



Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland

Section for Archives and Museums

Glossary of terminology commonly used across the Archives and Museum sectors in the UK & Ireland

January 2026

FOREWORD

I am delighted to see this Glossary published, following significant work by the Glossary Project Working Group set up by the ARA Section for Archives & Museums in 2022. The Glossary is a good example of cultural professionals working across professional boundaries to map archive and museum definitions for commonly used terms, helping to improve inter-professional communication. Although there have been several glossary and terminology projects in the archival field internationally, it is also good to have a synthesis of terms which apply specifically in the UK and Ireland. I am sure that this publication will be of value to practitioners across heritage collections.

Elizabeth

Professor Elizabeth Shepherd
President of the Archives and Records Association

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Glossary Project was initially launched by the Archives & Records Association's Section for Archives & Museums (ARA SAM) in October 2022, with the aim of mapping terminology commonly used across the Archives and Museum sectors. The need for such a Glossary arose following ARA SAM's own engagement with its burgeoning membership and with professionals working in the intersection of these professions: it became clear that there was a growing need and consensus to create a glossary and resource for mapping terms which might be commonly used across both sectors but where definitions and usage varied, sometimes unexpectedly, depending on context and sector.

Although some resources do already list useful definitions for use across heritage collections, it was felt that a more detailed approach by ARA SAM was needed in order to capture the varied usage of terminology across different parts of the heritage sector. This Glossary inevitably has some archival focus, but we have made efforts to map across to conservation, rare book, records management and museum terms as broadly as possible.

To support the development of this project, a Glossary Project Working Group was set up to draft a first version of the Glossary. The Working Group consisted of ARA SAM Committee members as well as professionals across the Archives and Museum sector. Those who have worked on the document during the drafting period have had experience working in both sectors in the UK, Ireland and overseas. The development of this tool has been the result of extensive collaboration across the sector and has been documented on the ARA SAM blog. This first version of the Glossary builds on feedback received from various engagement sessions with professionals, including an interactive workshop at ARA Conference in 2023 and a sector wide consultation with members, which ran between June and August 2024.

Part of the unique value of this Glossary rests with the fact that it has been built on widely diverse practice in various institutions, work settings and collections. Different types of collection are often managed together and terminology can sometimes be dictated by whether a collection is governed as part of a museum, archive, library or other institution. It is therefore helpful to use the Glossary as a reference tool to avoid ambiguities or misunderstandings in professional practice.

The Glossary also signposts relevant and supporting external resources and professional standards. These have been used to inform this work as it has developed and, as the terms and definitions listed in the glossary are not exhaustive, these provide additional guidance and further information for more specialist areas. A decision was made not to focus on terms that were too specialised (e.g. rare books, conservation). Instead, the Glossary focuses on terms that are commonly referred to in both Archive and Museum sectors, which are the two key professional audiences. We hope, however, that it will be useful to all working more broadly within heritage.

The ARA SAM group would like to acknowledge and thank the following people who have contributed to the Glossary Project: SAM committee members past and present - Alexia Clark, Alison Diamond, Amy Hurst, Charlotte Berry, Chloe Anderson-Wheatley, Emilie Bell, Jenny Durrant, Jim Ranahan, Julie Noble-Watts, Kirstie Meehan, Laura MacCalman,, Mary Brown, Peter Lester, Ralitsa Petrova, Rebecca Grafton, Roz Sklar, Sian Yates, Scarlet Dennett, Victoria Stevens, Alison Cullingford, Athanasios Velios, Deborah Mason, Mari James and all of those who submitted feedback during the consultation stages.

The Glossary document will remain a working and living document that can be updated periodically, to ensure that it continues to be a usable and relevant resource for all. It will be made available for free on the ARA's website and we encourage those who have found it useful to disperse it widely throughout your professional and other networks. ARA SAM will continue to collect feedback and act as the point of contact for any further updates (sam@archives.org.uk).

We hope that this Glossary will be of practical and theoretical help to professionals and all others working across the Archives and Museum sectors, and connected disciplines, to increase awareness and collaboration across heritage collections.

Charlotte Berry, Chloe Anderson-Wheatley and Rebecca Grafton

Former and present Chairs, Section for Archives and Museums, 2019-2026

TERMS

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Term	Archive Definition	Museum Definition	Equivalent Term
ACCESS	Authority to obtain information from or to perform research in archival materials. Access to public records is covered by The Public Records Act 1958: “reasonable facilities are available to the public for inspecting and obtaining copies of those public records in the Public Record Office”. Individuals also have the right of access to their personal data.	Giving equitable access to everyone regardless of ability or experience.	
ACCESSION	(v.) To transfer physical and legal custody of documentary materials to an archival institution. (n.) Materials transferred to an archival institution in a single accessioning action. The process of transferring legal and physical control of archives from creating agency or donor to the archival institution. [See PRE-ACCESSION]	Related procedures are very different and in a museum context an accessioned object is always completely owned by the museum. The process of registering an artefact into the collection is sometimes called “registration”. It is also a primary process in the SPECTRUM standard.	OBJECT ENTRY / REGISTRATION

ACCESSION NUMBER	Number ascribed to or associated with an object or archival item when received into an archive.	Number assigned to an object or archive in a catalogue or other finding aid. Museums give each object in their collection a unique number which they use to identify it from other similar objects in the collection. No two objects in a museum collection will have the same number. This number is often written directly onto the object, or attached by a label.	ENTRY NUMBER / REFERENCE NUMBER
ACCESSION RECORD	A formal written description of an accession, either analogue (paper handwritten accession register) or digital (collection management system module accession entry; Excel spreadsheet; Word table etc.).		Same Term
ACCESSION REGISTER	The book in which accessions are recorded. Many archives maintain hard copy books as well as databases	The book in which accessions are recorded. Many museums maintain hard copy books as well as databases.	Same Term
ACCRETION	An addition to an accession. [See ACCRUAL]		No Museum Equivalent
ACCRUAL	An addition to an accession. An accession of archives added to an archival unit already held by the same archival institution. [SEE ACCRETION]		No Museum Equivalent
ACQUISITION	The process of identifying and acquiring, by transfer, donation, loan or purchase, historical materials from sources outside the archival institution.	Primary procedure in SPECTRUM standard.	Same Term

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES	To provide an administrative history of, or biographical details on, the creator (or creators) of the unit of description to place the material in context and make it better understood. Institutional departments can change name, function, focus etc. over time. These need to be noted in detail so that the identity of a record creator is clear over long time periods during which an archive has collected materials.		No Museum Equivalent
ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY	Explains life of creator and work to help contextualise the archive collection. [See PROVENANCE]	[See PROVENANCE]	
ADMINISTRATIVE VALUE	The value of records for the ongoing business of the agency of records creation or its successor in function. [See PROVENANCE]	[See PROVENANCE]	Same Term
ADVOCACY	(v.) To promote the value and significance of a collection, institution etc. (n.) An area of collections management which specialises in advocating for a collection, institution etc. Being an advocate for a person, movement or collection.		Same Term
AFFECT THEORY	Affect theory is a theory that seeks to organise effects, sometimes used interchangeably with emotions or subjectively experienced feelings, into discrete categories and to typify their physiological, social, interpersonal, and internalised manifestations (Wikipedia).		No Museum Equivalent

AGENTS OF DETERIORATION		The ways in which collections can be lost or damaged, namely: Physical Force, Theft and Vandalism, Neglect, Fire, Water, Pests, Pollutants, Light, Incorrect Temperatures, Incorrect Humidity.	Same Term
AIP	Archival Information Package. An Information Package, consisting of the Content Information and the associated Preservation Description Information (PDI). AIP is primarily a Digital Preservation term.		No Museum Equivalent
APPRAISAL	Process of determining whether records or archives have sufficient enduring historical value to warrant acquisition by an archival institution.	Similar term although not always formally defined in museums and usually takes part as part of object entry/acceptance procedure before the item has been formally accepted into the collection.	OFFER PROCESS / OBJECT ENTRY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS/ARCHIVES	1. Written records describing archaeological finds etc. associated with archaeological field work 2. Finds/samples/artefacts found as part of archaeological field work, also incl. the written records	The entire output of an archaeological project - can include documents, photos, slides, born-digital material, finds, drawings etc. The product of a piece of developer funded archaeological work, usually produced by a commercial archaeology company. A collection of objects and documentary records, sometimes including slides and photographs, which references a particular piece of archaeological work. Could refer to a watching brief, evaluation or full-scale excavation.	
ARCHITECTURAL RECORD	A plan, drawing, blueprint, sketch, model, specifications, photographs or other textual, graphic or visual documentation created and referred to and used to support the design and construction of physical structures such as buildings or landscapes.		Same Term

