

Policy 1510 Ethics Policy for the Staff of University Collections

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| Responsible Offices | Offices of the Provost and General Counsel | Effective Date | 2/1/08 |
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Scope

University Museum and Library collections staff represent the University in a wide variety of activities and situations, and their actions reflect on the institution as a whole. The scope of this policy is the maintenance of responsible stewardship of University Collections in the Museums and Libraries.

Policy Statement

Yale University's collections are public trusts and the museum and library professions are ones of public service. University staff members should act as responsible ambassadors for the University and advocates for its educational and research mission both within and beyond the Yale community.

Staff members are encouraged to engage in the full range of activities associated with the University's collections and with their fields of specialization within their professions or disciplines, which may include writing, publishing, lecturing, teaching, collecting, and other activities that enhance their qualifications or standing within their professions, based on the understanding that these activities will also benefit, the University.

Reason for the Policy

This policy gives guidelines to staff members to accept special responsibilities and to conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and dedication to support the mission of the collections with which they are involved.

Definitions

Staff

Unless otherwise indicated, the word "staff" or the phrase "staff members" refers to all museum or library staff, including students who are paid for their work. In the case of the Peabody Museum, "staff" also includes all faculty curators and faculty affiliates

Policy Sections

1510.1 Mission of the University Libraries and Museums

The fundamental requirement of all collections staff is that they should seek to fulfill the respective missions of the University's libraries and museums so as to warrant public confidence in the University, and refrain from anything that would compromise or jeopardize the University's good standing in the community.

Library and Museum staff represent the University in a wide variety of activities and situations and their actions reflect on the institution as a whole. Individuals should be conscious of this and act as responsible ambassadors for the University and advocate for its educational and research mission both within and beyond the University community.

1510.2 Adherence to University's Standards of Business Conduct

Library and museum staff members must fulfill the responsibilities of their positions fully and conscientiously, adhering to the University's [Standards of Business Conduct](#).

These Standards are reflected in many separate policies and procedures of the University, whose statements appear for example, in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and in the [Personnel Policies and Practices Manual](#). The Standards are also reflected in the specific policies of individual University collections. The University is also cognizant of, and will consider carefully, relevant policy statements and codes of ethics of professional associations related to University's collections, such as the American Association of Museums, American Association of Museum Directors, the College Art Association, the American Institute of Conservation, the Association of College and Research Libraries, the American Library Association and the Association of Research Libraries.

1510.3 Stewardship

Staff should exercise responsible stewardship of the collections, balancing preservation with access, advancing understanding, and presenting the collections with accuracy and integrity.

1510.4 Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest or even the appearance of such conflict should be avoided. When conflict or the potential for conflict arises, it should be resolved in a manner that is consistent with University policies.

Library and museum staff members who are responsible for or affiliated with particular collections shall not collect objects, books and manuscripts for their personal ownership in real or apparent competition or conflict with the collections with which they are affiliated. In all cases, the collecting interests of the University take precedence over those of the individual. Employees of University collections may collect in areas not collected by the museum or library with which they are affiliated without informing the museum or library of their activities. In areas where the museum or library does collect, staff members should notify the director of the acquisition of or plans to acquire important materials in which the museum or library might have an interest. The staff member should first consult the relevant curator to determine if the material is of interest to the museum or library, and if so, then notify the director in writing. The museum or library has the right to purchase materials acquired by a staff member for cost plus expenses within thirty days of such notice or sixty days of acquisition, whichever is longer. In the case of materials collected by the director of a University collection, such materials should be presented first to the relevant curatorial department and then to the Office of the Provost at the University.

Museum or library staff may not acquire objects, books or manuscripts for themselves, either by purchase or exchange, from the collection with which they are affiliated. Sale of materials to the University by staff members shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Materials belonging to staff members may be lent to the collection for exhibition or teaching purposes or for publication. Such loans may be acknowledged in print, in exhibition labels, and in publicity. Materials lent to a University collection under these circumstances should not be sold within three years after the conclusion of such a loan without the approval of the director of the collection.

