



# 1. MODULE OVERVIEW

## 1.1 Module description

This module focuses on the nature of the objects we conserve. It enables you to explore the ways in which objects are made, regarded, and used, and the ways in which their condition and meaning can shift over time or in different contexts. It aims to give you experience in examination and condition assessment of objects, and development of statements of significance.

## 1.2 Module Aims

This module aims to train to examine objects and assess their condition and significance. It enables to explore the ways in which objects are made, regarded and used, and the ways in which their condition, values and meaning can shift over time, or in different contexts.

## 1.3 Learning Outcomes

- Application of acquired knowledge and skills
- Observation and critical reflection
- Safe handling and examination of objects
- Team-working
- Documentation and report writing skills
- Translation of information across formats

## 1.4 Methods of Assessment

Video Presentation (four minutes): 30%, submission due February 9<sup>th</sup> 2024  
Report (2000 words): 70%, submission due March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024

## 1.5 Communications

- Ø [Moodle](#) is the main hub for this course.
- Ø Important information will be posted by staff in [the Announcements section of the Moodle page](#) and you will automatically receive an email notification for these.
- Ø Please post any general queries relating to module content, assessments and administration in the [General Queries Moodle forum](#) (or via email if you prefer).
- Ø For personal queries, please contact the PGTA ([su.yin.19@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:su.yin.19@ucl.ac.uk)) or co-ordinator ([j.m.saunders@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.saunders@ucl.ac.uk)) by email.

## 1.6 Week-by-week summary

Week	Date	Details	Lecturers
12	08.01.24	11:00-	

## 1.8 Weekly Module Plan

The module is taught predominantly through lectures, seminars, and practical activities. Sessions which you must attend on campus each week take place Mondays 11:00 am -

You will need both the software *and* a driver for the digital microscopes to work. These can be downloaded from this website: <http://www.dino-lite.com/download.php>.

Please see 'Basic texts and Online Resources' on the Moodle Module Homepage for important background

## 2.2 Assessment 2: Report (2000 words)

The report is also based on your OBL object and will cover key aspects of important to conservators: significance, condition, and preventive advice. In addition, you will need to complete three distinct critical evaluation sections. Your report should contain high quality visuals to support communication and understanding of your object. You must follow the content guidelines provided precisely and take note of marks allocations when considering the length of each stipulated section (see [Assessment Booklet](#)).

Your report will be worth 70% of your final mark for this module.

## 3. SYLLABUS

All essential readings are available online through [www.ucl.ac.uk/library](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library) or via the link provided with the entry. All recorded lectures will be made available on Moodle or via the link provided with the entry.

Week 12
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### VIDEOS TO WATCH

Looking at Things (RFP). *In three parts on Moodle.*

Introduction to Significance (RFP). *On Moodle.*

### CLASS 410 – 11:00-12:50 BST

Module Introduction (JS). Overview of what we will achieve this term with a focus on the assessments followed by a significance activity to introduce this important approach to understanding objects.

### ESSENTIAL READING

Appelbaum, B., 2007. *Conservation treatment methodology*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. INST ARCH LA APP. Also available as an e-book. Read pages 65-71 and 341.

Mason, R., 2002. Assessing values in conservation planning: methodological issues and choices. In: M. de la Torre (ed.), *Assessing the values of cultural heritage. Research Report*. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 5-30. INST ARCH AG DEL. Also available online: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/pdf\\_publications/pdf/assessing.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/assessing.pdf)

Reed, C., 2018. *Reviewing Significance 3.0: a framework for reviewing museum collections' significance, management and use*. London: Collections Trust. <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/reviewing-significance-3-0/>

Russell, R. and Winkworth, K., 2009. *Significance 2.0: A guide to assessing the significance of collections*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

Rundle Mall, SARU Collections (Course) - 6 (if q0 TJETQ0 0 1 35.4 722.26 Tm0 g0 G[(Edi)4(

Objects should be handled cautiously and supported fully during examination. If the condition of the object allows, try to examine all surfaces including the underside and/or inside. Examination should involve more than just the naked eye; all of the following are useful:

A hand-lens, a stereoscopic microscope, and a raking light (a beam of light directed parallel to the surface which will reveal surface irregularities).

A needle or soft brush may be used very gently to probe, or to clear the surface of dust.

A colour atlas (if available) should be used to help in observing and recording variations in colour.

