SYNTHESYS Collections Self assessment

Frequently asked questions

How long will it take to receive the report?
Reports will be sent to the institution within 6weeks of completing a self assessment.

Please note that a more detailed report can be provided if full use is made of the comments section.

How will the self assessment results be used?
The data will be analysed and a report sent to the contact who completed the self assessment. A summary of results of all self assessments will be produced, but institutions will remain anonymous. Names of institutions that have completed assessments may be included in confidential reports to the EU (if requested by the EU) but will not be linked to the summary data.

How long does it take to complete the assessment?
It should take no more than 2 hours to complete the assessment form. It will take additional time to gather the data required.

What should I answer if a question is not applicable to my institution?
Enter not met – and write in the comments field "not applicable". It is not expected that this will happen very frequently.

Glossary of terms

Access/Accessible: Identifying barriers which prevent participation and developing strategies to dismantle them. Barriers may be physical, sensory, intellectual, attitudinal, social, cultural or financial and so on. (Resource, 2003)

Accession: Process of recording the admission of an item of group of items into a collection. (BSI, 2009)

Acquisition; Documenting and managing the addition of objects and associated information to the collections of the organisation and their possible accession to the permanent collections. (MDA, 2007)

Audit; The examination of objects or object information, in order to verify their location, authenticity, accuracy and relationships. (MDA, 2007)

Benchmark; A defined level of performance set by consensus or peer review as a recommended mark of attainment. Benchmarking may be used to establish a set of procedures such as 'good practice' or to define levels of practice, such as basic, good or best. (Resource, 2003)

Business Continuity; Strategic and tactical capability of the organisation to plan for and respond to incidents and business disruptions in order to continue business operations at an acceptable pre-defined level. (BSI, 2009)

Collection; A body of acquired objects or items, together with associated information, held in title by the collecting organisation; or the accumulated items held by a collector. (Resource, 2002)

Collection Care; Range of Activities intended to safeguard a collection. (BSI, 2009)

Collections Management; Strategies, policies, processes and procedures relating to a collection's development, information, access and care. (BSI, 2009)

Condition Survey; An analysis of the overall condition of a collection. The survey can be a sample-based analysis or a full item-by item survey that assesses the condition of individual items. For a large collection, a statistically valid sample may be the most effective means of gathering information. The results can be used to help decide how best to direct resources or to prioritise conservation programmes. (Resource, 2003)

Conservation; Hands-on, intervention techniques applied to the physical form to achieve chemical and physical stabilisation for the purpose of extending the useful life of museum materials and objects to ensure their continued availability. (Resource, 2003)

De-accessioning; The management of disposal (the transfer, or destruction of objects) and of de-accession (the formal

sanctioning and documenting of the disposal). (MDA, 2007)

Documentation: The gathering, recording and giving access to evidence of objects, their histories and associations, and the processes they undergo. (Resource, 2003)

Emergency Preparedness/ Being prepared to implement practices that will speed the reaction and recovery phases after a disaster or emergency. More generally refers to the entire process of planning and equipping for a disaster. It includes anticipating the sorts of disasters that could occur and having procedures in place to deal with them. (Resource, 2003)

Preservation: all actions that can be taken with the aim of ensuring the current and long-term survival and accessibility of the physical form, informational content and relevant metadata of archival records, including actions taken to influence records creators prior to acquisition or selection. Preservation consists of all actions described under "Policy Principles" in this document. The term "conservation" is used in this policy to refer to treatment actions and copying for the long term. It is also sometimes used synonymously with preservation in archival communities; these terms are not synonymous in other heritage communities (e.g., museums). (NA, 2007)

Preventative Conservation: All measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimizing future deterioration or loss. They are carried out within the context or on the surroundings of an item, but more often a group of items, whatever their age and condition. These measures and actions are indirect – they do not interfere with the materials and structures of the items. They do not modify their appearance. (ICON-CC, 2008)

Remedial Conservation: All actions directly applied to an item or a group of items aimed at arresting current damaging processes or reinforcing their structure. These actions are only

carried out when the items are in such a fragile condition or deteriorating at such a rate, that they could be lost in a relatively short time. These actions sometimes modify the appearance of the items. (ICON-CC, 2008) **Stabilization:** Treatment procedures intended to maintain the integrity of cultural property and to minimize deterioration. (AIC)

Standards: Documented agreements containing technical specifications or precise criteria to be used as rules, guidelines or definitions of characteristics, to ensure that material, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose. (Resource, 2003)

Treatment: The deliberate alteration of the chemical and/or physical aspects of cultural property, aimed primarily at prolonging its existence. Treatment may consist of stabilization and/or restoration. (AIC)

Users: All those who may derive benefit from the services provided by a museum, by visiting it, using its services directly or remotely, or in any way involving themselves with its activities, services and facilities. (Resource, 2003)

Works Cited

AIC Definitons: AIC [Online] // AIC. - http://aic.standford.edu/about/coredocs/defin.html.

BSI PAS 197: Code of practice for cultural collections management [Report]. - London : BSI, 2009.

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MDA SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard [Report]. - Cambridge : MDA, 2007.

NA Preservation Policy [Report]. - London : National Archives, 2007.

Resource Benchmark in Collection Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries: A Self-assessment Checklist [Report]. - London : Resource, 2002.

Resource Registration Scheme for Museums and Galleries: Registration Standard [Report]. - London : Resource, 2003.