



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# **CULCNM501A Assess the significance of collections**

**Release: 1**

## CULCNM501A Assess the significance of collections

### Modification History

Release	Comments
Release 1	This unit of competency first released with <i>CUL11 Library, Information and Cultural Services Training Package version 1.0</i>

### Unit Descriptor

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to complete significance assessments for entire collections, or collections within a larger collection. Value, meaning and history attached to individual objects or collections as a whole are some of the criteria applied to determine significance.

### Application of the Unit

This unit applies to collecting organisations that make reasoned judgements and sound decisions when undertaking significance assessments that assist in the process of managing collections.

In larger organisations, specialised curatorial staff may undertake this role. In smaller organisations, the role may be undertaken by individuals with broader management responsibilities, by committees and boards of management, or combinations of different personnel.

Work is undertaken autonomously, according to established procedures but in consultation with stakeholders.

### Licensing/Regulatory Information

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

### Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

### Employability Skills Information

This unit contains employability skills.

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

<b>Element</b>	<b>Performance Criteria</b>
<i>Elements describe the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.</i>	<i>Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where bold italicised text is used, further information is detailed in the required skills and knowledge section and the range statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the evidence guide.</i>

## Elements and Performance Criteria

1. Prepare to assess the significance of collections	<p>1.1 Determine <b><i>purpose</i></b> for undertaking significance assessment</p> <p>1.2 Identify organisational policies that relate to significance assessment</p> <p>1.3 Identify collections to be assessed</p> <p>1.4 In consultation with colleagues, identify factors that may impact on the assessment and take these into account when planning work</p>
2. Apply assessment methodology	<p>2.1 Research the <b><i>history</i></b> and <b><i>wider context of collections</i></b> using <b><i>sources of information</i></b></p> <p>2.2 Review the scope and themes of collection and compare to organisational mission, purpose and key themes</p> <p>2.3 <b><i>Consult</i></b> with <b><i>relevant personnel</i></b> to determine the social value of collection</p> <p>2.4 Analyse and describe the condition of collection</p>
3. Develop statements of significance	<p>3.1 Identify and compare collection with <b><i>similar collections</i></b></p> <p>3.2 Assess significance against <b><i>primary</i></b> and <b><i>comparative criteria</i></b></p> <p>3.3 Write <b><i>statements of significance</i></b> that describe the value and meaning of collection</p> <p>3.4 Seek feedback from colleagues on statement of significance</p> <p>3.5 Enter significance assessment into organisational <b><i>records</i></b></p>
4. Review assessments of collections	<p>4.1 <b><i>Reassess</i></b> significance of collection</p> <p>4.2 Update statement of significance to reflect reassessment</p> <p>4.3 Amend organisational records</p> <p>4.4 Prepare recommendations for further action as required</p>

## Required Skills and Knowledge

*This section describes the skills and knowledge required for this unit.*

### Required skills

- communication skills to:
  - consult with relevant personnel regarding the provenance of objects in collections
  - initiate discussions in the workplace and in the wider community about the significance of collections
- initiative and enterprise skills to identify comparative examples of collections
- learning skills to seek assistance from technical specialists
- literacy skills to:
  - take notes
  - read and interpret information
  - prepare statements of significance
- planning and organising skills to:
  - sort information and sources
  - establish timelines for significance assessments
- problem-solving skills to:
  - identify information useful in determining the significance of collections
  - verify information sources
- research skills to:
  - access and interrogate sources of information to determine the significance of collections
  - research history and provenance information
- self-management skills to:
  - follow workplace procedures
  - prioritise work tasks and meet deadlines
- teamwork skills to:
  - respond appropriately to feedback from others on information presented in formal and informal discussions
  - work collaboratively with others.

### Required knowledge

- organisational strengths, goals, policies and strategies in relation to collection management
- collection management policies
- primary and comparative criteria
- process to access technical specialists
- sources of information relating to assessing the significance of collections
- significance assessment methodology.

## Evidence Guide

*The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge, range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Training Package.*

<b>Overview of assessment</b>	
<b>Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit</b>	<p>Evidence of the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply knowledge about undertaking a significance assessment of collections</li> <li>• consult effectively with relevant people about the significance of collections</li> <li>• complete a significance assessment for a collection.</li> </ul>
<b>Context of and specific resources for assessment</b>	<p>Assessment must ensure access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information sources</li> <li>• collections, or a subset of a collection in situ</li> <li>• organisational policies and procedures related to significance assessments.</li> </ul>
<b>Method of assessment</b>	<p>A range of assessment methods should be used to assess practical skills and knowledge. The following examples are appropriate for this unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct questioning combined with review of portfolios of evidence and third-party workplace reports of on-the-job performance</li> <li>• application of the significance assessment process to collections</li> <li>• verbal or written questioning to assess knowledge of significance assessment of collections</li> <li>• review of a statement of significance</li> <li>• responses to a case study.</li> </ul> <p>Assessment methods should closely reflect workplace demands and the needs of particular client groups (consider the requirements of different age groups, clients with English as a second language, clients with disabilities, remote library users, etc.).</p>
<b>Guidance information for assessment</b>	<p>Holistic assessment with other units relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role is recommended, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CULCNM503A Manage the development of collections.</li> </ul>