What to look for?

### Ø Technology

Careful visual examination can yield a considerable amount of information about how the object was made and what it was made of. Things to look for include:

Main material(s) used in the construction.

How the main material was shaped e.g. by building up (additive) or cutting away (reductive).

Size, shape, colour, texture, weight.

Indication of technique(s) of manufacture - tool marks, flash-lines etc.

Decoration:

- o applied directly to surface e.g. paint.
- o modification of surface e.g. stamping, carving.
- o attached to structure e.g. beads attached to textile.

### Ø Condition

The condition of both body and surface should be noted. It is important to note whether the deterioration of one component is affecting another, e.g. a weakened thread threatening the loss of beads, a corroding metal causing damage to another material. Look for the following:

Physical condition:

- o whole, broken, folded, cracked, crushed.

Chemical condition:

- o corroding, fading, disintegrating.

Biological condition:

- o signs of insect or fungal attack e.g. insects, larvae, flight-holes, fungal strands.

Accretions:

- o dust, dirt, grease -dust, dirt, grease.
- o salts -flaking surface, white powder, crystals.
- o material which may not be obviously identifiable.

N.B. Evidence of use may be indicated by material condition. Signs of wear on an object, or deposits on the surface associated with the original use e.g. greasy marks left by food, or traces of pigments left inside a pot are important to record.

### Ø Earlier repairs

N.B. Because of the nature of the ARCL0113 assignment, only basic information about earlier treatments will be provided (if available).

#### Ø Further investigation

If further information is needed which cannot be provided by visual examination, it becomes necessary to undertake more detailed investigation (e.g. investigative cleaning which may involve removing a small area of corrosion or accretion). It may be necessary to turn to more complex examination techniques such as chemical spot-tests, X-radiography, X-ray diffraction, scanning electron microscopy etc.

These techniques may be needed, for example, to distinguish between one metal or alloy and another, or to find out what has been used as a varnish or as a medium for a paint, or to identify the species of a piece of wood.

N.B. 'Further investigation' is not a required section of the ARCL0113 assignment, but you can certainly recommend it where appropriate throughout your reports.

### Week 13

#### VIDEOS TO WATCH

Introduction to Inorganics (JS). *In six parts on Moodle.*

CLASS 405 –09:00-10:50 BST

Photography Workshop 1 (AR).

CLASS 410 –11:10-12:50 BST

Inorganic materials discussion and activity (JS). *Focus on glass and stone.*

#### ESSENTIAL READING

Caple, C. (2006). *Objects: Reluctant Witnesses to the Past* (1st ed.). London: Routledge. Chapter 3, 94-137 (feel free to skip over entries relating to organic materials, though this information will be useful for Dean's class next week). <https://doi-org.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/10.4324/9780203409060>

González-Ramírez, A. (2019). Stone sculpture wear: Alteration/Fragmentation processes and their impact on carving traces of tenon heads of chavin de huántar, peru. *Advances in Archaeological Practice*, 7(2), 152-168. <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/10.1017/aap.2018.34>

May, E., and Jones, M. (Eds), 2006. *Conservation Science: Heritage Materials*. Cambridge: RSC. Chapter 7 Glass and Ceramics, 160-184. <https://doi.org/10.1039/9781847557629>

Szczepanowska, H.M. 2012. *Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Key Principles and Approaches* (1st ed.). London: Routledge. Chapters 8 & 9 <https://doi-org.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/10.4324/9780203081198>



### Reductive technologies

Cutting away material to create a shape.  
Wood, bone, ivory, stone.  
Visible tool marks.

### Alteration through heat (pyro technology)

Ceramics, plasters, glass, enamels, metals.  
Evidence of mobile/molten stage in manufacture e.g. twisting of iron, flowlines in glass.  
Evidence of moulding ('seam lines').  
N.B. ceramics can also be moulded (slip casting) but this does not involve heat.

### Colouring and surface finishes

Paints: ceramics, glass, stone, plasters, wood, ivory, textiles etc.  
Dyes: leather, textiles.  
Colourants glass, glazes.  
Glazes: ceramics.  
Patination: metals.  
Waterproofing: leather, textiles.

### Re-use, recycling

Further change/transformation.  
Scrap metal, grog in ceramics, cullet in glass.  
Re-fashioning of costume to re-use valued textiles.

### Composites

Composite objects made of more than one material with different properties which may affect each other.