ARCHIVAL HISTORY	To provide information on the history of the unit of description that is significant for its authenticity, integrity and interpretation e.g. successive transfers of ownership/custody; history of arrangement of items; past cataloguing etc.		OBJECT HISTORY
ARCHIVAL INSTITUTION	Institution holding legal and physical custody of noncurrent documentary materials, determined to have permanent or continuing value. Archives and manuscript repositories are archival institutions. Also described as Archive Service.		No Museum Equivalent
ARCHIVAL SCIENCE	Study and theory of building and curating archives, which are collections of documents, recordings and data storage devices. Also known as Archival Studies. Can cover theory, practice and methodology. The systematic study of concepts related to the creation, management and provision of access to archives, records, and data. Emerging from diplomatics, the discipline also is concerned with the context or provenance under which the information or item was, and is, used.		MUSEOLOGY
ARCHIVAL VALUE	The value of documentary materials for continuing preservation in an archival institution. The noncurrent records of an organisation or institution preserved because of their continuing value. The agency responsible for selecting, preserving, and making available records		No Museum Equivalent

	determined to have permanent or continuing value.		
ARCHIVE	An institution or other organisation established for the purpose of archiving the records which meet its collection policy. May be a standalone institution or may be a part of the creating body whose records it exists to archive. (n.) A physical or digital collection of historical records. (v.) To transfer records of continuing value to a repository and to preserve and manage those records. A fonds. An individual record of continuing values A curated online collection of information and contextual data relating to a particular theme. A conceptual construct of a storehouse of recorded knowledge with outsized social and political significance that generally controls meaning and discourse and serves as a simulacrum of truth and fact.	This has several definitions i.e. predominantly paper-based items included within the permanent museum collection, catalogued as if they were objects; a paper and digital-based collection in the usual archival sense, run by archival professionals, usually within a large national gallery or museum; files and records relating to the museum's own history and collecting over time	Same Term

	(adj.) Relating to archives and archival practice.		
ARCHIVES ADMINISTRATION	The professional management of an archival institution through application of archival principles and techniques.		Same Term
ARCHIVIST	The professional staff member within an archival institution responsible for any aspect of the selection, preservation, or use of archival materials.		Same Term
ARRANGEMENT	The archival process of organising documentary materials in accordance with archival principles, such as provenance or original order, and as appropriate into levels of arrangement. The process involves examining documentary materials, researching history of creator, sorting and packing material into storage containers, and labelling and creating tools for retrieval.	This forms the bulk of the object entry/accessioning/cataloguing procedure in a museum's documentation procedure manual.	DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURE
ARTEFACT	A physical object created, adapted, shaped or otherwise produced by human workmanship, primarily an archived object within the archive context.		Same Term
ASSET OWNER	The individual accountable for ensuring that the risks to, and the opportunities for, the asset are monitored. The Information Asset Owner doesn't need to be the creator or the primary user of the asset, but they must understand its value to the organisation. This term is mostly used for records management and needs to be considered in relation to data protection. [See INFORMATION ASSET REGISTER]		No Museum Equivalent

AUDIENCE		Groups of people who use the museum's services by attending or participating at an event, exhibition, program or other presentation. Audiences can be defined by using categories, such as the types of services they use and how they use them (e.g., visitors, members, researchers, program participants, Web site users), or by their demographic characteristics (e.g., families, school groups, seniors, culturally specific groups) or their interests and motivations for participating.	Same Term
ASSOCIATESHIP OF THE MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION (AMA)		A professional development programme by the Museums Association, designed to help museum professionals develop their skills and knowledge through a CPD scheme, alongside a project and end-point assessment.	REGISTRATION
AUDIT	The auditing process is a thorough examination of all of the records an organisation holds, to maintain operational compliance, and ensure that the organisation meets all statutory document storage and destruction requirements. [See RECORDS SURVEY]	Regular checks of locations of items in storage areas, done on a frequent basis in order to determine any issues with movement and location controls. Usually done in small amounts on a particular store or type of collection e.g. relating to particular hazards, object types, material types or subject areas.	
AUDIO-VISUAL COLLECTIONS	Audio visual or A/V collections include analogue audio and film, magnetic video and audiotape, optical media such as CDs and DVDs and digital media. Additionally, audio-visual collections have begun to expand into video games and born-digital content.	Now increasingly known as 'time-based media', particularly where museums and galleries acquire born-digital artistic works such as films or video installations.	Same Term

AUTHENTIC COPY	A reproduction that has been officially certified, especially so that it may be admitted as evidence. A version of a document which meets the test of authenticity. A digital record that has undergone technical checks that help preserve authentic digital records: fixity checking ensures that digital records have not been changed at the bitstream level (the underlying code that makes up all digital information); and metadata that documents the history of a digital record can demonstrate the record has not undergone any unauthorised change or alteration.		No Museum Equivalent
AUTHENTICITY	The quality of archival documents to bear reliable testimony to the actions, procedures and processes which brought them into being, primarily connected with continuous custody of archives by their creator and its legitimate successors. Authenticity means that the original content, context, and structure persist.		Same Term
AUTHORITY	As in “authoritative records”: Any form or structure of records is considered authoritative evidence of business as long as they have the characteristics of authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability. Records must consist of content and metadata to describe their context, content, structure, and the way they're managed.	Part of cataloguing and collections management procedure in museums.	

AUTHORITY CONTROL	Authority control is a process that organises information by using a single, distinct spelling of a name (heading) or a numeric identifier for each topic. The word authority in authority control derives from the idea that the names of people, places, things, and concepts are authorised, i.e., they are established in one particular form.		Same Term
AUTHORITY RECORDS	A record which gives the authoritative or standardised form for a name or word.		Same Term
AUTHORITY LIST	A list of standardised terms which are to be used as preferred terms to help users find relevant information when using resources such as archival materials.		Same Term
BENCHMARKING	Benchmark is 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 or to define levels of practice. A process through which practices are analysed to provide a standard measurement ('benchmark') of effective performance within an organisation. Benchmarks are also used to compare performance with other organisations and other sectors to identify realistic outcomes and targets. [See EVALUATION]	A point of reference used in measuring and judging quality or value.	Same Term

BORN DIGITAL	Born-digital records are records that have been natively created in digital format, rather than digitised from paper records. Examples of born-digital information include: emails, text-based documents (for example Word documents, Google documents), presentations (for example PowerPoint), spreadsheets (for example Excel), PDFs, images and videos, CAD drawings, 3D models, data sets and data bases. [See DIGITAL ARCHIVE; DIGITAL SURROGATE]		Same Term
BOX LIST	Provide an overview of what type of material is in the archive. Box lists describe not just boxes, but also any containers of archive material such as files, ring-binders, volumes, packets and bundles, or the loose contents of drawers and cabinets. A broad inventory of the archive at box-level, which may also cover containers such as files, ring-binders, volumes, packets and bundles, or the loose contents of drawers and cabinets.		Same Term
BUSINESS ARCHIVES	Business archives are those records that are created through a business's operation that have a long-term value to the business, its stakeholders and future generations. Archive records can include paper, electronic records, audio tapes, video, photographs, and objects.		Same Term
CALENDAR	A specific type of archival finding aid, usually for medieval deeds and charters, which lists the items individually and in great detail, often so that the original does not need to be consulted. These are typically listed chronologically within the broader finding aid. No longer used as a standard type of catalogue entry as deeds are generally catalogued at bundle or file level.		No Museum Equivalent

CAPTURE	Act of incorporating a record with its metadata into a recordkeeping system.		No Museum Equivalent
CATALOGUE	A complete list of items, typically organised into a systematic order that aids discovery and retrieval. Descriptive list of items or objects with or without metadata which can be used to search the collection.		Same Term
CATALOGUING	The systematic process of creating descriptions or metadata representing content of archive collections to individual items.		Same Term
CATALOGUE RAISONNE		A complete, annotated catalogue of the works of a deceased artist. It contains photos and information such as title, medium, size of each work. It also provides details of the present condition, and provenance of each work.	No Archive Equivalent
CHECKSUMS	A series of numbers and letters that uniquely identify a digital file. Used to check integrity of digital files over time and after transfers, to compare copies, and to identify duplicates.		Same Term
CERTIFICATION	The formal process of recognising knowledge and skills, typically for Records Management professionals. The formal process of asserting that a fact or process meets a standard. The formal process of certifying digital repositories (e.g. in USA). The process of issuing an official document (a certificate) attesting to the truth of a fact, the		No Museum Equivalent

	quality of a process, or the authenticity of a record.		
CLASSIFICATION	Either physically arranging the materials or use of a class code to index and retrieve documents stored in a different order. Classification may involve assigning a class code used to index and retrieve the document.	Classification is the category to which an object belongs e.g. ammonite = Fossil. There are also recognised classification systems within the museum sector such as SHIC (the Social History and Industrial Classification System) which were originally used as finding aids for card indexes and early databases but are falling out of use as databases become more advanced.	Same Term / TAXONOMY
CLOSURE PERIOD	The length of time that access to records is restricted. Restrictions are often placed on items containing personal data, or other areas of data requiring a time period to pass before access.		No Museum Equivalent
CODICOLOGY	Codicology is the study of codices or manuscript books especially their physical nature such as the materials, tools and techniques used to make codices, along with their features.		No Museum Equivalent
COLLECTING	The process of seeking, locating, acquiring, organising, cataloguing, displaying, storing, and maintaining items related to a specific theme/subject that are of interest to an entity.		Same Term or Acquisition
COLLECTING POLICY	A policy established by an archival institution concerning subject areas, time periods, and formats of materials to seek for donation or purchase.		Same Term
COLLECTION	An artificial accumulation of materials devoted to a single theme, person, event, or type of document acquired from a variety of sources. Collection can also be used as alternative word for Fonds	A museum collection is a curated group of artefacts, specimens, or other objects that a museum acquires, preserves, and makes accessible for the benefit of the public. These collections are the core of a museum's activities, serving as a resource for research, education, and exhibitions. They can include	

