths and weaknesses of collections, as well as articulating collection needs for strategic planning.

(20) De-Accessioning and Disposal:

- a. It is acceptable for the University of New England to de-accession objects or specimens where items fail to meet acquisition criteria and the requirement for relevance, significance and acceptable physical condition.
- b. De-registering an accessioned object is an integral component of an effective collections management system. Items received as donations through the Cultural Gifts Program cannot be returned to the original donor.
- c. Method of disposal of an item from a University Collection will depend on the nature of the item and the rationale for removing from the collection and may include; repatriation, transfer, exchange, gift, sale or destruction.
- d. Only other public collections may receive the transfer, exchange or gift of a de-accessioned work.

(21) Loans: The University of New England may allow the temporary loan of items both into and from its collection, subject to risk assessment and appropriate steps to assure the safety, insurance and security of loan subject.

- a. All loans should be covered by an approved loan agreement (reviewed by Legal Services), with items contracted for a defined period of time; for the stated purpose of research, analysis, education or exhibition; and have an agreed process for managing issues that might arise with transfer and return.
- b. All loan activities need to consider regulations for moving objects including – prohibitions or special requirements for moving (or receiving) certain items, particularly items across jurisdictions or from overseas.
- c. Advice on regulations may be sought from the Associate Director University Collections or Compliance Manager.
- d. The Collections Manager must keep records within UNE's Records Management System (RMS) of all loan transactions, details of measures to protect movement of collection and copies of collection condition reports on receipt and on return.

(22) Loss or Damaged Items:

- a. The University of New England will formally record items as lost / stolen if they cannot be found within 36 months of their last recorded sighting.
- b. The University will also have a process for identifying items damaged beyond repair which need to be formally deaccessioned or disposed of.

Tip: Lawful Collections: A collection might not be lawful because:

- A. Current regulations prohibit or restrict the collection of certain items. For example:
1. Aboriginal artefacts should not to be removed from the site or land on which they are found (National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974) without permission. Accepting such items from the time of the Act may be unlawful.
 2. Receipt of objects from international sources may be prohibited by Australian Laws (Customs) International laws or Australian participation in international conventions.

B. There may be no clear ownership, permission or consent for the University to include a specimen, image, sound recording or object in a collection. For example:

1. Privacy laws require consent from persons for the use of their information including photographs (without consent the University may not be able to collect or access for use/display an item).
2. An item without clear ownership may have been stolen.

Administration

(23) Management Procedures and purpose: Each University Collection will have management procedures consistent with this Policy which articulate their purpose, significance to the University, scope, themes covered and specific areas for future collecting. These procedural documents will be presented to the University Collections Committee for recommendation for endorsement by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer and are to be reviewed every 5 years.

(24) Documentation:

- a. The University of New England recognises that effective documentation underpins every aspect of collection activity and is fundamental for the accountability and integrity of items, their accessibility, history, security and use.
- b. The University will maintain documentation to a standard that ensures it can consistently record the nature of its collections and inform management decisions.
- c. All documentation relating to a Collection is to be saved in the University Records Management System (RMS). This is a critical requirement to support ongoing custodianship of a Collection and is a key consideration within regular assessments and reviews.

(25) Assessment: Each collecting area of the University of New England will undergo an annual assessment process. This assessment will clarify the condition of the collection, the state of documentation and record keeping, the importance of the collection, its mission and scope as well as its outreach activities. The University will make available a self-assessment checklist to support this process.

(26) Compliance with Legal framework: Collection activities are conducted within the context of Australian federal, state/territory and local laws, by-laws and regulations. The University of New England will abide by international agreements between Australia and other countries; and their obligations, and operate in accordance with relevant collection practice and standards, for example, the [UNESCO Convention](#), [CITES Convention](#), [Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria](#); [ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums](#) and [Australian Museums and Galleries Association Code of Ethics](#).

(27) Copyright & Privacy: Items held in some Collections may be subject to copyright. Where applicable, permission for reproduction must be sought from the copyright owner, in accordance with Australian [copyright law](#). Similarly some collections may contain materials such as photographs or information that is covered by [Privacy laws](#). Records of consent for the collection and use of personal information are required to be kept consistent with UNE's [Privacy Management Rule](#).

