

# UCC Heritage Services Collections Policy

Approved by: Mark Poland, Director, Buildings & Estates, UCC

Approval date: 9 July 2025

Review date: 1 July 2030

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. VISION AND MISSION	1
3. UCC HERITAGE SERVICES COLLECTIONS BACKGROUND AND HISTORY	2
4. CURRENT COLLECTION POLICY AND PRACTICE	3
5. THE COLLECTIONS: TYPE AND QUANTITY	3
6. STATEMENT OF ACQUISITION BRIEF	6
7. LIMITATIONS	9
8. OBLIGATIONS	10

## 1. Introduction

1.1. The aim of this policy document is to define what is to be collected and to establish the rationale for the UCC Heritage Services Collections. This document sets out the regulations governing the acquisition of objects for the UCC Heritage Services Collections. Acquisitions to the UCC Heritage Services Collections outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances and then only under proper consideration. The UCC Heritage Services Collections are managed by the University Curator, Heritage Services, in Buildings & Estates.

1.2. This document covers UCC Heritage Services Collections and excludes the collections of the University Archives, Library Special Collections and Archives, the University Modern Art Collection, and collections under the care of various Schools (e.g. Archaeology, Geology, Medicine, Music).

## 2. Vision and Mission

2.1 The core mission will be to care for and develop the UCC Heritage Services Collections, and

to share and communicate knowledge about them. The UCC Heritage Services Collections will support and engage with the University's ambitions for interdisciplinary approaches to research, teaching and knowledge exchange.

2.2 This policy is intended to help the UCC Heritage Services Collections achieve its mission through focused collecting. It supersedes all previous and existing practices and policies, formal or informal, relating to the acquisition of objects for the UCC Heritage Services Collections. It is planned that this and any subsequent policies will be reviewed regularly by the University Curator. A detailed review of this Policy will be conducted every five years and any revised statement will be submitted to the Director of Buildings & Estates for approval. The adoption and implementation of this policy is a requirement of the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

2.3 In a complex organisation such as the University, it is recognised that donations may be offered through other schools / departments. Such prospective donations will be considered by the University Curator under the terms of this policy.

2.4 This policy recognises the UCC Heritage Services Collections as a highly important resource and sets out how the University Curator intends to accomplish the core mission by:

- Collecting, preserving and exhibiting UCC's portable material heritage and history;
- Taking the lead in research, and scholarship on everything pertaining to the Collections;
- Promoting the Collections and making them accessible to local, national and international audiences;
- Collaborating with UCC students and staff, local or national or international groups to help promote a better understanding of UCC's heritage.

### **3. UCC Heritage Services Collections Background and History**

3.1 The UCC Heritage Services Collections broadly relate to the historical artefacts that are unique to the University's institutional history, teaching and research fields, staff and alumni.

3.2 Queen's College Cork was founded by the College Act of 1845 and opened for teaching on 7 November 1849. From the beginning museums were part of the institution being mentioned in the Queen's College Statutes and the UCC Statute of 1909. Several museums for the various branches of the life and earth sciences as well as a general museum were created through purchase or donation from 1849 onwards.

3.3 From 1845 to 1910 there was no museum in Cork city. There was briefly a museum in Fitzgerald's Park from 1910–1924. In 1945 the Cork Public Museum opened under the auspices of Cork Corporation, UCC and Cork County Council. This Museum was managed by UCC who also funded the position of curator. Until 1963, when this arrangement ceased, some collections were transferred to the Museum's building for display / storage. With the cessation of this connection, objects were returned or sold, and some kept at the Museum (but some of which may be returned in time). The Cork Public Museum is now solely under the control of Cork City Council.

3.4 A permanent position of University Curator was created in 1999. The UCC Heritage Services Collections are owned and managed by UCC through the department of Heritage Services based in Buildings & Estates.

3.5 The UCC Heritage Services Collections will make a contribution to UCC's mission to provide an intellectually challenging learning environment. As part of this remit, since 2013 display cabinets have been purchased and placed around the campus. The stewardship of these cases is the responsibility of the University Curator who will curate the displays and take due regard to the proper care and safeguarding of objects. In addition, other objects are on display that are in the Collections including the Ogham Stones and the Presidents' portraits.