### Complexity

Complexity may not be visible on the surface e.g. prisms in binoculars, e.g. the layers in a painting. Each component, even if invisible, may be contributing to change.

### Inclusion of 'foreign' materials

Effect of trade thus in 'indigenous' objects (e.g. from N. America, Africa, India) we may find European dinner plates, trade cloth, trade beads.

### 'New materials

Plastics; new metal alloys; new ceramics; medical drugs (see Living and Dying exhibition at the BM).

### Additive technologies

Adding material to create a shape.  
Ceramics, plasters, glass, woven structures.  
Added materials e.g. temper in ceramics, plasters.  
Added features i.e. building an object up.  
Visible tool marks, added features e.g. handles, evidence of construction (e.g. weaving).

### Alteration through chemical modification

Leather, some textiles (e.g. mercerisation of cotton, weighting of silk).  
Dyeing.

### Material character of objects

Extraction and processing of raw materials.  
Change from one state to another.  
Skill of craft workers in selecting materials and controlling these changes.  
Using the same starting material and ending with products with different properties  
metal worker controlling copper alloys [copper, brass, silver, even gold];  
tanner producing soft gloving leathers or buff-leather jerkins  
Limestone can be used for: building, carving, plasters and mortars (all calcium carbonate), also essential to manufacture of iron (blast furnaces).  
Ironstone can be used for: building, pigment, metal (all will yield iron on analysis).

### Imitations and copies

Many materials imitate others:  
pots imitating baskets.  
imitations of gold (tumbaga; silver+yellow lacquer, gilded metal, gold paint).  
early plastic imitating ivory, tortoiseshell.

### Fakes

Imitations intended to deceive

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Bone and Ivory (RFP). *On Moodle.*

Hard Tissue Keratinous Material (RFP). *On Moodle.*

Orton, C., Tyers, P. and Vince, A. 2013. "Making pottery." In

While a focus on physical stability continues to be fundamental to the processes of conservation, increasing importance is being given to significance. An assessment of significance identifies the important elements of an object's fabric, history, function, social and spiritual values and meaning. Once these features are understood they can be expressed in a statement of significance.

The aim of conservation is to retain, reveal or recover the cultural significance of an artefact. How this is to be achieved should be clearly defined in a conservation plan, which explains what the conservation treatment is designed to conserve. This differs from a conservation or treatment proposal, which seeks to define how it is to be conserved. Thus, the statement of significance guides the conservation plan and the conservation or treatment proposal sets out how the plan will be implemented.

### Statement of Significance

Significance assessment should take place before conservation begins so that the object's values are thoroughly understood and as far as possible preserved in the conservation process. The assessment of significance provides part of the context for conservation decision-making. Conservators are better able to determine priorities and levels of conservation treatments if they first understand object significance.

Values: The values considered when writing statements of significance may include, for example: aesthetic, social, scientific, historic, religious, spiritual, legal, economic, political or cultural. These are values that an object or collection may have for past, present and future generations.

The statement does not provide an absolute measurement; it is likely to change over time.

Collaboration: Assessment of significance is most effective when it is collaborative and multivocal. Who defines the significance is a complex issue and is context specific. Ideally there should be an opportunity for the originating community, donor, or current owner/user to describe why an object is important to them. Occasionally there will be strongly contested ideas that reflect differing views about the value and meaning of objects.

The Burra Charter (2013) is a useful source and is often used by organisations as the basis of assessment in developing a conservation plan. It emphasises that the artefact itself is an important source of information, regardless of other forms of documentation since they are no substitutes for the experience of the actual artefact.

### Object Biography

The concept of object biography also has a useful contribution to make to the understanding of significance. Object narratives provide a perspective on the changes to an object's meaning through time. However, it is important to remember that these tell us as much about the values of those who construct the narrative as they do about their subject matter. People constantly remake and reinvent perceptions and interpretations of the historical environment to meet their own ideas, needs and aspirations.

In order to extract meaningful information from a plurality of perspectives, standardised methodologies have been developed. However, many consider heritage values can never be objectively broken down and measured.

### Standardised Methodology

In defining a statement of significance each case should start with an agreed method of characterising values from the range of interested parties involved. In defining a standard methodology, it is necessary to agree the range of values to be assessed. Institutions, funding bodies and planning agencies are likely to insist upon the use of a specsta.Be886619Aee

## Nature of Significance

Assessment of significance involves:

Examination of the object.

