

# **RGU Art & Heritage Collections**

## **ACCESS POLICY**

**2013-2018**

Name of governing body: **Robert Gordon University**

Date on which this policy was approved by management body: **8 August 2013**

Date at which this policy is due for review: **31 Jan 2018**

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05/08/2013

**Art & Heritage Collections Statement of Purpose** 'The University Art & Heritage Collections give students, staff and the wider community inspiration, learning and enjoyment by preserving and presenting historic artworks and artefacts which reflect the history and achievements of Robert Gordon University.'

## 1. Definition of access

We define access as something that is made possible when physical / environmental, sensory, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal, financial, and technological barriers are removed or reduced.

## 2. Equal opportunities

RGU Art & Heritage Collections and its management team are part of Robert Gordon University, and as such are subject to the University's Equality and Diversity Policy <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity>

'RGU Inclusivity Statement

- Robert Gordon University strives towards creating a working, learning and social atmosphere which is inclusive, harmonious and respectful of diversity. The university will achieve this by:
- embracing a positive attitude towards the promotion of equality on the basis of age; culture; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation to ensure all reach their full potential;
- being prepared to understand that fairness and equality of opportunity is not always about treating people similarly, but can sometimes mean treating people differently;
- acknowledging and celebrating the breadth of experiences and perspectives that people from diverse backgrounds bring to the life of the university; and
- seeking to eliminate discrimination and prejudice by ensuring people treat each other with respect. '

The Access Policy of Art & Heritage Collections will ensure we comply with the above statement by applying it to all our possible service users, services, collections, events and premises.

The Art & Heritage Collections will also follow the Museums Association's Code of Ethics for Museums, especially section 3.1

"All those who work for or govern museums should ensure that they improve the quality of experience for all users".

### **3. Policy on accessibility**

Our policy is to consider accessibility in everything we do to develop the service. This includes our relationships with and provision for staff, students, and volunteers as well as outside visitors, and we are committed to training in access issues for staff, and volunteers.

### **4. The barriers to full access which we will address include**

- I. **Physical Barriers**, such as building layout, steps, doors and lack of seating which might make moving around, sitting and standing difficult for some people
- II. **Sensory Barriers**, such as written, spoken, performed or audio interpretation which might make reading, seeing or hearing interpretation and information difficult for some people
- III. **Intellectual Barriers**, such as modes of communication, vocabulary and language which might make understanding particular ideas and narratives difficult for some people
- IV. **Cultural Barriers**, such as assumptions about shared knowledge, history, beliefs or practices which might make understanding particular ideas and narratives difficult for some people
- V. **Attitudinal Barriers** such as a lack of welcome, services or activities for any individuals or groups.
- VI. **Financial Barriers** such as the cost of any service we provide or goods that we might have for sale. Our policy of free access also overcomes this barrier
- VII. **Technological Barriers** such as the inappropriate use of ICT and new media which might either impede or enable greater access to collections.

### **5. Buildings**

RGU Art & Heritage Collections are held within the main University premises and as such are subject to the University's Equality and Diversity Policy (see above paragraph 3) <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity>. In planning any display or other public space or work space the solving any problems of physical access for disabled and other users will be a priority, according to the above policy and to current UK and EU regulations.

### **6. Access to Collections**

RGU Art & Heritage Collections will always offer a variety of ways of gaining access to the collections and information about them.

These could include, but are not restricted to the following; displays and exhibitions, handling sessions, publications, website information and events.

In general our opening hours are subject to the existing lengthy building opening hours of the Georgina Scott Sutherland Library and we will continue to ensure that these are as flexible as possible to suit as many people as possible.

In order to offer suitable access to collections for research, we will offer study rooms for object viewing, any printed material we may have, web-based resources and access to staff.

We will plan exhibitions, information and interpretation to suit a range of audiences and abilities, and ensure that our presentation and labelling of displays respects a diversity of backgrounds.

Subject to requirements of care and conservation, we will always consider lending our collections and making them available for handling if we can.

## **7. Access to Learning**

RGU Art & Heritage Collections will aim to provide learning opportunities for different audiences and levels of ability and tailor our programme to the needs of specific groups.

Where possible, we will aim to provide education programmes for all publicly accessible temporary and permanent displays to interpret the collections for people with a range of backgrounds and abilities.

Where possible, we will aim to identify and develop partnerships with a range of other educational and community organisations to ensure that our activities continue to cater for the widest possible audiences.

## **8. Access to visitor services**

RGU Art & Heritage Collections are held within the main University premises and at present share front of house staff and other facilities with the University Library and Business School. These staff assist and welcome all visitors.

Accessible toilets, access for wheelchairs and pushchairs and seating and appropriate signage for a range of users is provided where possible.

Disabled parking spaces and a bus service are available a short distance away.

Refreshment facilities are available within the building where our main exhibitions and activities take place at present.

All visitor services staff receive adequate training in customer care.

## **9. Communication and Access**

We will promote and publicise the activities, events and services we provide using as many forms of communication as possible. These will include traditional printed press, leaflets, websites, direct mail, and social media. We are of course also able to receive communication from users in each of the above ways.

## **10. Reviewing the policy**

Our **Collections Access Policy** will be available on our website [www.rgu.ac.uk/collections](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/collections) and social media as appropriate.

We will review the Collections Management Plan at least every 5 years

The date of the next review is January 2018