#### **4. Current Collection Policy and Practice**

4.1 It has been the practice of UCC since its foundation to create collections for teaching purposes as well as to retain historical objects relating to the history of the institution. In the absence of a city museum until the 20th century as noted above in section 3.3, the University stepped into the role of a local museum taking in objects that have historical significance. The first written Collections Policy was drawn up in 2020.

4.2 Objects used in teaching or research from the several academic areas exist in the UCC Heritage Services Collections. The acquisition of these are considered under the terms of this policy.

4.3 Since 1849, the University's Collections have been principally amassed through donations, as well as transfers from within the University. Purchases have occasionally been made when funds permit, but there has never been a formal acquisitions budget. Loans have also been taken in for long- and short-term periods. The Collections are housed on campus property and the objects are either on display on campus or else are stored in a store also on campus.

#### **5. The Collections: Type and Quantity**

5.1 The present Collection is made up of about 7,500 objects relating to the teaching and administrative history of Queen's College Cork and its successor University College Cork. As well as the accessioned material, UCC Heritage Services Collections currently has loans from the Honan Trust and private individuals. Approximately 2% of the Collections are currently on long-term loan from other institutions or individuals.

5.2 The majority of the Collections were donated to or purchased by UCC over the last 175 years. All objects were listed and photographed between 2015–2018 and new additions are dealt with in the same way. Cataloguing is an ongoing process that relies on historical research and documentation.

5.3 The permanent Collections include objects that make up the bulk of the holdings. These are

Collections of intrinsic value to the history of the University, whether they be objects of art, history, science or culture. Though objects from several areas exist in the Collections today, in several cases it is no longer the aim to collect or receive more of these types. Objects in the Collection are held and curated on a permanent basis. These objects are being accessioned fully and catalogued to the highest standards. Nearly all objects in the permanent Collections are made available for research, publication, loan and exhibition, if conditions are met. Some objects may be culturally sensitive, too fragile or subject to donor-imposed restrictions, which might affect conditions of access or display; these objects should be fully documented as such.

5.4 Objects held in trust are those not owned by the University but which are being stored by agreement. These objects are cared for under the same conditions as the permanent Collections but they may be subject to different access, research or display restrictions.

5.3 The majority of the Collections are of local and regional importance but there are some objects related to individuals and events of national and international importance. Examples of these objects include the historic scientific instruments, the Ogham Stone collection, the William O'Brien collection or paintings by significant Irish artists.

5.4 The Collections can be categorised under the following highlighted headings: *Archaeology and Ethnology, Architectural models, Audio-Visual, Botany, Fine and Applied Art, Silver, Furniture, Natural History, Pathology teaching aids, Plaster Casts, Printing, Scientific Instruments, Sports and Debating, Other*. Many of the objects were acquired in the 19th and 20th centuries as teaching collections to support the disciplines of Archaeology, Physics, Chemistry, Classical Studies, Medicine, etc.

## 5.5 Collections Types

5.5.1 *Archaeology and Ethnology*: Between 1861 and 1945 the collection of Ogham Stones was assembled at the University. These 28 stones are on display in the Stone Corridor, in the North Wing of the Main Quadrangle. These objects are listed in the Archaeological Survey of Ireland Sites and Monuments Record and are of national importance. Displayed with these stones are two pot-quern stones, two carved stones and a cross-inscribed memorial. In 2006 the stones were rehoused under professional supervision. In the Collections there are approximately 500 archaeological objects and 1,012 classified as ethnological. These have been collected through purchase or individual donations. This includes a small assortment of classical material that including artefacts from the Etruscan, Ancient Roman, Egyptian and Grecian periods. With these can be put the two coin cabinets which contain replicas of about 2,000 coins and a large frame containing 112 electrotypes on display on campus.