Developing an understanding of its history and context.

Identifying its value for the individuals or groups who have an interest in it.

As an example, Australia's Heritage Collections Council has applied four main criteria to assessing significance:

### Ø *Historic*

An object may be historically significant for its associations with people, events, places, and themes. This could be

## Step-by-Step Approach

Gather available details about the object: owner's details, photos, copies of reference materials and information on related objects.

Research history and provenance of the object: evidence of use, where it was made, used.

Talk with owners, users, and relevant associated groups. Examine cultural values, encourage owners to describe the meaning of the object to them and others.

Understand the context of the object, how the object relates to other objects in the collection/group, its history and geographic area.

Examine and assess the object.

Analyse the fabric of the object: what is it made of; patterns of wear; repairs adaptations; condition.

Assess significance against the main agreed values then determine the degree of significance.

Write a concise statement of significance showing why the object is valued and outlining its cultural meaning.

### RECOMMENDED READING

Avrami, E., Mason, R., and de la Torre, M. (eds), 2000. *Values and Heritage Conservation*. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute.

[http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/pdf\\_publications/values\\_heritage\\_research\\_report.htm](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/values_heritage_research_report.htm)

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Avrami, E., 2009. Heritage, values, and sustainability. In: A. Richmond and A. Bracker (eds), *Conservation: principles, dilemmas and uncomfortable truths*. London: Butterworth-Heinemann in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 177-183. INST ARCH L RIC; ISSUE DESK IOA RIC 9. Also available as an e-book.

*The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013.*

Modern Materials (CR). Lecture and handling session.

#### ESSENTIAL READING

Plastics Subject Specialist Network website: <https://www.modip.ac.uk/projects/plastics-ssn>

Scott Williams, R. 2002. Care of Plastics: Malignant Plastics. *WAAC Newsletter* 24 (1). <http://cool.conservation-us.org/waac/wn/wn24/wn24-1/wn24-102.html>

Shashoua, Y. 2008 *Conservation of Plastics, Materials Science, Degradation and Preservation*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. Especially: Chapter 6 Degradation of Plastics. Chapter 7. Conservation of plastics, 7.1 Inhibitive conservation

#### RECOMMENDED READING

Rogerson, C., 2010. *Preserving Jewellery Created from Plastics and Rubber: Application of Materials and Interpretation of Objects* (Doctoral dissertation, Royal College of Art). Introduction: [https://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/338/1/Cordelia\\_Rogerson\\_PhD\\_Conservation\\_Preserving\\_Jewellery\\_2010.pdf](https://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/338/1/Cordelia_Rogerson_PhD_Conservation_Preserving_Jewellery_2010.pdf)

Shashoua, Y. 2016. Mesocycles in conserving plastics. *Studies in Conservation* 61 (sup 2), 208-213. Available online.

CLASS OBLL – 14:00-16:00 BST

Future Care (JS, SY).

By now, you should have a good understanding of how different aspects of environment and use can cause and/or accelerate different deterioration mechanisms in objects, and preventive conservation approaches which can help to manage these risks (*refer to ARCL0111 Preventive Conservation class materials*). Not all agents of deterioration will be relevant for all objects in all contexts, but it may be a good starting point to go through these to ensure you have not forgotten something that applies to your object.

Week 19
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CLASS 410 – 11:00-12:50 BST

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Wills, B., 2014. Wrapping the Wrapped: The Development of Minimal Conservation of Ancient Human Wrapped Mummies from the Region of the Nile. In: Harris, S. and Douny, L. (eds) *Wrapping and unwrapping material culture: archaeological and anthropological perspectives*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press Inc, pp. 157–170. [https://www.academia.edu/9188920/Wrapping\\_the\\_Wrapped\\_The\\_Development\\_of\\_Minimal\\_Conservation\\_of\\_Ancient\\_Human\\_Wrapped\\_Mummies\\_from\\_the\\_Region\\_of\\_the\\_Nile?email\\_work\\_card=title](https://www.academia.edu/9188920/Wrapping_the_Wrapped_The_Development_of_Minimal_Conservation_of_Ancient_Human_Wrapped_Mummies_from_the_Region_of_the_Nile?email_work_card=title)

Wills, B. and Antoine, D., 2015. Developing a passive approach to the conservation of naturally mummified human remains from the fourth cataract region of the Nile Valley. *British Museum Technical Research Bulletin*, 9, pp.49-56. On Moodle.