	[See FONDS]	a wide range of items, both tangible and intangible, and are carefully managed according to a collecting policy.	
COLLECTION CARE	Include monitoring climate controls, implementing an integrated pest management program, and writing policies and procedures, such as a disaster plan or contingency plan. Also includes policies regarding how users handle materials in the collection - mainly within the archive context. [See PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION]	In larger museums, this can be a team (separate from remedial conservation colleagues) who specialise in preventative conservation.	Same Term
COLLECTIONS DEMOGRAPHY	The science of studying the evolution of the degradation of a large collection of statistically similar items, such as part or whole of an archive, using damage functions.	The study of the characteristics and dynamics of a group of objects	
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT	The process of building an institution's holdings of historical materials through acquisition activities, also includes appraisal and decisions not to collect.		Same Term
COMPETENCY	An ability, knowledge or skill required for the successful performance of a job or task. Increasingly being used to refer to specific elements of the ARA's Professional Development Programme competency frameworks.		Same Term
COMPLETENESS	Entirety of a record and or collection. [See RELIABILITY]		Same Term

COMMUNITY ARCHIVES	Archives created or accumulated, described, and/or preserved by individuals and community groups who desire to document their cultural heritage based on shared experiences, interests, and/or identities, sometimes without the traditional intervention of formally trained record-keepers. Often not deposited with professionally-run archives but held by the community. [See PARTICIPATORY ARCHIVES]		Same Term
CONDITION REPORT	Describes the condition of an object which can be produced in-house by a curator or other collections care staff or by a qualified conservator.		Same Term
CONSERVATION	Interventive techniques applied to an item to achieve chemical and physical stabilisation for the purpose of extending the useful life of the item to ensure its continued availability. Active protection of archival material with the use of physical or chemical treatment. [See PRESERVATION; PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION; REMEDIAL CONSERVATION]		Same Term
CONSERVATOR	A professional whose primary occupation is the practice of conservation and who, through education, knowledge, training, and experience; formulates and implements all the activities of conservation in accordance with guidelines for practice.		Same Term

CONTEXT	The organisational, functional, and operational circumstances surrounding the creation, receipt, storage, or use of a collection of materials. This information can inform the user about the evidential value of the materials. [Also known as ARCHIVAL CONTEXT]	[See PROVENANCE / OBJECT HISTORY]	[See PROVENANCE / OBJECT HISTORY]
CONTINUOUS CUSTODY	In contemporary U.S. usage, the archival principle that to guarantee archival integrity, archival materials should either be retained by the creating organisation or transferred directly to an archival institution. In British usage, the principle that noncurrent records must be retained by the creating organisation or its successor in function to be considered archival.		No Museum Equivalent
CONTINUUM	A conceptual model, influenced by postmodernist thinking, which shows how records move back and forth over time between different stages of recordkeeping and status as archives, evidence and memory, as a result of different activities and interactions; it is characterised by ongoing change and is often contrasted with the linear records lifecycle. A model for recordkeeping in the electronic environment comprising of four main records management themes of transaction, identity, evidence and recordkeeping and the four processes of creation, capture, use and pluralisation. [See RiC]		No Museum Equivalent

CONTROLLED VOCABULARY	At its simplest may be a list of the words that you are 'allowed' to use in a specific context – for instance, as descriptors for the subject metadata of a record. Thesaurus is a formal representation of a controlled vocabulary. Most thesauri are constructed as classification schemes, which show the relationships between terms. (Example: https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/thesaurus.html)		Same Term / CLASSIFICATION
COPYRIGHT	In the UK, copyright is a legal right that gives the creator of original works, like books, music, and films, exclusive control over how their work is used.		Same Term
CUBIC METRES	A standard measure of the quantity of archival materials on the basis of the volume of space they occupy.		Same Term
CURATOR	A professional who is keeper or custodian of a collection. Sometimes used instead of archivist or rare books librarian. Usually used in archives to mean a professional in charge of objects and artworks.	A number of meanings within the museum sector and that the definition 'professional who is keeper or custodian of a collection' could also apply to e.g. Museum Officer or Museum Collections Officer which are titles often used by local authorities but curator is a catch-all term.	Same Term
CURRENT RECORD	Records regularly used for current business of an organisation and which therefore continue to be maintained in their place of origin. [See SEMI-CURRENT RECORD]		No Museum Equivalent
CREATION	First phase of the existence of a record and the point at which its lifetime should be planned based on importance of the business transaction to which it relates.		No Museum Equivalent
CRITICAL ARCHIVES	Broadens beyond scope of inward, practice-centred orientation and builds a critical stance regarding the role of archives in production of		No Museum Equivalent

	knowledge and different types of narratives, as well as identity construction.		
DE-ACCESSIONING	The process of permanently removing an item from a [archive/museum] collection. The removal of an item will be documented in the catalogue. It is a formal process of removal and not routine appraisal or weeding.	The process of removing something from the collection and closing off the relevant record. This should be approved by the governing body and should NOT be secret. This is generally tightly controlled and items which are de-accessioned are typically offered for new homes via the Museums Association. Sometimes undertaken as part of collection rationalisation or collection development activities.	Same Term
DECOLONISATION	Viewing a collection through a non-western colonial lens. Actions taken to address biases used in descriptions such as outdated terminology and adding trigger warnings to offensive language in records. The process of dismantling colonial systems and structures that were established during the colonial era. It involves not just the end of direct political control by a colonising power, but also the undoing of the cultural, economic, and social legacies of colonialism. This includes challenging the power dynamics, knowledge systems, and ways of being that were imposed by colonial powers.	The long, slow, painful, and imperfect process of undoing some of the damage inflicted by colonial practices that remain deeply embedded in our culture, politics, and economies. Activities can include repatriation, collecting in new areas, supporting new means of entry into the profession, co-curation with specific groups and updating offensive terminology.	Same Term
DEED	A legal document that is signed regarding ownership of property or legal rights.		Same Term
DEED OF GIFT	A legal document accomplishing donation of documentary materials to an archival institution through transfer of title. [See DONATION; DONATION AGREEMENT]		TRANSFER OF TITLE

DEPOSIT	[See DEPOSIT AGREEMENT]	Museum procedures can vary considerably from archival practice i.e. regular loans in and out for display by partner institutions, travelling exhibitions, digitisation, conservation etc. Museums as a whole loan out more collections than archives and this is part of the sector's model for access, and is accordingly built into museum funding.	ENTRY / OFFER
DEPOSIT AGREEMENT	A legal document providing for deposit of historical materials in physical custody of an archival institution while legal title to the materials is retained by the donor. More commonly called a loan. This is being phased out now, and retrospective work done to make new agreements with owners for collections previously held indefinitely on 'permanent loan'.	[see DEPOSIT]	ENTRY / LOAN
DESCRIPTION	Description related to catalogue record field of scope and content e.g. description of the content of a collection, file or item. [See ARRANGEMENT; HIERARCHY; SERIES]	Within a museum catalogue the description is a physical description of what the object is.	
DESTRUCTION	Usually part of the de-accessioning process if an item is considered to be damaged, or to have deteriorated, beyond repair or poses a risk. The item is completely destroyed (e.g. through burning) and the process of destruction is documented. Physically destroyed to make it impossible to recover the data The entire process will be recorded within the Catalogue.	More commonly known as Disposals.	Same Term