5.5.2 *Scientific Instruments*: In 1995, Dr Charles Mollan conducted an national inventory of historic scientific instruments, which were then located in the Department of Physics, UCC. Over 200 of these 19th century objects have now been transferred to the UCC Heritage Services Collections. With the

clearance of rooms in the Kane and Food Science Buildings in the early 2000s, about 100 other scientific instruments have been added. These objects and others relating to teaching reflect the desire for excellence in the University since its inception.

5.5.3 *Botany*: Albums of algae specimens dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. A large seed donated by a graduate in the 1890s. Two models made by the Robert Brendel and Company, Germany, dating to c.1910. The University Curator does not actively seek botanical collections.

5.5.4 *Natural History*: This collection is small consisting of a set of antlers of (possibly) a Giant Irish Deer and geological samples including petrified wood, shells and fossilised bone. As outlined above, there are some objects that were previously in the UCC museums but which were transferred to the Cork Public Museum in the mid-20th century. Due to changing priorities, the Museum plans to return taxidermy specimens to UCC which the University Curator has agreed to take in when space permits because these are part of the historical UCC collection. UCC Heritage Services Collections does not actively seek natural history collections, primarily due to space limitations but also because the School of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences has its own important collection.

5.5.5 *Plaster Casts*: A collection of about 130 plaster casts were either donated or purchased in the 1850s for use in the teaching of Arts and Engineering students. Some were made at the Brucciani studio in London. With the advent of photography, plaster casts became less used, but in the recent past interest in these collections has revived. This is an important collection because of its provenance and size.

5.5.6 *Pathology teaching aids*: At some as yet undetermined point in the late 19th or early 20th century, 140 wax moulages were purchased from Paris which were made by Jules Baretta between 1863 and 1914. These were used to teach Medical students about dermatological diseases.

5.5.7 *Furniture*: The original University 1849 building was designed by Thomas Deane and Benjamin Woodward in Ruskinian Gothic style. Some furniture from this period survives including chairs, tables, fire dogs and desks which are recorded in the collection. A new Governing Body was created under the Irish Universities Act of 1908 and, the desk created at the time for use in the Council Room is in the collection. In 1999, an important assemblage of carved wood items was added to the Collections. This is known as the Marjorie Fitzmaurice Collection having been carved by her grandmother Margaret Whitaker Walker (née Peppard) during the 1880s and is an important expression of rustic art, which has been published. There is a small group of office furniture used in the University before the 1970s, some of which were manufactured in Cork. The Furniture collection conveys the history of the institution. The University Curator does not actively seek this type of collection due to the limitations on storage space.

5.5.8 *Fine and Applied Art*: Since 1949, by resolution of the Governing Body, the University has commissioned portraits of its Presidents, which were added to those already donated. This group also includes two portraits painted by John B. Yeats, two paintings by John Lavery, portraits of Donal Cam O'Sullivan Beare and William O'Brien MP and portraits of staff members. The statue of Queen Victoria sculpted by a Cork artist was donated by architect Thomas Deane in 1849 and is now on display. Over time a fine collection of sculpture by the Cork artist Séamus Murphy has been created through donations as well as two busts by Joseph Higgins and other portrait busts of staff.

5.5.9 *Silver*: In 1910 a group of UCC staff and alumni paid for a new university mace made by William Egan & Company, Cork. This is both a historically significant piece and a working object, which is used at conferring ceremonies. It is stored on campus in a display cabinet. Other silver and silver-plated pieces include sports trophies, the Tramway Cup, and flatware and tableware (including objects from the Honan Hostel which for a long period was part of UCC history).

5.5.10 *Audio-Visual*: The use of contemporary technology by UCC staff is reflected in the boxes of glass plate negatives (lantern slides) containing about 1,000 slides which were used in the Departments of Engineering, Electrical Engineering, French, Medicine and Physics. Some of the projectors are also in the Collections. Other teaching aids include charts.

5.5.11 *Architectural models*: There has been significant development of the campus since the 1972 Development Plan. The Collections hold 9 architectural models of building projects, some of which did not happen.

5.5.12 *Printing*: Cork University Press was founded in 1925 and printing blocks used to print dustjackets and illustrations are in the Collections, some of which were used in the centenary exhibition. During the 20th century, various campus magazines and other publications were produced at the UCC Printing Office and when this was cleared out c.2015, several boxes of blocks were transferred to the Collections. These signify both the academic output but also the administrative history of the institution.