#### RECOMMENDED READING

Bowron, E.L., 2003. A new approach to the storage of human skeletal remains. *The Conservator* 27 (1), 95-106. <https://doi-org.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/10.1080/01410096.2003.9995193>

Week 20
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#### VIDEOS TO WATCH

Examination and Identification of Textiles (RFP). *In three parts on Moodle.*

Processing the fibres of a banana stem with Katia Neves (RFP). *On Moodle.*

How to spin on a drop spindle (A. Flagg). *On Moodle.*

#### CLASS 410 –11:00-12:50 BST

Fibre ID discussion and activity (JS) and Assessment videos showcase 1.

#### ESSENTIAL READING

Brooks, M., M., and Eastop, D. 2006.



## VIDEOS TO WATCH

Waterlogged Wood (JS). *In four parts on Moodle.*

CLASS 617 –11:00-11:50 OR 12:00-12:50 BST

Waterlogged organics practical in the MSc conservation lab teaching area (DS, TG). [Choose your group on Moodle.](#)

## ESSENTIAL READING

Bergstrand, T., 2001. In situ preservation and re-burial – methods to handle archaeological ship remains in the archipelago of Göteborg, Sweden. In Hoffman, P., Spriggs, J., A., Grant, T., Cook, C., & Recht, A., (eds.), 2001. *Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> ICOM Group on Wet Organic Archaeological Materials Conference*, Stockholm. Bremerhaven: Druckerei Ditzen GmbH und Co. 155-166.

Björdal, C., G., & Nilsson, T., 2002. Decomposition of waterlogged archaeological wood. In Hoffman, P., (ed.), *Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> ICOM Group on Wet Organic Archaeological Materials Conference, Stockholm 2001*. Bremerhaven: ICOM Committee for Conservation Working Group on Wet Organic Archaeological Materials. 235-243.

Mouzouras, R., Jones, A., M., Jones, E., B., G., & Rule, M., H., 1990. Non-Destructive Evaluation of Hull and Stored Timbers from the Tudor Ship "Mary Rose". *Studies in Conservation*, 35, 4, 173-188.

Sully, D. and Domoney, K. 2014. Conservation Studies. In: Milne, G., and Sully, D., (eds.). 2014. *The Gresham Ship Project II: An armed Elizabethan merchantman wrecked in the Thames: cargo, contents and context*. Nautical Archaeology Society: Portsmouth, UK. Chapter 3.  
[https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1410625/1/UoA17A\\_10007784\\_SullyDM\\_19975.pdf](https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1410625/1/UoA17A_10007784_SullyDM_19975.pdf)

## RECOMMENDED READING

Brunning, R., 1996. Waterlogged Wood. Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood. *Compiled for the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, English Heritage.*

Brysaert, A., 1998. A Late Bronze Age sickle from Shinewater Park: The treatment of a waterlogged composite. *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, 4.

Jones, M., 2006. Conservation of Ancient Timbers from the Sea. In May, E., & Jones, M., (eds.), *Conservation Science: Heritage Materials*. Cambridge: RSC Publishing, 266-308.

Malea, E., Vogiatzi, T. and Watkinson, D.E., 1999. *Assessing the physical condition of waterlogged archaeological leather* (Doctoral dissertation, CARDIFF). <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ekaterini->

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED READING

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# APPENDIX A

## QUESTIONS ABOUT RAW MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Starting points to consider in this session and for further research:

What type of material is present?

E.g. ceramic, metal, wood, leather, skin, textile, ivory.

Some cases may be obvious, but with more difficult ones you may want to discuss how you can tell that the object is what it is. If you are not sure of the material then looking at the object's record and conducting further research into your object and its origins might provide some clues. For example, if the object record states that the material is elephant ivory, you might want to research ivory characteristics (e.g. Schreger lines (cross-hatching) in cross-

## QUESTIONS ABOUT CONDITION

Aspects to think about for possible inclusion in your report:

Is the object complete?

Are there missing/broken pieces? If you have broken pieces, do they fit well together? Is the break likely to be old or recent? Why do you think these pieces were broken? Do they correspond with joins between different components, which have failed? Has the material deteriorated to become very weak? Is the object damaged in any other way - aside from being broken - e.g. crushed, scratched etc.?

