

Museum Essentials: Working Ethically

Glossary

Outlined below is a glossary of terms that relate to the Museums Association's Code of Ethics for Museums.

Access

usually seen in terms of identifying barriers that prevent participation and developing strategies to dismantle them. Barriers come in many forms and may be physical, sensory, intellectual, attitudinal, social, cultural or financial.

Audience

individuals and groups who make use of the museum's resources or facilities.

Collection

a body of cultural and heritage material. Collections may be physical, intangible or digital.

Collections development policy

an internal policy document which shapes a museum's collections by guiding acquisition and disposal and is led by the museum's statement of purpose.

Community

a group of individuals who share a particular characteristic, set of beliefs or attitudes.

Dealing

making a speculative acquisition with the intention of reselling for profit.

Due diligence

ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken to establish the facts of a case before deciding a course of action, particularly in identifying the source and history of an item offered for acquisition or use before acquiring it, or in understanding the full background of a sponsor, lender or funder.

Governing body

the principal body of individuals in which rests the ultimate responsibility for policy and decisions affecting the governance of the museum. Legal title to the assets of the museum may be vested in this body.

Item

a physical, non-tangible or digital object or material held by a museum.

Partner organisation

an organisation with which a museum has built up a formal relationship relating to museum activities or museum funding.

Source community

a group which identifies themselves as a community and would normally be expected to have a shared geographical location, shared cultural or spiritual and religious beliefs and shared language; or to share some of these facets; and which is recognised as the cultural source of items held in a museum collection.