DIGITAL ARCHIVING	This term is used very differently within sectors. The library and archiving communities often use it interchangeably with digital preservation. Computing professionals tend to use digital archiving to mean the process of backup and ongoing maintenance as opposed to strategies for long-term digital preservation.		Same Term
DIGITAL RECORD	Representations of physical documents (created through the scanning/digitisation process). A catalogue record on a digital catalogue or database.		Same Term
DIGITAL ARCHIVE	A place of storage for preservation and access of digital and electronic records, whether born digital or created as a result of digitisation [See BORN DIGITAL; DIGITAL SURROGATE]		Same Term
DIGITAL HUMANITIES	An area of scholarly activity at the intersection of computing or digital technologies and the disciplines of the humanities. It includes the systematic use of digital resources in the humanities, as well as the analysis of their application.		Same Term
DIGITAL SURROGATE	A digital facsimile of an original item or document provided in place of the original. [See DIGITAL ARCHIVE; BORN DIGITAL]		Same Term
DIGITILISATION	The process of converting business processes over to digital technologies e.g. the use of video conferencing software. Sometimes used in error for Digitisation.		Same Term

DIGITISATION	Capturing items in digital form as a surrogate e.g. photography or 3D imaging. This is primarily undertaken in the heritage industries to increase public access to collections online and to enhance record keeping and documentation, as well as in situations where the original is in poor condition and is deteriorating. Process of transforming analogue material such as paper-based textual records, photographs, sound, and video recordings, into binary digital records, to support preservation, storage and access. A documentary item converted to digital form may be referred to as a digitised record or digitised archive.		Same Term
DIGITAL PRESERVATION	The process of ensuring that digital information of continuing value remains accessible and usable. Refers to the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary. Digital preservation is defined very broadly and refers to all of the actions required to maintain access to digital materials beyond the limits of media failure or technological and organisational change. Those materials may be records created during the day-to-day business of an organisation; 'born-digital' materials created for a specific purpose (e.g. teaching resources); or the products of digitisation projects.		Same Term

DISPLACED ARCHIVES	Any records that have been removed from the context of their creation and whose ownership is disputed. Particularly used where records have been removed from countries that were formerly under colonial control and are held elsewhere.		Same Term
DIPLOMATICS	The study of the form of a document, which can help with authenticating records. Also known as diplomatic.		No Museum Equivalent
DISPOSAL	Permanent transfer of an item out of a collection.		Same Term
DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN	A formal procedure document which details the actions necessary after a disaster (fire, flood etc.) and who is responsible for carrying them out.		Same Term
DISPOSITION	The final action as part of a record's lifecycle which involves implementation of appraisal and review decisions for a series of records. Transfer to an archival institution, transfer to a records centre, and destruction are possible dispositions.		No Museum Equivalent
DISPOSITION SCHEDULE	Instructions governing retention and disposition of current and noncurrent recurring records series of an organisation or agency. [See RECORDS SCHEDULE; RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE]		No Museum Equivalent
DOCUMENT	Recorded information regardless of form or medium with three basic elements: base, impression, and message.	Refers to an actual physical piece of paper.	
DOCUMENTATION	Any process in a museum, library, or archive where information is recorded systematically for purposes of record keeping and collections management.		Same Term
DONATED HISTORICAL MATERIALS	Historical materials transferred to an archival institution through a donor's gift rather than in accordance with law or regulation	There is no real equivalent as such because donations are far more common in museums	DONATION

	[See DONOR]	than items coming into a collection in accordance with law or regulation.	
DONATION	A legal document accomplishing donation of documentary materials to an archival institution through transfer of title. [See DEED OF GIFT]	Usually an item or group of items given to a museum, but can sometimes refer to a financial gift. Donations are not always accessioned into the permanent collection. They can be returned to the donor or made use of for handling, educational or display purposes.	Same Term / ENTRY FORM
DONOR AGREEMENT	[See DEED OF GIFT]		TRANSFER OF TITLE / ENTRY FORM
DONOR	An individual or organisation that chooses to donate or transfer records to an archival institution. [See DONATION; DONOR AGREEMENT]		Same Term
DUBLIN CORE	A metadata standard that consists of 15 data elements. Each data element (or field, in database parlance) describes one aspect of a resource. Dublin Core is most commonly used for web resources.		Same Term
ELECTRONIC RECORD	A record that is created, stored and maintained in electronic format and created solely for use with computer systems (e.g. emails, typed information).		Same Term
EMERGENCY PLAN	[See DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN]		Same Term
EMULATION	The writing of programs that allow the behaviour of specific outdated hardware, operating systems or software to be mimicked on current platforms. Act of recreating a hardware or software environment so that electronic information from an obsolete system can be accessed from a current system.		Same Term

ENCAPSULATION	Enclosing the original data with descriptive metadata that allows it to be deciphered and viewed. Securing a document within a protective enclosure so that it can be viewed without causing handling damage. It is common for maps and plans to be encapsulated.		Same Term
ENCODED ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION	A standard for encoding descriptions of archival resources in XML so that the descriptions can be exchanged, modified, and rendered by computers.		No Museum Equivalent
ENTRY	A reference to an item in a list, register, or catalogue. A heading used to organise information. The word or phrase under which the description of a work is organised in a list, register, or catalogue.		OBJECT ENTRY RECORD
EPHEMERA	Miscellaneous documentary items or pieces of transitory documentation created for an immediate purpose and then considered obsolete and intended to be discarded after use (e.g. tickets, pamphlets, advertisements, business cards).		Same Term
EVALUATION	[See BENCHMARKING]	Obtaining valid and reliable information from visitors that helps in the planning of exhibitions, activities, and programs and in determining the extent to which the activities are meeting their intended objectives. Can include observation (tracking) studies, questionnaires, interviews, community meetings, and focus groups. Visitor evaluation can be carried out before, during, and after the exhibition or program development.	Same Term

EVIDENTIAL VALUE	The value of records or papers as documentation of the operations and activities of the records-creating organisation, institution, or individual.		No Museum Equivalent
EXHIBITION	A public display of a collection of records or objects (can be a physical or digital exhibition), usually curated by an archivist on a temporary basis, as archives generally do not include permanent display spaces.	Typically a temporary exhibition, either home-grown or bought-in, which runs for a certain time period in a gallery space usually reserved for this type of activity. Permanent exhibition spaces are typically called 'displays' instead.	Same Term
EXHIBITION LOAN	Temporary deposit of a physical archival object for the purposes of display.		Same Term
EXIT FORM		A form that captures information for items leaving museums, usually on loans. It records details of the object, including its condition and value, as well as signatures for those involved in the loan.	DEACCESSION/ LOAN FORM
EXTENT	Physical and logical units to describe an archive collection (i.e. measuring storage in linear or cubic metres or feet).		No Museum Equivalent
FACSIMILE	(n.) An exact copy, especially of written or printed material. (v.) Make a copy of.		Same Term
FIELD WORK	The activity of identifying, negotiating for, and securing historical materials for an archival institution.	Associated with archaeology, anthropology or natural history.	
FILE	Organised assembly of documents within a series, put together according to topic, activity or event.		No Museum Equivalent

FILE FORMAT	A file format is a standard way that information is encoded for storage in a computer file. It tells the computer how to display, print, process, and save the information. It is dictated by the application program which created the file, and the operating system under which it was created and stored. Some file formats are designed for very particular types of data, others can act as a container for different types. A particular file format is often indicated by a file name extension containing three or four letters that identify the format (e.g. DOC, PDF).		Same Term
FINDING AID	A description from any source, providing information about the contents and nature of documentary materials.		CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM
FIXITY CHECK	Method for ensuring the integrity of a file and verifying it has not been altered or corrupted. During transfer, an archive may run a fixity check to ensure a transmitted file has not been altered en route. Within the archive, fixity checking is used to ensure that digital files have not been altered or corrupted. It is most often accomplished by computing checksums.		[See CHECKSUMS]

FOLIATION	The recording of the number of leaves and/or their arrangement in a volume (typically for rare books/manuscripts but also used in archives). This is generally done to indicate order and sequencing. It differs from modern pagination as each leaf of paper has one number and two sides, and the front and reverse which are numbered accordingly. This system is developed and used by rare books and conservation and is useful for describing the binding structure of a volume, particularly if multiple works are bound together or if new binding work has taken place over time. This system is also useful for labelling digital surrogates when undertaking digitisation work, as each image has a ready-made reference number. [See FOLIO; PAGINATION]	Utilised for rare books and volumes.	
FOLIO	An individual leaf of paper or parchment, either loose as one of a series or forming part of a bound volume which is numbered on the recto or verso side only. [See PAGINATION].	Occasionally used in reference to paper artworks.	
FONDS LEVEL	A whole-body of documents created or accumulated by a particular individual, family, corporate body or agency retained due to their archival value. [See SUB-FONDS LEVEL]		No Museum Equivalent
FORMAT	Used to describe the material being catalogued or discussed (e.g. paper, parchment, born-digital, map, photograph, film).		

FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS	Technique for appraising and processing materials based on the relative importance of the activities performed within an organisation. Key management and description units for archives.		No Museum Equivalent
GIFT	[See DONATION]		Same Term / DONATION
GRAPHIC	Relating to visual art involving drawing, engraving or lettering.		Same Term
GREGORIAN CALENDAR	A solar calendar with 12 months of 28–31 days each. The year in both the Gregorian and Julian calendars consists of 365 days, with a leap day being added to February in the leap years. The months and length of months in the Gregorian calendar are the same as for the Julian calendar. The previous Julian Calendar was replaced by the Gregorian Calendar, changing the formula for calculating leap years, at different dates in different countries. Each system had a different start to the year. [See JULIAN CALENDAR]		Same Term
GUIDE	A type of finding aid that describes some or all of the holdings of one or more archival repositories.		No Museum Equivalent
HANDLING COLLECTION		Items which are logged for use in education and public sessions but which do not form part of the permanent collection.	No Archive Equivalent
HERITAGE CENTRE	A public facility that is primarily dedicated to the presentation of historical and cultural information about a place and its people.	Such centres are often not accredited in the same way as archives and museums.	Same Term
HERITAGE COLLECTIONS	Cross-domain, multi-sectoral collections from GLAM.		Same Term

HIERARCHY	A system in which arrangement of archival records and collections are ranked according to status. Specialist databases are usually needed for this type of arrangement and cataloguing. [See ARRANGEMENT]	There is no real equivalent as such as museum collections are not catalogued in hierarchies but at item level.	No Museum Equivalent
HOLDINGS	All documentary materials in the custody of an archival institution, including both accessioned and deposited materials.		Same Term
INCUNABULA	A book or pamphlet printed before 1500; also 'incunable'; plural: 'incunabula' or 'incunables'.		Same Term
INDEX	A list (usually arranged alphabetically) of terms, which may be organised thematically (e.g. place, person, subject) and which may also be standardised, that includes indications to sources (such as pages in a book or records in an archive) relevant to that term.		Same Term
INFORMATION	Knowledge that is communicated; it may or may not exist within any fixed form.		Same Term
INFORMATION ASSET REGISTER	List of an organisation's information assets, including location, description, owner and whether they contain personal data. [See ASSET OWNER]		Same Term
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE	The strategy and principles that determine how an organisation's information should be managed. Often a department within a local authority which is responsible for records management, information security, data protection and freedom of information.		No Museum Equivalent
INFORMATION OFFICER	An individual with responsibility for the management of information resources.		No Museum Equivalent
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	The systems and processes used to organise, maintain and utilise tangible informational assets or resources.		Same Term

INFORMATION SCIENCE	The field or discipline of study and practice concerned with the analysis and management of information. Typically refers to librarianship.		Same Term
INFORMATIONAL VALUE	The value of records or papers for information they contain on persons, places, subjects, and things other than the operation of the organisation that created them or the activities of the individual or family that created them.		
INGEST	The process of adding a digital asset such as a born-digital or digitised archival record into a digital preservation system.	The process of taking large amounts of collections related data into collections management systems.	
INSURANCE AND INDEMNITY		The activity of ensuring your objects, loans and other objects have appropriate cover against damage or loss. Sometimes refers to the UK Government Indemnity Scheme which dictates how museum loans are managed.	
INTANGIBLE RECORDS	Information that is made available in a non-physical form, for example orally or gesturally, that is arranged or codified in a certain way that allows it to be read and from which knowledge is constructed.		INTANGIBLE HISTORY
INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT	A preventative and proactive approach to controlling the presence of and damage caused by destructive insects and animals in archive repositories. Includes processes such as regular housekeeping and environmental monitoring. Commonly an archival responsibility where institutions do not employ a conservator.	The selection, integration, and implementation of pest management methods based on predicted economic, ecological, and sociological consequences. A decision-making process that helps one decide if a treatment is necessary and appropriate, where the treatment should be administered, when treatment should be applied, and what strategies should be integrated for immediate and long-term results. Usually run by Collections Care or Conservation professionals in larger institutions.	Same Term

INTEGRITY	The characteristic of an archive and record that describes it as both authentic and reliable.	Refers to its physical stability.	Same Term
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	A type of property that relates to intangible intellectual creations; examples of intellectual properties include patents, trademarks and copyrights.		Same Term
INTERPRETATION	Information that communicates ideas, explanations and/or contextual details about a subject, typically an archival record, often in an exhibition or similar context.	The media/activities through which a museum carries out its mission and educational role: Interpretation is a dynamic process of communication between the museum and the audience. Interpretation is the means by which the museum delivers its content.	Same Term
INTRINSIC VALUE	The archival term for those qualities and characteristics of permanently valuable records that make the records in their original physical form the only archivally acceptable form of the records.		Same Term
INVENTORY [OF RECORD]	In records management, a descriptive listing of each record series or system and its location.		No Museum Equivalent
INVENTORY	A (summary) list of all records within a collection, usually arranged in the same order as the physical records. A document produced by the executor of an estate that lists the assets and debts of a deceased person.	Process to check you have the basic information to be accountable for the objects in a museum's care. Forms a primary process in the SPECTRUM standard. [See AUDIT]	AUDIT

ISAD(G)	General International Standard Archival Description. An international standard first released by the International Council on Archives in 1994 that determines and defines the elements used in archival finding aids.	SPECTRUM Primary Procedures (set out the baseline industry standard for collections management and can be aligned with e.g. Museum Accreditation requirements). Worth noting that SPECTRUM covers all aspects of collections management and not just a cataloguing standard.	SPECTRUM
ITEM	A single article or unit in a collection.		Same Term
JULIAN CALENDAR	A solar calendar of 365 days in every year with an additional leap day every fourth year (without exception). This calendar was proposed by Roman consul Julius Caesar in 46 BC. It was replaced by the Gregorian calendar at different times for different countries, which altered the date of the year start e.g. in England/Wales, in Scotland. [See also GREGORIAN CALENDAR]		Same Term
KEEPER	The most senior member of archival staff within an organisation; may also be referred to as Chief Archivist, Principal Archivist, Director etc.	Typically used for the most senior curator within a subject area in a national institution, and occasionally also for collections management. Director is generally used for the top level of the museum executive.	
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	The deployment of skills and resources to share and utilise knowledge, that is, the range of values, experiences, insights and awareness that frames and generates new experiences and information. Often used more broadly than archives to include records management, libraries, information governance, information management etc.		Same Term
LEARNING – FORMAL		Structured learning that typically focuses on teaching specific, predetermined skills and/or knowledge, primarily to school aged children. Learning outcomes are frequently measured or evaluated, usually through testing.	Same Term

LEARNING – INFORMAL		Learning environments or systems that offer self-directed opportunities that can lead to unexpected or unplanned learning, impacts and outcomes e.g. one-off events.	Same Term
LEARNING – SELF-DIRECTED		Also known as independent learning. An individual takes ownership of their learning process (with or without guidance). The free-choice environment of many museums can be a foundation for creating self-directed learning opportunities through interpretive scaffolding and visitor choices that offer multiple points of access.	Same Term
LEARNING STYLES		Categorisations that differentiate the manner in which a person most effectively comprehends and processes new information.	Same Term
LEGAL CUSTODY	Ownership of title to documentary materials.		Same Term
LEGAL TITLE	Rights of ownership that are defined or recognised by law or that could be successfully defended in a court of law.		Same Term
LIBRARIAN	Professional who provides access to library information and books. [See METADATA LIBRARIAN]		Same Term
LICENSING		The act of providing reproduction agreements with third parties for items the museum retains the copyright for.	Same Term
LIFE CYCLE OF RECORDS	The concept that records pass through a continuum of identifiable phases from the point of their creation, through their active maintenance and use, to their final disposition by destruction or transfer to an archival institution or records centre.		No Museum Equivalent

LINEAR METRES	A standard measure of the quantity of archival materials on the basis of shelf space occupied or the length of drawers in vertical files or the thickness of horizontally filed materials. This is a common means of reporting annual accessions to The UK National Archives.		Same Term
LITERARY ARCHIVES	Archival collection of literary works created by writers, encompassing a wide variety of formats including author manuscripts, drafts, letters, diaries, photographs, audio-visual material, publishing contracts and other personal papers. Commonly managed by archivists, but also by librarians and curators on occasion.		Same Term
LISTING	Refers to the inputting of key information about archival records - such as records description, covering dates, format, preservation and/or conservation requirements, and location - prior to cataloguing. The partially obsolete term listing does not imply the arrangement of archival material into a hierarchical structure, as the term cataloguing does, despite the terms often being used interchangeably.		No Museum Equivalent
LOAN	Process of allowing archival records to be temporarily removed from one party to another, such as from an archive to another cultural institution which is mounting an exhibition. A loan may be time limited or very long term, or it may be for purposes of exhibitions, publication or reference.	Loans are arranged between accredited museums but can also be to/from private individuals/organisations.	Same Term
LOAN PERIOD	Period of time that archival record is loaned out. Long-term (5 or 10 year renewable) or short-term.		Same Term

