
Advanced Certificate in Museum Project Management

Legal and Ethical Issues in Museums

****Acquisition****

: The process of obtaining objects or materials for a museum's collection. This can involve purchasing, donating, or borrowing items. The acquisition process must adhere to legal and ethical guidelines to ensure the provenance, cultural sensitivity, and authenticity of the objects.

****Provenance****

: The history of ownership, custody, or location of an object. Provenance is crucial in establishing the authenticity and cultural significance of an object, and museums must make best efforts to verify the provenance before acquisition.

****Deaccession****

: The formal process of removing an object from a museum's collection. Deaccessioning can be a result of various reasons, such as the object not meeting the museum's collection criteria, being duplicate, or not being in good condition. Legal and ethical guidelines must be followed during the deaccessioning process to ensure the proper disposal or transfer of the object.

****Cultural Property****

: Objects that have cultural, historical, or artistic significance to a specific group or society. Museums must respect the cultural heritage of objects and adhere to legal and ethical guidelines when acquiring, displaying, and storing cultural property.

****Repatriation****

: The return of cultural property to its country of origin, community, or descendants. Repatriation is often a result of legal or ethical claims made by the original owners or custodians of the objects. Museums must consider repatriation requests carefully and follow legal and ethical guidelines in the process.

****Intellectual Property****

: The legal rights to creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, symbols, names, images, and designs. Museums must respect the intellectual property rights of others and seek permission when using copyrighted materials or trademarks.

****Conflict of Interest****

: A situation where a person's personal or professional interests conflict with their duties or responsibilities. Museum professionals must avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any potential conflicts to ensure the integrity and transparency of their actions.

**** Ethical Guidelines****

: Principles that guide the conduct and decision-making of museum professionals. Ethical guidelines help ensure the responsible and respectful treatment of objects, communities, and stakeholders in museum practices.

****Laws and Regulations****

: Legal frameworks that govern museum practices and operations. Laws and regulations provide a minimum standard of conduct and protect the rights and interests of various stakeholders, such as the public, museum professionals, and object owners.

****Accessibility****

: The design and provision of museum services and facilities that enable all people, regardless of their abilities, to participate and enjoy the museum experience. Accessibility includes physical access, sensory access, cognitive access, and digital access.

****Diversity and Inclusion****

: The recognition and celebration of the diversity of people, cultures, and perspectives in museum practices. Diversity and inclusion involve ensuring that museums are welcoming, respectful, and representative of the communities they serve.

****Community Engagement****

: The active involvement and collaboration of museums with communities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of museum programs and services. Community engagement helps museums build relationships, trust, and relevance with their stakeholders.

****Restitution****

: The return of stolen or looted objects to their rightful owners. Restitution is often a result of legal or ethical claims made by individuals, communities, or countries. Museums must consider restitution requests carefully and follow legal and ethical guidelines in the process.

****Transparency****

: The open and honest communication of museum practices and decisions. Transparency helps build trust, accountability, and credibility with stakeholders and the public.

****Accountability****

: The responsibility and answerability of museums for their actions and decisions. Accountability involves ensuring that museums are answerable to their stakeholders, the public, and the law.

****Risk Management****

: The identification, assessment, and mitigation of potential risks in museum practices. Risk management helps museums prevent or minimize harm to objects, people, and the institution.

****Confidentiality****

: The protection of sensitive or personal information in museum practices. Confidentiality helps maintain trust, respect, and privacy with stakeholders.

****Professional Development****

: The ongoing education, training, and growth of museum professionals. Professional development helps museum professionals stay current, skilled, and ethical in their practices.

****Collaboration****

: The joint effort and partnership of museums with other organizations, institutions, or communities. Collaboration helps museums expand their reach, resources, and impact.

****Sustainability****

: The responsible and ethical use of resources, practices, and programs in museum operations. Sustainability involves considering the environmental, social, and economic impact of museum practices.

****Advocacy****

: The support and promotion of museums and their values, missions, and contributions. Advocacy involves raising awareness, building coalitions, and influencing policies and decisions that affect museums.

****Digital Preservation****

: The long-term preservation and accessibility of digital objects and materials in museum collections. Digital preservation involves ensuring the authenticity, integrity, and usability of digital objects for future generations.

****Data Privacy****

: The protection and regulation of personal or sensitive information in museum databases and systems. Data privacy involves ensuring the confidentiality, security, and transparency of data practices.

****Exhibition Design****

: The planning, development, and implementation of museum exhibitions. Exhibition design involves creating engaging, informative, and accessible experiences for visitors.

****Education and Outreach****

: The development and delivery of museum programs, activities, and resources for various audiences. Education and outreach involve promoting learning, engagement, and participation in museums.

****Fundraising and Development****

: The generation and management of financial resources for museum operations and projects. Fundraising and development involve building relationships, partnerships, and support from various sources.

****Governance****

: The leadership, management, and oversight of museum operations and decisions. Governance involves ensuring the accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of museum practices.

****Marketing and Communication****

: The promotion and outreach of museum brand, message, and offerings. Marketing and communication involve building awareness, interest, and engagement with museums.

****Research and Scholarship****

: The investigation, analysis, and interpretation of museum objects, collections, and practices. Research and scholarship involve contributing to the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of museums.

****Visitor Experience****

: The overall impression, feeling, and impact of museum visits. Visitor experience involves ensuring the accessibility, engagement, and satisfaction of museum visitors.

****Volunteer Management****

: The recruitment, training, and supervision of museum volunteers. Volunteer management involves engaging, recognizing, and supporting the contributions of volunteers.

****Workplace Culture****

: The values, norms, and practices that shape the work environment and relationships in museums. Workplace culture involves promoting respect, collaboration, and professionalism in museum practices.