5.5.13 *Sports and Debating*: There are several items of clothing in the Collection reflecting the various sports played in the University including Rugby honours caps, shirts and a jacket, there are also medals and trophies from sports and debating, the oldest of which dates to 1871 (rowing cup). These objects were donated by alumni and staff. The Department of Physical Activity and Sport also has a collection and some trophies are with individual clubs and societies.

5.5.14 *Other*: Other objects include a clock donated to the Professor of Law in 1895; gifts made to officers of the University; objects from the Honan Hostel; the Army uniform of Prof. J. G. Healy; laboratory glassware; a porter's cart; calculating / computing equipment and an Apple computer assembled in Cork; illuminated addresses in the William O'Brien MP collection.

## **6. Statement of Acquisition Brief**

6.1 It is the policy of Heritage Services to prioritise the acquisition of historical objects relating to the institutional history, buildings used by the University, and staff and alumni of the University, that enhance the history and knowledge of UCC.

6.2 UCC Heritage Service's acquisition policy in this regard is an active one and objects are usually acquired through donation or reporting, but also occasionally through purchase. Material may be acquired passively in cases where the material fills a gap within the Collection or where it is deemed to enhance an existing area within the Collection.

6.3 The University Curator will consider all potential acquisitions and whether they are consistent

with its Collection Policy and whether UCC Heritage Services Collections is the most suitable place for the material.

6.4 UCC Heritage Services acknowledges the role of the University Archives in collecting the documentary history of UCC in relation to history of the University or its staff and students and, to that end, offers of archival items will be directed to the University Archivist. The role of the National Museum, which has traditionally collected archaeological and historical material from County Cork, together with the Cork Public Museum, Cork City and County Archives, and Cork City Libraries are also acknowledged. In the city, there are also the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork Butter Museum and the Military Museum, Collins Barracks, that also collect and curate material from Cork's historical past. There are also many institutions and heritage centres throughout County Cork that have archaeological and historical material in their care. UCC Heritage Services will work with these and other organisations to ensure that the material is preserved in the place most appropriate, given its nature and provenance.

6.5 The University Curator, as UCC Heritage Service's senior institution professional, will have delegated authority and responsibility for: accepting or rejecting potential gifts or bequests to UCC, and therefore the UCC Heritage Services Collections, soliciting gifts of material for the Collections within the terms of this policy, making recommendations and taking actions on the purchase of material in accordance with this Policy. All decisions taken regarding the acquisition of objects are to be documented and approved by the University Curator. Following the Gifts Policy of UCC Advancement, that department will be informed of any gifts of greater value than €10,000.

6.6 Before acquiring any object, the following considerations are made before accepting any acquisition: the provenance of the object (in order to establish legal ownership) and its connection with the history of UCC, the condition and conservation needs of the object, the potential of displaying the object, the safety of the object if not acquired, and the long-term storage and care of the object.

6.7 Once UCC Heritage Services has been made aware of an object, it will be evaluated and a decision will be made within six weeks as to whether or not it is to be acquired. This may be extended to twelve weeks in order to allow consultation within UCC in cases where the acquisition of an object would result in significant financial implications for UCC, in terms of storage, conservation or display. If possible and practical, a second appraisal of the object's monetary and aesthetic worth should be secured by the University Curator from a recognised and unbiased authority.

6.8 UCC Heritage Services will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, any object unless the University Curator is satisfied that valid title to the object in question can be acquired. In particular no object will be collected which has been acquired in or exported from its country of origin including the Republic of Ireland or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned in violation of that country's laws.

6.9 The donor is responsible for appraisals of value. Under no circumstances shall UCC Heritage Services provide an appraisal of a donation. It may offer only suggestions concerning external appraisal

services.

6.10 Where an object is offered as a gift in good faith and the prospective donor is uncertain of the identity of the legal owner and UCC Heritage Services is unable to ascertain this as a result of its own reasonable efforts, the University Curator shall be permitted to accept the object, provided a permanent and detailed note of the circumstances and known facts is made at the time of acceptance and kept with the object record.