(28) Valuation: Regular valuations of the University of New England Collections is necessary for a number of collection management functions. Collections will be re-valued every five years according to a regularly rotating schedule. Valuations will be conducted by independent valuers, recognised as experts in the relevant field. Valuation methodologies will vary according to the collecting area. Scientific collections will be valued according to a recollection calculation determined by current industry standard such as the [Council of Australian Museum Directors](#) for natural science collections. Cultural collections will require determination of fair market value. Resourcing for valuations should be considered in resource management plan agreed with the Custodian.

(29) Risk Management: The University of New England will stock take collections to verify the physical presence and

location of collection material to maintain inventory control over its collections. The location of all items within the collections must be known at any given time, and the movement of items is controlled by recording changes in location. The University of New England will at all times provide as secure and appropriate a physical environment as possible for the storage, display and transportation of its collections. Security measures include correct procedures for moving and handling items.

(30) Resourcing Plan: The Collections Manager should maintain a resourcing plan for the Collection which is endorsed by the Custodian.

Support

(31) Responsibility: A Executive Dean of Faculty, or senior officer of an administrative unit or the Director Library Services and University Librarian should normally be designated as the responsible Custodian for a specific Collection. This responsibility should be recognised in that person's position description. The day-to-day management of each collection should be delegated to one staff member. In this Policy the person is referred to as 'Collection Manager'.

(32) Staff and Volunteers: Staff and volunteers should be inducted into the procedures relating to the management of the collection and expectations of conduct, including supervision, working safely, etc. consistent with general University policies.

(33) Support: Support and advice in relation to this Policy is available from the Associate Director University Collections as well as through publications of international, national and professional museum standards, as outlined by [UNESCO](#), [CITES](#), [ICOM](#), [Australian Museums and Galleries Association](#), and the [National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries](#).

Facilities

(34) Care and Maintenance: The University of New England will take physical measures wherever possible to inhibit deterioration of the collections, and provide appropriate care and maintenance for its collections to ensure they are kept in stable condition. Resourcing of care and maintenance forms part of the resourcing plan.

(35) Continuity of Facilities: An assessment of facilities (digital and physical) for continuity and meeting expectations in terms of a specific collection (considering relevant factors that might include security; access; climate and pest control, etc.) should be undertaken at least annually and reported as part of assessments and review.

(36) Storage and Display: The University of New England aims to provide appropriate conditions at all times for the storage and display of its collection, including appropriate environments and housing materials as specified by international standards. Virtual exhibitions and displays may be used to complement, augment, enhance or replace the physical display of the collections.

(37) Exhibitions: Collection Managers should have procedures for events and exhibitions.

Part C - Promoting, accessing and using University Collections

Use and Access Tenets

(38) The University will facilitate and promote access to the collections in accordance with preservation and display requirements, ethical and legal constraints, confidentiality, security and cultural practice.

(39) Access / Use: The University of New England will facilitate and promote access to the collections by students, staff, and the public in accordance with its strategic vision. Access to collections and exhibitions may allow both physical and virtual contact with an item either by a University employee or student, the general public or other interested parties, as permitted by the University.

(40) Research: The University of New England encourages research, analysis and inquiry into its collections, whenever funding, resources and access conditions allow. Researching collection items is vital to their continued relevance, enhances their interpretive value and builds upon the current knowledge of the collection. Any material developed as a result of research and use of the collections is to be made available to the University and should include proper acknowledgement of the relevant University of New England Collection.

(41) Teaching: The University of New England encourages teaching disciplines to consider and incorporate interactions (virtual or physical or both) with collections as part of enhancing learning and education experience.

(42) Community: The University of New England recognises and supports access to collections by Community members and has in place processes to facilitate appropriate access, including exhibitions, displays and specific programs (including loaning of collections).

(43) All Collections Managers, Custodians and Associate Director University Collections have a key role in the promotion of use and access of University Collections, including:

- a. Making available relevant details of University Collections activities on the University website and in University news and social discourse;
- b. Promoting use of collections within the UNE academy and with partner or community organisations.

Tip: If you are in doubt as to what collections the University might hold relevant to a teaching, research or outreach activity or whether an item, object, digital material, property, gift or donation should be or is part of a collection – contact the Associate Director University Collections in the first instance, or in need the University Collections Committee or the Office of the Vice-Chancellor.

Part D - Authority and Compliance

(44) The Custodian of this Policy, the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, pursuant to Section 29 of the [University of New England Act 1993](#), makes this policy.

(45) University Representatives must observe this Policy in relation to University matters.