LOCAL STUDIES CENTRE	Place for accessing local history resources such as newspapers, census records, postcards and photographs, maps, Birth/Marriage/Death information etc. Traditionally managed by librarians but now sometimes as a joint archives/library service.		Same Term
LOCATION	The site of a physical or digital archival record in the archive store or digital preservation system. The location of an item should be recorded in the relevant list or catalogue. If an item is subsequently moved - e.g. for consultation by a researcher, exhibition, conservation - a note should be made of this on the item entry on the archive list/catalogue.	Recording the location of an item, usually a shelf location within the object or archive store, this should be done whenever an item is moved, for example when moved onto display or on loan.	Same Term
MACROAPPRAISAL	Process of determining whether documentary materials have sufficient value to warrant acquisition by an archival institution, based on context of records creation. Carried out on a large scale e.g. collection level or higher.		No Museum Equivalent
MANUSCRIPT	A handwritten or typed document, including a letterpress or carbon copy, or any document annotated in handwriting or typescript. More commonly used within libraries, especially Special Collections. Can mean specifically a literary manuscript, or a pre-printed book volume. [See PERSONAL PAPERS]	Term can also refer to any document held within the museum, instead of archive/document/record etc.	Same Term
MANUSCRIPT CURATOR	The professional staff member within a manuscript repository responsible for any aspect of the selection, preservation, or use of documentary materials. This can cover either archivists or librarians, depending on the institution but is typically used in national libraries or in national museums holding significant archive or rare book collections.		Same Term

MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORY	An archival institution primarily responsible for personal papers. Not a common term in the UK.		No Museum Equivalent
MAP	[See PLAN]		Same Term
MATERIAL OR TECHNIQUE		Most objects have a list of materials attached to them, such as 'glass', 'vegetable fibre', 'shell', 'beads' or 'metal'. This refers to the materials identified by people working in the museum that have been used to make the object and does not mean that these are the only materials used to make the object. They are often unspecific, for example 'metal' instead of 'iron', 'vegetal fibre' instead of 'coconut fibre', or 'shell' instead of 'cowrie'.	No Archive Equivalent
MEDIUM	The physical material that serves as the carrier for information. The creation technique for an artwork e.g. oil on canvas, watercolour, terracotta bust etc.	The creation technique for an artwork e.g. oil on canvas, watercolour, terracotta bust etc.	Same Term
METADATA	Information about data being held, including details on an organisation's records – their nature, extent, location, context of their creation, or receipt, means to access and decisions on future management. Generally, refers to born-digital or digitised archival items but increasingly used more generically. Commonly used by librarians now instead of cataloguing.	Encompasses all data known about an object and typically contained within a series of databases.	Same Term
METADATA LIBRARIAN	A professional who creates, stores, maintains the data that describes all types of library resources [See LIBRARIAN]. Typically used now to describe a librarian who specialises in acquisitions and cataloguing.		Same Term
MICROFILM	(n.) Film containing microphotographs of a newspaper, catalogue, or other document.		Same Term

	(v.) Reproduce (a document).		
MICROAPPRAISAL	Process of determining whether documentary materials have sufficient value to warrant acquisition by an archival institution, based on function of the record. [See also MACROAPPRAISAL]		No Museum Equivalent
MICROFICHE	(n.) A flat piece of film containing microphotographs of the pages of a newspaper, catalogue, or other document. (v.) Reproduce (a document) on microfilm.		Same Term
MIGRATION	Movement of data from one system to another, while maintaining the records' authenticity, integrity, reliability and usability. It can also refer to the process of converting files from one file format to another. Transfer of data to an up-to-date system. Currently the strategy adopted by many archiving bodies.		Same Term
MISSION		A statement approved by the museum's governing authority that defines the purpose of a museum—its reason for existence. The mission statement establishes the museum's identity and purpose, provides a distinct focus for the institution, and identifies its role and responsibilities to the public and its collections.	Same Term
MIXED COLLECTION	Collection which is not classification specific – most commonly a local history museum. Collection of both archival and non-archive heritage records.	A collection which is made up of more than one type of object/material (most collections).	Same Term

MODERN RECORDS	Generally used to denote records of a relatively recent period i.e. 30 years. These can also constitute current and semi-current records of an institution, rather than the archives which are permanently preserved there. Alternatively, the term can denote current records of any kind.		No Museum Equivalent
MULTI-LEVEL DESCRIPTION	A finding aid or other access tool that consists of separate, interrelated descriptions of the whole and its parts, reflecting the hierarchy of the materials being described.		Same Term
MUSEUM		Not for profit permanent institution that collects, conserves, exhibits, provides access and researches collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment and safeguards collections in trust for society.	Same Term
MUSEOLOGY		The study of museums, their history and the activities they undertake.	ARCHIVAL SCIENCE
MUSEUM ARCHIVE	Could be used interchangeably for the whole collection, or the documents telling the history of the museum, or the museum's documentation as relates to its collection. Perform the function of managing and preserving the official archives of the museum institutions, collecting archival material related to the museum's mandate or related to creators or owners of objects held by the museum, or acquiring personal papers of curators, directors trustees and staff involved with the work of the museum.	Could be used interchangeably for the whole collection, or the documents telling the history of the museum, or the museum's documentation as relates to its collection.	Same Term
NATIONAL MUSEUM		A museum that is run and funded by central government. Usually, larger institutions with collections of national importance.	
NATURAL HISTORY		Objects and artefacts which relate to the natural world – items that relate to all groups of animals, plants, rocks, meteorites, minerals and fossils.	Same Term

NON-RECORD MATERIAL	Material that is not record in character because it comprises solely library or other reference items, because it duplicates records and provides no additional evidence or information, or because its qualities are nondocumentary.		No Museum Equivalent
NON-CURRENT RECORD	Records no longer needed for current business. Either kept within a records management system on a temporary or a defined period to comply with a legal framework, destroyed or transferred to archives permanently.		No Museum Equivalent
NEUTRALITY	Treating everyone the same and allowing them to access open records, regardless of their nationality, political beliefs, race or gender. Neutrality of archives meaning archivists should remain neutral to their collections, using description that avoids interpretation of materials.	Museums and collections are there for anyone regardless of background etc.	Same Term
OBJECT ENTRY		Logging all objects coming into a museums care for whatever reason, including loans, enquiries and potential acquisitions. Primary procedure in SPECTRUM standard. [See REGISTRATION]	ACCESSION
OBJECT EXIT		Procedure for recording when objects leave a museum for whatever reason, this could be for loans or more formally as part of deaccessioning and disposal. Primary procedure in SPECTRUM standard.	
OBJECT HISTORY		[See ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY]	ACCESSION
OBJECT NAME		The simplest name by which the object can be described e.g. box, book etc.	No Archive Equivalent

OBVERSE	The front of a two-sided object – usually a numismatic object but also used to describe wax seals or metal seal matrices.		Same Term
OFFER (PROCESS)		An offer of an object to the museum's collection, pre-acceptance /review /accessioning.	ACCESSION
ONLINE ACCESS	Provision of giving access to open, digital records online at a time and place of the researcher's preference. This can be because items have been digitised or because they are born digital.		Same Term
OPEN STORAGE	Less commonly used in archives as these are usually stored in closed stores with no public access. May be used in local studies' collections e.g. books, ephemera, maps, photographs etc. for non-unique items for public or supervised access.	Method of getting more objects available for public access by different means than permanent display or temporary exhibition e.g. positioning items in stores so they can be accessed during store tours, positioning stores next to public areas and enabling some access through glass doors and walls etc.	No Exact Archive Equivalent
ORIGINAL ORDER	The archival principle that records should be maintained in the order in which they were placed by the organisation, individual, or family that created them. [See SANCTITY OF ORIGINAL ORDER; PROVENANCE]		No Museum Equivalent
ORPHAN WORK	Orphan works are copyright works where one or more right holder is unknown or cannot be traced. Orphan works diligent search guidance for applicants is available at – GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works .		Same Term
OUTREACH	Activities and programs that promote, and educate about, the use of archives and value	Taking the museum out into communities – work with care homes, schools, local interest	Same Term

	of, archive-based resources, and archival collections.	groups etc. Can be talks, loans, handling sessions, creative sessions etc.	
PACKAGING	The materials used to pack an object or artefact and/or the way it should be packed. Can include archive quality materials, but may also refer to original packaging presented alongside an object. The materials used for wrapping and boxing archival items, ideally made of acid-free and chemically stable materials.		Same Term
“PAL & DIP”	Abbreviated informal term for the two fields of Palaeography and Diplomatic i.e. the study of handwriting and documents.		No Museum Equivalent
PAGINATION	Numbering each page of an archival document, e.g. when digitising an item, to ensure that each page is accounted for. This system follows current pagination in printed books. [See also FOLIATION]		Same Term
PALAEOGRAPHY	The study of historical handwriting and the deciphering and dating of historical manuscripts.		Same Term
PAMPHLETS	An unbound book (that is, without a hard cover or binding): a single sheet of paper that is called a leaflet, or a few pages that are folded in half, in thirds, or in fourths, called a leaflet or it may consist of a few pages that are folded in half and saddle stapled at the crease to make a simple book.		Same Term
PAPERS	A general term used to designate more than one type of manuscript material. A collection of records and/or archives created and kept by an individual, family or organisation.		Same Term

