



University Museums, Repositories, and Collections Policy

Teaching and research collections produced or acquired using university resources may be managed in three different ways: curation in university museums, curation in university repositories, or administration by departments. These options strive to strike a balance among several issues, such as educational uses, research purposes, legal obligations, accountability, and oversight.

University Museums

University museums provide exposure for university collections and other items through displays, tours, educational programs, and loaning materials to institutional collaborators, and they provide an important perspective on preserving, reserving, and maintaining collections for the future. BYU has four authorized museums: the Monte L. Bean Life Sciences Museum, Museum of Art, Museum of Paleontology, and Museum of Peoples and Cultures. Policies, governance, procedures, and information for the individual museums follow best practices and can be obtained from museum staff.

Although museums instruct, motivate, and inspire learning beyond the borders of the university, there remains an expectation that each museum and its programs vigorously support the mission and aims of the university through engagement in undergraduate and graduate education and faculty research in relevant academic disciplines.

The establishment of a new museum is rare and requires the approval of the dean, academic vice president, President's Council, and consultation with the existing museums.

University Repositories

The university distinguishes between repository collections and university collections. University repositories are facilities that provide professional, systematic, and accountable curatorial services on a long-term basis. They also coordinate and ensure accountability for short-term loans from off-campus museums and other repositories.

Designated university repositories include:

- Harold B. Lee Library (See [University Libraries Policy.](#))
- University Archives (See [University Archives Policy.](#))
- Monte L. Bean Museum
- Museum of Art
- Museum of Paleontology
- Museum of Peoples and Cultures



Repository collections of artifacts, works of art, manuscripts, books, journals, and scientific specimens are important to the university's mission of providing a stimulating environment for learning. In addition to their educational role, repository collections may have research, historical, aesthetic, and capital values.

Repository collections owned by the university require adequate care to optimize their academic value, as well as to preserve and enhance other values. Items such as antiques and antiquities, art, animal and plant parts and whole specimens, paleontological specimens, rare books and manuscripts, personal papers, and human remains can present health and safety or insurance concerns. As repositories, the museums and library provide professional care for items in compliance with state, federal, and international laws, regulations, permitting processes, and professional ethics.

The establishment of new university repositories is rare and requires the approval of the dean, academic vice president, and consultation with the existing repositories.

University and Departmental Collections

University collections consist of items pertinent to specific disciplines and are managed by departments for short-term use in engaging and enriching the student experience and supporting faculty research. Faculty applying for a new collection must demonstrate that the educational or research needs of that discipline require certain materials to be brought together or utilized in a way that cannot be achieved through a museum or repository. These collections are generally small in nature and pose no undue burden on the existing space, financial, and personnel resources of the department. The resources required to house, manage, and maintain collections are provided by the associated academic units.

All collection materials are university property and must be appropriately accounted for and identified. Additionally, collections must not conflict with repository collections. Adequate space must be available for current needs as well as future growth. Proper environmental and security controls must be available for preservation of the collection. Personnel associated with the collection should have sufficient training in technical services necessary to maintain the collection.

Approval for university collections is granted by the relevant chair, dean, and academic vice president in consultation with museums and repositories. A list of approved collections is maintained by the academic vice president's office. Approval for collections is reviewed as part of regular academic unit and academic support unit reviews every seven years.



Items Loaned to Units or Personnel

Academic units, academic support units, or individual BYU employees who wish to solicit or accept items on loan from a university museum or repository should follow the loaning unit's procedures.

Academic units, academic support units, or individual BYU employees who wish to solicit or accept items on loan from non-BYU entities or individuals should follow the [Loaned Items Procedures](#).

APPROVED: 28 Nov 2022

PRIOR VERSION: 21 Mar 1983

APPLICABILITY: This policy applies to all units with museums, repositories, or collections and to units and individuals who accept items on loan for display.

POLICY OWNER: Academic Vice President

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Associate Academic Vice President – Research and Graduate Studies

IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES: [Loaned Items Procedures](#)

RELATED POLICIES:

- [Disposition of University Collections](#)
- [University Archives Policy](#)
- [University Libraries Policy](#)