## Range Statement

*The range statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Bold italicised wording, if used in the performance criteria, is detailed below. Essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) may also be included.*

<b><i>Purpose</i></b> might include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deaccession objects from collections</li> <li>• establishing provenance of collections</li> <li>• guiding collection strategies and policies</li> <li>• guiding and supporting acquisition decisions</li> <li>• guiding conservation policies and treatment</li> <li>• informing strategic planning</li> <li>• supporting funding applications</li> <li>• taking stock of collections.</li> </ul>
<b><i>History</i></b> may relate to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• published histories</li> <li>• role of former directors, curators and scientists in developing collections</li> <li>• significant gifts, acquisitions, buildings and renovations.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Wider context of collections</i></b> relates to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• buildings in which collections are housed</li> <li>• environment and use</li> <li>• historical context in communities</li> <li>• items to be accessioned</li> <li>• period when collections were developed.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Sources of information</i></b> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian War Memorial</li> <li>• database of Collections Australia Network (CAN) collections</li> <li>• Heritage Collections Council, Commonwealth of Australia</li> <li>• historical societies</li> <li>• Museums Australia</li> <li>• National Archives of Australia</li> <li>• online collections database of National Museum of Australia</li> <li>• national, state and local government public records</li> <li>• online databases</li> <li>• organisational policies and procedures</li> <li>• Picture Australia</li> <li>• Powerhouse Museum.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Consult</i></b> may relate to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community values</li> <li>• important items or themes for communities</li> <li>• people to whom collections are important</li> <li>• role organisations play in communities.</li> </ul>

<b><i>Relevant personnel</i></b> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• associations or trades</li> <li>• donors</li> <li>• ethnic communities</li> <li>• office bearers</li> <li>• owners</li> <li>• special interest community associations</li> <li>• technical specialists</li> <li>• users</li> <li>• volunteers.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Similar collections</i></b> may relate to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• size</li> <li>• subject</li> <li>• type.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Primary criteria</i></b> may relate to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aesthetic considerations, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• balance</li> <li>• colour</li> <li>• design or technical excellence</li> <li>• form</li> <li>• harmony and beauty</li> <li>• originality or innovation in design or execution</li> <li>• skill in quality of workmanship or execution</li> </ul> </li> <li>• historical considerations, such as association with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• event or activity</li> <li>• person</li> <li>• place</li> <li>• process</li> <li>• theme</li> </ul> </li> <li>• scientific or research significance, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collection history</li> <li>• documented context</li> </ul> </li> <li>• social or spiritual significance, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• association with communities</li> <li>• public display.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>Comparative criteria</i></b> may relate to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• condition, intactness or integrity, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alterations</li> <li>• disturbed or altered components or composition</li> <li>• evidence of use</li> <li>• missing components</li> <li>• original or copy</li> <li>• repairs</li> <li>• still working</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unrestored</li> <li>• unusually good condition for its type</li> <li>• interpretive potential of contribution to collections and museum</li> <li>• provenance, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• place of origin</li> <li>• where and how objects were used</li> <li>• who owned, used or made objects</li> </ul> </li> <li>• rarity, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distinguishing qualities</li> <li>• uniqueness</li> <li>• unusualness</li> </ul> </li> <li>• representativeness, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good example of its type</li> <li>• typical or characteristic of material, style or design.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Statements of significance</i> may provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a brief, considered assessment of the values, meaning and importance of objects</li> <li>• a collection of knowledge and ideas about objects</li> <li>• a summary of the process of investigation and assessment</li> <li>• benchmarks for future use</li> <li>• communication of values for interpretive programs</li> <li>• images of collections being assessed and other comparative collections</li> <li>• record of the crucial provenance details and association of objects</li> <li>• summary of the meaning and importance of objects.</li> </ul>
<i>Records</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• catalogues</li> <li>• objects</li> <li>• online records.</li> </ul>
<i>Reassess</i> may relate to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes in organisational strategy</li> <li>• changes in collection policy</li> <li>• new information.</li> </ul>

## Unit Sector(s)

Cultural services - Collection management