



## Criteria for Deaccessioning – Practical Exercise

Museums and many archives have formal deaccessioning processes for setting criteria and making decisions about removing objects from a collection. However, there are different responsibilities and ethical expectations between the different organizations. Museums are assumed to collect in perpetuity and thus there are limitations on how objects can be removed from collections, and if sold, how the proceeds may be used. Ultimate authority for deaccessioning usually rests with the governing authority.

Archives and special collections libraries are also expected to be long-time custodians for the objects in their collections. Therefore, they have responsibilities to their donors and must follow their mission regarding criteria for removing and disposing of objects. In many cases, decision-making authority rests with staff.

During the webinar on accession, acquisition, deaccession, and disposal, you were presented with various criteria that should be used by your institution when considering the deaccession and disposal of objects from your collection. In the following exercise, you will be presented with three different objects. For each object, list the pros and cons you see when considering them for possible removal from your institution. Then check the box with your ultimate decision. Refer to the resources provided in this module for further information.

Use the following guides to help make your decisions:

Simmons, John E., *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies*, Chapter 8.

Hoffman, Frank W. and Richard J. Wood, *Library Collection Development Policies*, Chapter 21.





Object #1: A grandfather clock from the late nineteenth century. The object matches the historic furnishing plan for your institution, as it is a period piece. However, it is currently not on display in the historic house because of condition issues, including major termite damage and water damage to the face of the clock.

Pros	Cons

Deaccession?  
yes no

Object #2: A collection of glass lantern slides, in excellent condition, from the hometown of the founder of your institution. The slides were accessioned into the collection during the first few years of collecting. Your institution recently revised its mission statement to focus on its own geographic area, which is on the other side of the country from the founder's hometown.

Pros	Cons

Deaccession?  
yes no





Object #3: A carton of duplicate magazines from a seminal moment in your town’s history. There are 50 copies of the magazine and all have been accessioned into the collection. One complete issue has been digitized and is available to the public online. The magazines are in fair condition, but are printed on a material that has been known to degrade with frequent usage.

Pros	Cons

Deaccession?  
\_\_\_yes \_\_\_no