Is the object structurally sound?

For example, can you see any cracks/splits? Do these appear to be structural or superficial: is there any movement in the split? Are joins between component parts stable?

Is the surface of the object, including decorative elements stable?

Are there any surface losses? Is the surface friable, cracked, flaking etc.? Surface instability might be linked to structural deformation/deterioration (see no. 7 below).

How clean is the object?

Is there only surface dust or is there also dirt that has become more ingrained? Handling marks.

Is there any evidence of biodeterioration?

Such as mould, pest activity etc. If there is evidence of pest activity, does this appear to be old or active? - is there any frass?

Are there any other signs of surface accretions?

E.g. salts - particularly in the case of some ceramic and stone objects. Leather may also precipitate mineral salts (white accretions - but check that this is not mould).

Are there any other signs of deterioration/deformation/chemical instability of the component materials?

E.g. corrosion of metals. Warping/deformation/embrittlement of organic objects due to movement caused by changes in relative humidity. Red rot of leather (orange-red colour and pungent smell, loss of mechanical strength). Evidence of photochemical deterioration processes e.g. discolouration/fading due to exposure to UV light? Evidence of interactions between the different components of the object e.g. metal stains on leather?

Are there any signs of past use?

E.g. patterns of wear on the surface. Handling marks.

Is there any evidence of past interventions: old repairs/conservation work?

If so, are these stable or failing?

Can you suggest any factors that might have caused the object to reach its current condition?

E.g. dropped, crushed, buried, damp etc. Physical damage is often focused in areas of chemical deterioration: it may be difficult to disentangle the two. Nonetheless, it is an important to be able to distinguish between signs of past damage, and issues which may be ongoing (object use and environment may affect these decisions).

General Principles

Conservation is concerned with all the processes involved in caring for an object in order to retain its cultural significance.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT LAYERS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Where was the object made?

The answers to these first two questions might be based on comparison with other examples and/or identification of materials/techniques/styles used in a particular region.

By whom was the object made?

E.g. Is it representative of the work of a particular indigenous culture?

Considering the questions above, how well provenanced/documentated is the object? Are there many other similar objects?

Knowledge of the history of ownership and use of the object, as well as its age and provenance will affect its significance. An object with secure provenance may be useful for scientific research/further analysis/study into particular aspects of their context, especially if there are few similar examples. Is the object particularly unusual in any respect? Does it differ in any respects from other known examples? It might be older, or use slightly different materials/techniques, or display different patterns of wear. It might be more securely provenanced. It might be in better condition. All of these issues will influence the significance of the object.

Why was the object made/how was it used?

Visual analysis of patterns of use/repairs may be revealing. The reasons behind the creation of the object and its use will be reflective of its significance to those making/using it. E.g. ritual use may indicate spiritual significance. Or perhaps it was made to cater to tourist trade?

Can you identify possible stakeholders (those for whom the object is particularly significant)?

It may be necessary to consult these stakeholders during development of a conservation plan (of course, you do not need to put this into practice).

What do you know about the biography of the object?

The ways that the object has been used and valued is likely to have developed over time. Do not forget to consider more recently developed significances, such as those acquired after incorporation into a university teaching collection.

Taking your answers to the above questions into account, discuss the past and present values of your object. How is the object significant now/in the future?

Past significances might include historic, aesthetic, scientific/research/technical/educational, social/spiritual values etc. Present/future values will include original significances (e.g. ritual, social, cultural) but also its research and teaching potential (particularly based on the answers to question 4).

## QUESTIONS ABOUT FUTURE CARE

Consider the variables of relative humidity/temperature and light

How susceptible is your object to changes in condition caused by these variables? Does your object display evidence of any such condition changes? E.g. warping, fading etc. What might be the suitable environmental parameters for your object? Are they currently being met? Should they be improved? If so, how?

Pest activity

Is your object likely to be susceptible to pest damage? Is there any evidence of current activity? What measures can be put in place to reduce the likelihood of pest activity/damage?

Storage conditions

Describe the current storage/display conditions for your object. How suitable are they? (This will also overlap with question 1). Consider exposure to dust: is the object covered/in a closed cabinet? Is there overcrowding in the storage space? Is the object adequately supported? Does it move around when the drawer is opened/closed? Does it come into contact with other objects? Does it have a mount? Does it need a mount?

Handling