

Accessions Policy

1. Introduction

This Accessions Policy sets out the definition and process of accepting material into the archive ('acquisitions'). This process is known as 'accessioning.' Accessioning is a formal process, which physically and legally transfers an acquisition into the custody of an archive and enables the archive to make it available for research in an appropriate manner.

2. Method of transfer

Acquisitions can be received in an archive's repository in many ways. They may be transferred by the parent body as part of a project or records management process, and be purchased from owners or salesrooms, received as a gift, bequest or donation.

Each of these methods requires careful documentation as part of the accessioning process. This is done in an Accessions register.

3. Accessions register

The Accessions Register is where information about each accession is recorded. Details that need to be captured for each accession include:

- Date of accession
- Unique accession reference code (usually next in numerical sequence) e.g., A0001
- Associated accessions file reference for any accompanying documentation (see section 4)
- Status of accession e.g., transfer from parent body, purchase (include price and any grants received) donation, gift, bequest, loan.
- Contact details of vendor, donor, or depositor
- Description of material including names of creators, material content including any legislative and conservation considerations, covering dates, quantity, and storage

formats of material (eg 2 boxes, 3 folders, 5 CDs), provenance information, context, and any finding aids e.g., catalogues or box lists.

- Unwanted material – may be destroyed or required to return to donor
- Conditions of access. Note any conditions applied to sensitive material.
- Location of acquisition, even if it is only temporary.
- If the item has been loaned out, and when it is returned.

This is best done by entry into a database which can be in a spreadsheet or commercial collections management software.

4. Accessions file

An Accessions file must be generated for each acquisition, recording transactions with each depositor/donor including:

- Copies of any agreements
- Data about actions taken such as appraisal decisions
- Box lists
- Temporary loans elsewhere
- Correspondence including related to publication and copyright.

This can be a physical and/or a digital file and should have the same title as the accession number.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Archivist is responsible for the Accessions Register. Filling out the register can be delegated to others as appropriate by agreement with the Archivist e.g. to a volunteer as part of the oral history interviews management process or as part of any audits of acquisitions.

Any trustee, director, volunteer, employee or contractor considering/accepting other types of acquisitions on The National Memorial Arboretum's behalf, must contact the Archivist to start the accessioning process before any donation is accepted.

6. Cataloguing and Finding Aids

Any catalogue or finding aid for an accession must be linked to, or have a reference to, the original accession record. In a catalogue, this can be done by adding the accession

reference code to the [ISAD\(G\)](#) Element of Description ‘3.2.4 Immediate source of acquisition or transfer’.

If a commercial database is used, ideally it needs the ability to link from the accessions database to the catalogue database. This will assist with preliminary cataloguing information and location information.

7. Related documents

[Collections Policy](#)