PART	[see PIECE]	Used to identify and number multiple pieces/parts associated with one item number i.e. tea set will contain many sub-parts, such as teapot, saucers, cups, spoons.	Same Term
PARTICIPATORY ARCHIVES	Participatory archiving is a form of collaborative practice in which archivists, historians, and community members work together to document local and community histories and build unique archival collections. [See COMMUNITY ARCHIVES]		Same Term
PERMANENT LOAN	The archives maintain custody of the records but the records remain in the ownership of an external individual or organisation. An agreement to deposit an item in an archive permanently but without transferring ownership of that item to the receiving institution. A practice that is becoming less common and is strongly advised against due to the costs of preservation/cataloguing falling to the institution and the past experience of items being withdrawn from the institution for cash sale.	Permanent loans do still exist, but modern practice is not to accept them. Permanent loans in museum collections are often an accident of history e.g. the lender died and no contact can be made with relatives or administrators of their estate.	Same Term
PERMANENT PRESERVATION	Refers to the act of deciding that documents should be retained for ever and therefore designated as archives. It can also be considered as a definition or action of archiving.		No Museum Equivalent
PERSONAL PAPERS	A natural accumulation of documents created or accumulated by an individual or family and subject to their disposition. [See MANUSCRIPTS]		Same Term

PIECE	Single indivisible unit within the item. [See ITEM]	[See PART]	Same Term
PLACE		This field often refers to the place that an object is thought to have come from or was made. This could be a town, region, city, country, continent or a mix of all of these. There could be several different places listed if an object is made up of elements from different places.	Same Term
PLACE OF DEPOSIT	Term defined by The National Archives UK as: Places of Deposit for public records are appointed to hold specific record classes in agreement with their parent authority under Section 4 (1) of the Public Records Act (1958). This ensures that collections are available locally, usually within the county record office network across England and Wales. In Scotland, this system is known as Charge and Superintendence as separate legislation applies.		No Museum Equivalent
PLAN	A plan is a drawing or two-dimensional diagram used to describe a place or object, or to communicate building or fabrication instructions. Plan, Section, and Elevation are different types of drawings used by architects to graphically represent a building design and construction. [See ARCHITECTURAL RECORD]		Same Term
POST-CUSTODIALISM	The idea that archivists will no longer physically acquire and maintain records, but that they will provide management oversight for records that will remain in the custody of the record creators. InterPARES Trust – Terminology – Citations (English)		No Museum Equivalent

POST MODERNISATION	Post modernisation describes the transition of modern to postmodern culture. Modern culture was characterised by differentiation, rationalisation and commodification, but with post modernisation these processes accelerate into hyper differentiation, hyper-rationalisation and hyper commodification resulting in post culture. Post modernisation – ReviseSociology		Same Term
PRE-ACCESSION	An item/items that have been received by an institution but not yet formally accessioned into the collection. [See ACCESSION]	This would be described as the pre-entry / entry procedure.	ENTRY / OFFER
PREMIS	PREMIS - Preservation Metadata Implementation Strategies - is a metadata standard developed specifically to handle preservation of information resources. The PREMIS working group was set up in 2003 'to develop a core set of implementable preservation metadata, broadly applicable across a wide range of digital preservation contexts'.		Same Term
PRESERVATION	Activities associated with maintaining library, archival, or museum materials for use, either in their original physical form or in some other format. Preservation is considered a broader term than Conservation. Glossary of terms – Preservation Equipment Ltd. Passive protection of archival material, where no direct physical or chemical treatment to the item occurs beyond the provision of a safe environment and storage conditions. To prevent the deterioration or loss of a	Term used to denote documentation, cataloguing, packing and storage elements of collections management.	Same Term

	record and extend its life. Protecting records by keeping from harm, injury, decay, or destruction, especially through non-invasive treatment. To prevent accidental harm through proper manual handling and examining documents in suitable conditions with the correct amount of space and, supports and protective equipment. [See CONSERVATION]		
PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION	Preventative conservation involves “all measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimising 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.” Preventive Conservation https://www.iccrom.org/projects/preventive-conservation). [See CONSERVATION]		Same Term
PRIMARY VALUES	The values of records for the activities for which they were created or received.		Same Term
PRIVATE RECORD/COLLECTION	Records/archives of nongovernmental provenance.		No Museum Equivalent
PROCESSING	All steps taken in an archival repository to prepare documentary materials for storage, access and reference use. This can include sorting, packing, labelling and shelving.		No Museum Equivalent

PRODUCTION	Making available archival items for research, by producing the original or a surrogate.	Associated with the documenting and cataloguing process - packaging and storage.	DOCUMENTING / CATALOGUING
PROVENANCE	The archival principle that records created or received by one recordkeeping unit should not be intermixed with those of any other. Information on the chain of ownership and custody of particular records. [See RESPECT DES FOND; ORIGINAL ORDER; SANCTUARY OF ORIGINAL ORDER]	Where an object was produced. The background and history of ownership of an item. For archaeological collections this would include where it was found. For art collections this may also include a history of exhibition.	
QUARANTINE		The act of isolating collections materials to ensure no insect pests are present before allowing them to enter a store or exhibition space.	Same Term
RARE BOOKS	A book that is distinguished by an early printing date, limited issue, special character of the edition or binding, or historical interest. Often the responsibility of specialist rare book professionals. Typically require specialist cataloguing and metadata in accordance with rare book cataloguing standards.		Same Term
RATIONALISATION		Applying appraisal strategies to already catalogued and accessioned records with the aim of deaccessioning parts of the collection.	REAPPRAISAL
REAPPRAISAL	Using appraisal methods to identify archives that no longer merit preservation and are potential candidates for deaccessioning. This might be caused by a change in collections acquisition policy. Examination of an object or archival item following a change in collecting policy or other event with a view to deaccessioning it. [See DEACCESSIONING]		

READING ROOM	The physical space where researchers and members of the public have access to archives, museum or library materials.		RESEARCH ROOM, SEARCH ROOM
RECORD COPY	The copy of a document which is designated for official retention in files of the administrative unit that is principally responsible for production, implementation, or dissemination of the document.		No Museum Equivalent
RECORD GROUP	A body of organisationally related records established on the basis of provenance with particular regard for the complexity and volume of the records and the administrative history of the record-creating institution or organisation.		No Museum Equivalent
RECORDS	All recorded information, regardless of media or characteristics, made or received and maintained by an organisation or institution. [See CURRENT RECORD; MODERN RECORD]	In a museum context a 'record' specifically refers to the catalogue record for a particular object.	Same Term
RECORDS CENTRE	A records storage facility established to provide efficient storage of inactive or non-current records. Legal title to records deposited in a records centre is retained by the originating agency.		Same Term
RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE	[See DISPOSITION SCHEDULE; RECORDS SCHEDULE]		No Museum Equivalent
RECORDS MANAGEMENT	Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.	Typically means the management of database records, rather than the museum's own current or semi-current institutional records.	
RECORDS SCHEDULE	Instructions governing retention and disposition of current and noncurrent recurring records series of an organisation or agency.		No Museum Equivalent

