



هيئة الشارقة للمتاحف  
Sharjah Museums Authority

## Academic Research Policy

Approved by SMA Policy Committee: July 2013

## 1. Introduction:

This policy outlines the correct approach for research into any of Sharjah Museums Authority (SMA) resources e.g. collections, buildings, services, or general museological topics.

**1.1. Purpose:** To ensure appropriate standards and procedures regarding research into any of Sharjah museums resources; to increase and add to the body of knowledge and to encourage the dissemination of information.

**1.2. Scope:** This policy applies to both external academic researchers and internal SMA employees undertaking academic research. The policy also applies to university and college students undertaking research as part of their work placements with SMA.

## 2. Research Proposals

**2.1.** Applications for any academic research that requires the use of SMA collections and/or information has to be made using the Research Application Form. This will require a summary proposal of the aims and objectives of the research to be undertaken with a description of processes that may be involved, proposed timeline, and the format in which the final outcome will be presented. References and contact details of student and supervisor will be required.

This form is to be submitted to SMA as per the guidance on the form.

**2.2.** A letter stamped and signed by the institution for whom or in conjunction with whom the researcher is acting will be required, confirming the researcher and topic are genuine. In the case of a researcher undertaking independent research, a senior academic referee or employer will be required. The above documents must be sent by e-mail to SMA as per guidance on the form.

**2.3.** All academic research proposals must be approved by the concerned parties such as the relevant curator and/or department manager and where appropriate other government entities as necessary. Final approval from the Director General should follow.

**2.4.** If the research proposal is approved, the nominated SMA research contact is responsible for ensuring supervision of the researcher at all times, and their observing any relevant policies (e.g. SMA Collection Access policy). The information given to researchers should only be in the scope of their work and specialization.

### 3. Research Standards

- 3.1. Any research has to be conducted according to international research practice. This means that the researcher commits him/herself in writing (via the form) to being honest, open and accountable in all aspects of the research project. He/she will commit to recording all stages of the research transparently and identify and acknowledge all materials contributed by others in accordance with standard referencing procedures. He/she is expected to act with integrity at all times. This means that all acts of plagiarism, deception or falsification of research material are unacceptable. Violations will be reported to the relevant authorities associated with the researcher.
- 3.2. All aspects of the research process must respect the reputation of SMA and the cultural sensitivities of United Arab Emirates society. It is expected that the research is conducted in consultation with the nominated SMA contact to avoid misrepresentation of SMA.
- 3.3. Any questionnaires must be approved in advance by SMA. Where research is planned to be undertaken with visitors, the appropriate procedures have to be discussed and agreed with SMA research contact.
- 3.4. Audio and video recording of staff interviews are not permitted. Interviews recorded in writing require SMA review and approval of content.
- 3.5. Research involving the use of photography should adhere to the SMA Photography and Filming Policy.
- 3.6. Research involving close observation of objects should adhere to the SMA Collections Access Policy and Collections Analysis policy.
- 3.7. A researcher should adhere to the SMA Health and Safety policy, and any other relevant policies.

### 4. SMA Rights

- 4.1. SMA should be credited and acknowledged correctly in the final research and any associated publications.
- 4.2. SMA reserves the right to comment on the final draft of research publications in regard to the information provided by SMA and may require amendments to be made before publication.
- 4.3. SMA must be supplied with a copy of the finished, published or unpublished research work within six months of publication or project completion.
- 4.4. If SMA wishes to use any part of the published or unpublished work, SMA will seek consent and acknowledge the author appropriately.

**4.5.** In the event of any researcher disrespecting SMA policy in any or all of its aspects, all research privileges will be withdrawn immediately. The individual involved will be barred from undertaking any research on SMA premises in the future.