6.11 UCC Heritage Services shall extend to any donor the right of anonymity in terms of display or print credits.

6.12 All acquisitions are to be outright and unconditional.

6.13 All donations to the UCC Heritage Services Collections are irrevocable upon formal and physical transfer into the Collection. The donor will complete the UCC Heritage Services deed of gift form.

6.14 Once donated, UCC retains ownership of the object and full copyright and reproduction rights. Once legal title has been transferred, the treatment and display of the object is at the discretion of the University Curator.

6.15 All acquisitions will be assigned an accession number, documented, and all appropriate records will be permanently maintained by UCC Heritage Services.

6.16 If an object is deemed not to be appropriate for acquisition by the University Curator, then alternative options will be outlined to the donor/seller to ensure that the most suitable home for the object is found.

6.17 UCC Heritage Services does not have an acquisitions budget and purchases are only made on occasion when funds permit. Purchases are usually made from auction house or from individuals. In the case of auctions the University Curator will communicate with other public institutions, libraries and archives in Ireland to ensure there is no competition between State institutions. The University Curator needs to seek approval from the Director of Buildings & Estates, UCC, before any purchases can be finalised and within the framework of the University's 'Signing Authority and Approval Policy'.

6.18 It is the policy generally not to accept material on loan from individuals in cases where donation or purchase is clearly the more appropriate option. No objects will be received on 'permanent loan'; this is deprecated in museum practice. Loans are generally only made for a finite period for exhibition or study purposes. In the case of exhibitions, the University Curator recognises that it is preferable to borrow from other publicly funded institutions but the University Curator will accept loans for fixed periods from private organisations or individuals if the object is of particular importance (following due diligence). Only in very special circumstances will material be accepted on loan for reasons other than exhibition or study, as such loans have an impact on resources and finances and are a liability. The

period of all loans will normally be agreed in writing between the University Curator and the owner of the object at the time of deposit using the form supplied by UCC Heritage Services. Where the term of a loan has expired, it may be reviewed or extended for further finite periods, at the discretion of both the owner and the University Curator, or the object returned.

6.19 It is the University Curator's responsibility to ensure that this Collections Policy is adhered to and implemented on a day-to-day basis. If there are improvements in the staffing structure of UCC Heritage Services this may result in this responsibility being shared with other permanent or contract staff members including a Collections and Documentation Officer.

6.20 The Director of Buildings & Estates, UCC, must approve any changes that are made to this Collections Policy.

## **7. Limitations**

7.1 The University Curator will abide by any State law regarding archaeological sites and artefacts, including: the National Monuments Act 1930 and its amendments in 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004; the Cultural Institutions Act 1997; and any subsequent Acts that come into law. UCC recognises the authority of the statutory bodies and their responsibilities.

7.2 The University Curator will collect material from any period in the past relating to the history of Queen's/University College Cork.

7.3 There are a number of institutions and archives also collecting in County Cork and the University Curator works with these other institutions to ensure that there is no duplication in the areas of collecting. Thus from 2020 onwards UCC Heritage Services Collections will not actively acquire large collections in the areas of agriculture, folk life, furniture, natural sciences, art or Cork history. Material from these research areas may form part of UCC Heritage Services Collections if they were acquired sometime in the past.

7.4 UCC Heritage Services Collections will not acquire an object or objects that the University Curator considers to be impractical to house in the existing limited storage facilities.

7.5 UCC Heritage Services Collections only actively collects objects relating to the history of teaching, research, administrative or student history of UCC. As stated in Section 6.2, the University Curator may passively acquire objects outside of this area if they fill an existing gap within the Collection or where they are deemed to enhance an existing part of the Collection.

7.6 As UCC Heritage Services does not have a conservator on its staff, it will not acquire objects where there is a conservation need that would have a cost implication beyond its means. Exceptions will

be made for object(s) that would enhance the UCC Heritage Services Collections and when outside funding can be found to pay for any conservation work needed to be undertaken. The University Curator will consult with a qualified conservator to assess the extent of conservation work needed. UCC procurement rules should be followed as appropriate.