	[See DISPOSITION SCHEDULE; RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE]		
RECORDS SURVEY	Review of records in archives collection to identify specific information. For example, this could include confirming location in the store, condition survey.		AUDIT
REFERENCE MATERIALS	Non-accessioned items maintained by an archival institution solely for reference use.	Reference library/staff library/reference materials. May include archival materials.	
REFERENCE NUMBER	Unique number assigned to an object or archive in a catalogue, or other finding aid.	Museums give each object in their collection a unique number which they use to identify it from other similar objects in the collection.	ACCESSION NUMBER
REFERENCE SERVICE	The archival or library function of providing information about or from holdings of an archival institution, making holdings available to researchers, and providing copies, reproductions, or loans of holdings.	Not typically found in museums, unless part of a shared service with archives/libraries. Researcher space is usually provided in office or store space, rather than in a dedicated room in public areas.	No Museum Equivalent
REGISTRAR	An individual who acts as the official custodian of records made in a register e.g. Registrar of the National Register of Archives for Scotland. An officer responsible for the registration of births, marriages, deaths, civil partnerships, stillbirths and adoptions. A senior officer is a superintendent registrar whose office is a register office.	An individual(s) who is responsible for maintaining accurate records of collections, they often have oversight of documentation of all object movements such as loans.	Same Term
REGISTRATION	An element of ARA Professional Development Programme as a level of membership, previously called the Registration Scheme. [see ACCESSION]	[See ASSOCIATESHIP OF THE MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION (AMA)] The process of recording, tracking and managing museum objects, from initial acquisition to cataloguing, ensuring complete and correct documentation. [see OBJECT ENTRY]	
REGISTERED		This is a legal status of collections in museums i.e. objects which are formally accessioned into the Permanent Collection.	No Archival Equivalent

RELIABILITY	The characteristic of an archive that means it can be trusted to be an accurate and full record or representation of the transaction that it describes. [see AUTHENTICITY]		AUTHENTICITY
REMEDIAL	Describes a process designed to correct or improve a situation. [See REMEDIAL CONSERVATION]		Same Term
REMEDIAL CONSERVATION	Actions or processes applied to an (often fragile or deteriorating) archival record or other object designed to arrest existing damaging processes or reinforce their structure and which may result in a modification in appearance. [See CONSERVATION; REMEDIAL]	Maintaining the integrity of an object e.g. using the same processes and techniques that were available to the original maker rather than e.g. modern glue (as opposed to restoration).	Same Term
REPATRIATION	The process of returning archival records to their country of origin or former owners.	The process of returning museum objects or collections to their country of origin or former owners.	Same Term
REPOSITORY	Used to denote an institution holding archives. Not now in common usage.		No Museum Equivalent
REPRODUCTION LOAN	This type of loan enables an institution to receive archival materials in order to photocopy, photograph, microfilm or digitise them, after which the originals are returned to the lender.	[See LOAN]	
RESEARCHER	A person engaged in research with archival records. [See USER].		Same Term

RESEARCH ROOM	[See READING ROOM/ SEARCH ROOM]	A space provided for researchers to study and view materials, usually areas with strict controls on what items can be brought into the area. The room will be supervised by staff to provide support and to safeguard items. This often forms part of the stores or offices, rather than being a designated public space.	READING ROOM, SEARCH ROOM
RESPECT DES FONDS	An overarching concept that means in order to protect integrity of archives, all archives from one creator or source must be kept together as a unified whole (provenance) and that in turn should be preserved in the original order they were made or used. [See PROVENANCE; ORIGINAL ORDER]		No Museum Equivalent
RESTORATION	The act or process of returning an archival record or other object to its original or former condition.	The process to return an item to original condition however restoration is not so concerned with minimal intervention/ original techniques and materials in comparison to conservation. [See REMEDIAL CONSERVATION]	Same Term
RE-HOUSING	[See PACKAGING]		Same Term
RETRIEVAL	The process of locating and temporarily removing an archival record from a strong room, for example for use by a researcher. [See PRODUCTION]		Same Term
RETURN	The process of placing an archival record back in its correct place within a strong room following its use for example by a researcher.		Same Term

RiC	Records in Context. A standard or model for the description of archives produced by the International Council on Archives and first released for comment in 2016. It aims to bring together several existing standards into one model, including ISAD(G) and ISAAR (CPF).		Same Term
SAMPLING	Selection of particular items from body of archives to provide representation of whole body while not retaining all of the documents e.g. within a long series of minute books, volumes from a range of dates might be preserved i.e. five year periods, one volume every five years etc.		No Museum Equivalent
SEMI-CURRENT RECORD	A record that is still used by its creator but only on an occasional basis and which may therefore be stored remotely. [See CURRENT RECORD]		No Museum Equivalent
SCHEDULE	To establish retention periods for current records and provide for their proper disposition at the end of active use. [See DISPOSITION SCHEDULE; RECORDS SCHEDULE]		No Museum Equivalent
SECONDARY VALUES	The values of records to users other than the agency of record creation or its successors.		No Museum Equivalent
SENSITIVITY REVIEW	The process of surveying documentary materials in an archival institution to determine whether the materials may be open for access by researchers or must be restricted in accordance with law, a donor's requirements, or an institution's regulations.	The process of reviewing collections to determine whether materials can be used in display and exhibitions and open for access for researchers. (e.g. Human remains).	Same Term
SERIAL	A continuing publication issued in instalments, typically numbered and dated. Typically used in libraries to describe periodicals.		Same Term

SERIES LEVEL	A body of file units or documents arranged in accordance with a unified filing system or maintained by the records creator as a unit because of some relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use.		No Museum Equivalent
SIGNIFICANCE	[SEE ADMINISTRATIVE VALUE]		Same Term
SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT			ADMINISTRATIVE VALUE
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS	A group of records, documents or items, such as rare books, that are either irreplaceable or unusually rare and valuable. Often used to denote a department of a university library with specialist staff.	Term used to describe collections unique to the organisation.	
SPECTRUM		A museum management standard covering collections management, documentation. The authoritative source for many museum procedure terms	ISAD(G)
STACK	A term to describe archive storage area.	This is a uniquely archival term in my opinion, museums use 'store' rather than 'stack'.	RACKS / SHELVES
STORE	A room or repository where collections are kept [SEE STORAGE]		Same Term
STORAGE	Housing of a collection whether on display or not.		Same Term
STORED COLLECTIONS		Collections that are not on main display and are held in storage offsite. These often need a special appointment to view and access.	No Archive equivalent
SUB-FONDS LEVEL	The archives of an administrative unit directly related to a larger creating agency, which is identified as the creator of a fonds. [See FONDS-LEVEL/ ISAD-G]		No Museum Equivalent

SUBGROUP	A body of related records within a record group, usually consisting of the records of a primary subordinate administrative unit or of records series related chronologically, functionally, or by subject.		No Museum Equivalent
SUB-SERIES LEVEL	A body of documents within a series that can be readily distinguished from the larger series by filing arrangement, type, form or content. [see FONDS-LEVEL/ISAG-G]		No Museum Equivalent
SURVEY OR SURVEYING	[See AUDIT/ RECORDS SURVEY]		Same Term
TAXONOMY	The science of classifying things. Although the term taxonomy is increasingly used to denote classification systems themselves, the term 'classification scheme' is more appropriate for grouping records together. Examples of taxonomies include the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). [See CLASSIFICATION]		Same Term
TECHNICIAN	[See CONSERVATOR]	Specialist member of staff, usually within conservation or collections care teams, with skills in moving, packaging and mounting objects. May also apply to audio-visual and multi-media displays in gallery spaces.	No Archive equivalent
TEXTURAL RECORD	Documentary or written records, whether handwritten, typescript, published or generated by any other means, which are accessible to the naked eye without aid of a machine. Composed of written words or symbols rather than graphics, images or sounds.		No Museum Equivalent
TRANSFER	Act of moving document or custody from one entity to another (between organisations, individuals or both).	Used to describe moving objects between buildings of one institution.	
TRANSFER OF TITLE		Usually, a form that enables the capture of signatures and item details recording the	

		legal ownership of an item and its transfer to the museum.	
TREATMENT			PRESERVATION / CONSERVATION
USEABILITY	The characteristic of a record that means it can be located, retrieved and presented in correct time.		DOCUMENTATION
USER	[See RESEARCHER]		Same Term
VITAL RECORD	A government document containing information about a person's important life events. Records which are essential to the continued operation of an organisation after a disaster		No Museum Equivalent
WEEDING	Removal of obsolete or superseded individual documents from a file or series or archive, forming part of routine appraisal work.		No Museum Equivalent
WORKROOM	Conservation studio and workshop.		Same Term

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Term
CMS	Collection Management System
DAMS	Digital Asset Management System
DMS	Document Management System
DOI	Digital Object Identification
EDRMS	Electronic Document Record Management System
EDMS	Electronic Document Management System
GLAM	Galleries, Libraries, Archives & Museums
ISAD(G)	International Standard for Archival Description
MA	Museums Association
PDF/A	Versions of the PDF standard intended for archival use
RiC	Records In Contexts
SHIC	The Social History and Industrial Classification – a system for categorising social history collections
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
UKWA	UK Web Archive http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/

RESOURCES

Resource	Link
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Dublin Core. 'Learning Resources'.	https://www.dublincore.org/resources/
Collections Trust. 'Spectrum'.	https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/
International Council on Archives. 'Records in Contexts (RiC)'.	https://www.ica.org/ica-network/expert-groups/egad/records-in-contexts-ric/

This document was prepared by a working group of the Section for Archives and Museums

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