Objects, books or manuscripts acquired before the implementation of this policy are exempt from all of the above restrictions.

1510.5 Refrain from Commercial use

Staff members are encouraged to engage in outside activities related to their profession that result in individual professional growth or make a contribution to the advancement of knowledge and the arts. Outside activities refer to professional and volunteer activities that take place outside of the University. Such activities include lectures and conference participation; authorship of books, articles, catalogues and contribution to edited volumes; collection of specimens in the field; outside conservation work; participation in peer review panels, advisory boards for other institutions; and class/course participation. Such work is permitted so long as it does not interfere with the responsible execution of museum or library duties, create or appear to create a conflict of interest, or present itself as an official act of the museum or library. Activities such as teaching a course at another university would need to be approved in advance by the director. Volunteer work on behalf of charitable, civic, or other educational institutions is permitted.

Activities that would not be permitted include using one's position in a collection to obtain special price considerations in buying objects for personal collections, or using University facilities or equipment for profit making activities that are not professionally related as defined above.

Staff members may not deal in objects, books or manuscripts of the type collected by the museum or library in which they are employed and may not deal in these materials for one year after leaving their position. Dealing is defined as regularly buying and selling such objects intentionally for profit. Occasional sale or exchange to upgrade the staff member's personal collection is allowable.

Staff may not make appraisals (statements as to monetary value) of objects, books or manuscripts of the type collected by the museum or library, with the exception of in-house insurance appraisals for outgoing loans and other purposes.

A staff member may not authenticate materials of the type collected by the museum or library. Authentication in this context means accepting a fee for identifying materials and declaring them to be authentic and providing an official document stating this opinion.

Only bequests, gifts not exceeding modest value or gifts that are clearly offered as the result of friendship or a family relationship rather than the staff member's position, may be accepted. Food and refreshments provided in the course of business discussions or other professional activities such as development may also be accepted. Please refer to Policy 2001 *Gifts from External Parties to Employees* for more details.

Any concerns should be discussed with the director of the individual museum or library.

1510.6 Intellectual Property

Staff members are expected to maintain respect for intellectual property, both artistic and scholarly.

Policies regarding ownership of research and publications are those of the University as stated in the Yale University [Intellectual Property Policies](#). Questions concerning these policies should be discussed with the director of the individual museum or library and, when appropriate, reviewed by the University Committee on Cooperative Research.

Standards defining improper use of sources are those of Yale University. Such standards apply to all written work produced for publication in any form, either printed or electronic, including books, catalogues, articles, brochures, exhibition materials, press releases, and web sites.

1510.7 Adherence to International, Federal and State laws

Transactions related to the University’s collections must be in compliance with all federal, state laws and with international treaties to which the United States is a signatory. Individual collections may choose to adhere to additional national and international standards, subject to the approval of the University Committee on Collections.

1510.8 University Committee On Collections

The University Committee will be composed of faculty and senior administrators of the University. They will meet on a regular basis and provide support for the responsible stewardship of the University Collections.

Special Situations/Exceptions

Any questions on any of the issues raised in this Policy should be referred to the University Committee on Collections.

Related Information

[Standards of Business Conduct](#)

[Copyright Policy](#)

Contacts

Provide a list of contacts in the table format below.

| Subject | Contact | Phone |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Interpretation of Policy | Deputy Provost for the Arts | 432-4449 |

Roles and Responsibilities

Departmental Staff Members

Library and museum staff members must fulfill the responsibilities of their positions fully and conscientiously by adhering to the University’s [Standards of Business Conduct](#) and other related policies as specified in this Policy.

University Committee On Collections

The Committee is responsible for providing direction in addressing conflict of interest and other ethical issues related to University Collections.

Revision History

New Policy.

The official version of this information will only be maintained in an on-line web format. Any and all printed copies of this material are dated as of the print date. Please make certain to review the material on-line prior to placing reliance on a dated printed version.