(46) This Policy operates as and from the Effective Date. Previous Policies on University Collections and related documents are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Policy.

(47) Previous museum or other committees related to collections activities at UNE will be replaced by this Policy. To allow for an orderly transition, such committees or groups will be deemed to have been replaced and have no further operation 90 calendar days from the Effective Date of this new Policy.

(48) Further information regarding specific legislation and regulations relevant to collections activities, including (but not limited to) [Anatomy Act 1977](#), [Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016](#), [Copyright Act](#), [Human Tissue Act 1983](#), [Library Act 1939](#), [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974](#), [Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Act 2013](#), [Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991](#), [State Records Act 1998](#), and [UNE Act 1993](#), is available from the [Compliance pages](#) on the UNE Website or the Compliance Manager.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities within this Policy
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer	Approval or Disapproval of a new collection or to disestablish an existing collection. Overall responsibility for Collections Compliance. Note: The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer may consider advice regarding UNE collections from the University Collections Committee or other approved body.

Role	Responsibilities within this Policy
University Collections Committee	Monitor University Collections activities (including authority to call for reports and information regarding collections to fulfill this oversight function). Advise the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer regarding collections matters.
Associate Director University Collections	Maintain the University Collections Register. Support best practice collections processes across the University. Communicate about UNE Collections including promoting use and access of University Collections.
Custodian	Responsible for a collection (or collections) including resourcing, and the appointment and supervision of a Collections Manager. Responsible for ensuring Collections are self-assessed annually and that reporting on collections is made available when required. Assigned compliance responsibilities.
Collections Manager	Responsible for day-to-day management of a Collection consistent with standards, reporting to the collection Custodian. Key role in promoting and facilitating access and use of collections. Key role in organising compliance of collection.
University Representatives	Must abide by this Policy – ensuring that collection activities are only conducted in accordance with these standards and that instructions are followed when using or accessing collections.
Executive Principal Brand Partnerships and Business Development	Must consider this Policy relating to gifts and donations, requesting assessment of potential collections to the relevant Collections Manager.
Chief Financial Officer	May support the Custodian and Collections Manager by scheduling periodic valuations of University Collections.
Compliance System Manager	Provide up to date guidance on relevant standards, regulations and relevant agreements within the Compliance system, to support compliance of collection activities.
Researchers	Key role in investigating University Collections and extending the understanding of University Collections. Responsible for complying with relevant regulations and maintaining appropriate standards when accessing and using Collections for research.
Academy	Key role in integrating Collections activities into academic programs for enrichment and education.

Section 2 - Implementation and Review

(49) This Policy and Associated information will be disseminated and monitored by the University Collections Committee, who will advise the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer regarding amendments. They will be reviewed every five years to reassert the objectives and priorities of the University collections.

Section 3 - Definitions

(50) University Collections Register. A register of official UNE collections past and present (as identified in 2019).

(51) Collections Status is the current status of a collection. This may be:

- a. Current: An active approved collection managed by the University.
- b. Pending: A collection under consideration for establishment may be recorded on the register as pending. Should the collection be approved the status would be updated to 'current', if not approved the register would show this collection as 'not approved'.
- c. De-accessioned: A collection for which approval as a University collection has been rescinded. De-accession

may involve the collection being disposed of or transferred to another owner;

- d. Disposed: A collection which has been decommissioned and objects disposed of in accordance with relevant standards.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	29th October 2021
Review Date	29th October 2024
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
Approval Date	29th October 2021
Expiry Date	Not applicable
Unit Head	Ben Gooley Director Library Services and University Librarian 02 6773 2071
Enquiries Contact	Ben Gooley Director Library Services and University Librarian 02 6773 2071 <hr/> Library Services +61 2 6773 2458

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Records Management System (RMS)" - The University of New England installation of TRIM (Content Manager), or equivalent replacement system, under the control of the Records Management Office.

"Effective Date" - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.

"University Representative" - means a University staff member, contractor, agent, affiliate, residential staff member, UNE Council member, Council committee member, employee of a controlled entity, director of a controlled entity and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations, affiliated organisations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

"University Collection" - A University Collection is a coherent group of items that have historic, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, research or social significance to the University or its teaching program, where ownership is clearly vested in the University, and which has been approved for entry on the University Collections Register. Note: Research Materials are covered by separate policy and are not deemed a collection for the purposes of UNE's Collection Principles and Guidelines.