7.7 UCC Heritage Services currently has a historian on its staff and thus has the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of its acquisition policy. If further information or expertise is required, the University Curator will contact another institution or suitably qualified individual to gain further insight and knowledge of any potential acquisition.

7.8 The number of acquisitions made each year must reflect the availability of staff time to complete the necessary documentation, cataloguing, conservation, storage and research of objects.

7.9 Due to the current staffing levels at UCC Heritage Services, there is usually a 6–12 month period before any acquisition will be made available for research purposes. This is to allow for the necessary tasks identified in Section 7.8, to be carried out.

7.10 Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal can take place as part of the long-term Collections Policy. The University accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal can result from rationalisation programmes leading from the discovery of duplicates, reidentification of objects when research shows the item to have little or no importance or connection to the core Collections, severely damaged objects, objects which are infested beyond repair, or objects containing materials that present an unacceptable risk to health and safety (where their significance is not such to warrant the processes and costs involved in decontamination or similar, or this is not found to be possible without unacceptable remaining risk). All proposals in relation to disposal must be brought by the University Curator to the Director, Buildings & Estates, for sign-off.

## **8. Obligations**

8.1 It is the UCC Heritage Service's policy to keep all files relating to acquisitions and possible acquisitions up-to-date on an on-going basis. The University Curator will complete all documentation relevant to its acquisition, including entry forms, accession forms, and any additional documents that may need to be completed in order to transfer the legal title of an object at the time of an object's acquisition. All correspondence and completed forms are scanned and digitally filed on the departmental server. Legally important documentation are filed together in a filing cabinet onsite.

8.2 UCC Heritage Services practices preventative conservation and all objects are kept in environments suitable to their material and condition. The University Curator endeavours to have any objects that are acquired which are in need of urgent treatment professionally conserved as a matter of priority. It is the practice of UCC Heritage Services to consult with the National Museum of Ireland before the conservation of archaeological artefacts takes place. Appropriate licences will be applied for before any archaeological object is conserved.

8.3 Proper care and consideration must be taken with regard to claims for restitution and repatriation of objects. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis based on historical research into the object and taking into account all ethical implications, available guidance and within its legal position. Due regard will be made to Irish national policy.

8.3 The security of the Collection is a priority for UCC Heritage Services. The majority of the Collection is kept on campus in storage or in display cabinets. The storage facilities (both on and off-site) are locked at all times and are alarmed against fire and theft and the alarm systems are monitored permanently by a security company. Any person who wishes to access the storage facilities must be accompanied by the University Curator. The display cabinets are museum-standard and locked. An annual audit is made of objects on display.

8.4 The University Curator will conduct annual audits of the UCC Heritage Services Collections. All the objects on display around the campus will be subject to annual audit while five annual random audits will be conducted in the storage area.

8.5 UCC Heritage Services endeavours to provide as much access to the Collections as is safe to do so considering its staffing and space constraints. Currently objects in the Collections are available to researchers for examination by appointment, as long as they have been fully accessioned into the Collection's documentation records and subject to conditions of access as outlined in 5.3 above. UCC Heritage Services only permits material to be examined onsite during normal working hours and under supervision of the University Curator. A person who may require extensive access to the Collection may be required to present a letter of reference and must give at least one month's notice before the intended period of research.

8.6 While UCC Heritage Services is not in a position in terms of space and finance to display all of its Collection at any one time, it does endeavour to rotate the objects that are on display in its display cabinets on a regular basis.

8.7 All objects put on display will be subject to interpretation. All exhibited material is accompanied by a label containing the following information: object name; known or approximate date; provenance if known; accession number; and the donor's/finder's name if applicable. In circumstances where space permits, the label may also contain a short text providing contextual information about the object or use technology (such as a QR code) to link to such information.

8.8 UCC Heritage Services is actively engaged in the research and publication of its Collection. External researchers are encouraged to research and publish material from the UCC Heritage Services Collections. Permission to publish must be sought from the University Curator who will consider any restrictions on same, for example, reproduction or other rights management.