The Egypt Centre
Documentation Policy

Name of museum: The Egypt Centre
Name of governing body: Cultural Collections Committee, Academic Services, Swansea University
Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 03/03/2022
Approval given by: Lori Havard, Associate Director: Head of Libraries, Academic Services, Swansea University
Policy Review Procedure: The Documentation Policy will be published and reviewed at least once every five years
Date on which this policy is due for review: 03/03/2027

1. Introduction

1.1. This documentation policy relates to the collection held by The Egypt Centre. The policy was compiled in December 2021 and will be regularly reviewed, updated, and reapproved (at least once every 5 years).

1.2. The Mission Statement of the Egypt Centre is: The Egypt Centre aims to collect, interpret, and care for Egyptian archaeological material and related documentation in order to enhance the education and cultural life of Wales and beyond, now and in the future. The Egypt Centre has three core roles: widening participation, education, and preservation of the collection. To this end, it is recognised that documentation is a vital activity and enables the Museum to carry out its mission.

1.2.1. Documentation is used to widening participation, to ensure that as much information as possible is available to as many as possible. A computerised and digitised system is particularly useful in this respect. For those unable to use a computerised system, the Egypt Centre can produce printed information. The Egypt Centre allows access to all, except sensitive information, to anyone requiring it. The documentation system is designed to aid both public and academic enquiries. Thus, searches to the database may be made using common names and/or popular themes; or can employ specialist terminology. In order to ensure as wide access to the database as possible, the core catalogue of all artefacts (see 2.11) is available on the internet upon a searchable database and also within wider systems such as Europeana. Additionally, information on selected artefacts can be accessed via our web page and our blog.

1.2.2. The ability to use the computerised system to cross-reference means that it is easier to use the documentation system when planning educational activities. Additionally, documentation is taught to undergraduate students at Swansea University by Egypt Centre staff. The Egypt Centre's documentation system is used as an example.

1.2.3. The documentation system is used to record the condition of artefacts, including the recording of audit checks and conservation work.

1.3. Information on the collection and history of its documentation can be seen in the Forward Plan and in the Collection Development Policy, both available on request from the Egypt Centre.

1.4. The means by which documentation is carried out is given in the Documentation Procedural Manual, which is available from the Egypt Centre upon request.

1.5. Documentation is the responsibility of curatorial staff, though documentation activities may be carried out by other staff trained in documentation procedures, and by supervised volunteers.

2. Key Principles

2.1. The Museum places a high level of importance on procedural standards and documentation objectives necessary to meet the Accreditation Standard for museums. The Museum applies SPECTRUM, the UK Museum Documentation Standard, to all areas of documentation. As a baseline, the Museum will meet, but aim to exceed, the minimum standards for the SPECTRUM primary procedures. Internal standards and procedures and their relationship to SPECTRUM are detailed in the Museum's Documentation Procedural Manual.

2.2. The Museum's documentation activities will take account of current legislation, including all applicable legislation relating to copyright, data protection, and freedom of information. All documentation will be carried out in accordance with the Museum Association Code of Ethics.

2.3. Core documentation records are held digitally using the MODES Complete museum database system. These are backed up on the University server every time a change is made. The MODES Complete system is able to output records in a variety of formats, which mitigates against the potential obsolescence of the system.

2.4. Supplementary information (e.g., original letters relating to the status of donations, photocopies of publications relating to the artefacts, printouts of digital records, etc.) are held on paper records stored in the museum's archive room. It is recognised that this storage facility is not perfect, though measures have been taken to protect records (e.g., they are raised off the floor to reduce risk of damage by floodwater, they are stored in metal filing cabinets to reduce damage by water from above, object files must be signed in and out, they are kept in a locked room, etc.)

2.5. There is no documentation backlog. All artefacts can be identified by a brief description, accession number, location, donor, date of donation, original provenance where known, date of manufacture where known, any previous donors, present location.

2.6. The museum is continually adding to information on the collection. This includes photographs of artefacts, recording the use of artefacts in the museum, information gained through research, etc.

2.7. Audits of artefacts is ongoing (undertaken by trained staff and supervised volunteers)

2.8. Core information including a brief description, date, measurements, and an image is available on an online searchable database. Sensitive information such as name of donors wishing to remain anonymous, addresses of donors, etc., is not available on this database.