

ICOM CIDOC Training Programme

Museum documentation, principles and practice

Catalogue of course modules



March 2015

Foreword

CIDOC, the *Comité International pour la Documentation* (International Committee for Documentation), is one of ICOM's 31 International Committees. CIDOC's focus of interest is museum documentation, and more broadly, information management.

Recognising the need for a comprehensive and accessible training programme for professionals working in the field, CIDOC, in partnership with the Museum of Texas Tech University, has established the *CIDOC Training Programme* – a set of training seminars based on a flexible, modular structure.

The present catalogue shows the complete range of modules that are currently available. The selection of modules on offer at any specific training event will vary, depending on demand. The majority are classroom modules, based on 4 hours of classroom teaching including, practical exercises and written assignments. Any course prerequisites are mentioned in the description. Some modules will be available online, and independent study assignments are also possible. Modules are classified by level of difficulty, ranging from introductory (100 level) to specialist (400 level). Successful completion of the core requirements (all 100 level modules plus six additional modules) leads to the CIDOC Certificate in Documentation Practice.

If you can't find what you're looking for in the list below, please let us know!

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100 level introductory modules

Documentation essentials	
101 Introduction to Museum documentation	Overview of the entire scope of museum documentation - how it is used and how it contributes to the key missions of a museum: collection/preservation, study, publication and diffusion. The ethical and legal importance of good documentation is underlined. Analysis of the difficulties inherent in meeting all the conflicting requirements - the need for compromise articulated in a clear documentation policy. Exercise: evaluating a <i>documentation policy</i> .
102 How to set up a basic inventory system	Overview of all the elements of a basic documentation system (manual or computer based) needed for <i>inventory</i> : to meet minimum legal and ethical requirements. The register: description characteristics and essential elements, security and maintenance, importance as a legal record. Inventory (accession) numbers - common formats and errors to avoid. Location codes. Additional documentation: catalogues, files and indexes. Loans register, movement register.
103 Marking objects with identification numbers	Practical workshop on marking inventory numbers on objects/ attaching numbers to small objects. Where and how to best attach a number. Permanence vs reversibility. Participants will learn current best practice and common mistakes to avoid.
104 Photographing objects for inventory purposes	Practical workshop. Characteristics of a good identity photograph. Embedded colour charts, scale and metadata. Lighting. Common errors to avoid. Digital vs traditional photographs. Storage and conservation. Linking images with objects.
Documenting your documentation	
111 Defining and maintaining a Descriptive System: information fields and terminology lists	An overview of the structure and purpose of a descriptive system: field names, definitions, examples, terminology and syntax rules. The importance of <i>defining</i> the meaning of information fields will be underlined. Participants will compare different descriptive systems CIDOC, Africom, Spectrum, and Object ID. The notion of a core descriptive system and subject-specific adaptations will be covered. The problem of « semantic creep » will also be covered. Participants will be able to define and use a descriptive system.
112 Defining and maintaining a Procedural Manual: documentation policy and methods	This module outlines the structure and purpose of a procedural manual and provides an overview of six key collections management procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Object reception, Object dispatch • Object movement • Loans in, loans out • Acquisitions, accessioning • Inventory vs catalogue • Alienation (deaccessioning and disposal).
Organisation	
121 Job descriptions and organisational structure	This module looks at typical job descriptions for professionals working in the field of museum documentation, comparing the different approaches found in small, medium and large institutions and internationally. Different organisational charts (organigramme) are compared revealing how museum documentation fits into the overall institutional structure.
122 Budgets, productivity, planning and reporting.	This module provides an introduction to the administrative side of museum documentation: preparing budgets and managing accounts, estimating resources and costs, planning and time management, using performance indicators to evaluate productivity, preparing reports.

200 level intermediate modules

Terminology and documentation standards	
201 The CIDOC Information Categories	A detailed view of the CIDOC Guidelines - Information categories. Students should have completed course 111 or have experience in using a descriptive system. Topics covered: background to the CIDOC Guidelines, aims and scope of the document. The relationship between categories, units of information and procedures. How to adapt the Guidelines to specific requirements. Case studies of applications.
202 ISO 2788 - Guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri	A detailed view of the ISO recommendations for the design of monolingual thesaurus, Students should have completed course 111 or have experience in using controlled terminology. Topics covered: background to the document, aims and scope. Advantages/drawbacks of using a thesaurus. Basic thesaurus relations (BT-NT, RT, SN, USE and USE-FOR). Advanced relations. Mono- and poly-hierarchies. Rules for maintaining conceptual coherence. Depth and complexity issues. Case studies of real-life thesaurus-based applications.
203 Object ID: Documentation and illicit trafficking	A detailed view of the Object ID standard. Students should have completed course 101 or 102, or have experience in basic documentation. The course covers the scope and aims of the Object ID standard. Illicit trafficking and the responsibilities of museums, detailed examination of the Object ID elements, organisations and systems using Object ID. Adapting Object ID to local needs. Limits and possible extensions of the Object ID standard. How to integrated Object ID with an existing documentation system.
Projects and procedures	
211 Condition reports: reporting damage and loss	Explains the importance of condition reporting within documentation and collections management procedures and the types of information, both written and visual, to be recorded. Topics covered include terminology, when and how frequently to conduct a condition report, documenting damage, and how to analyze and use information collected. Participants should have completed modules 101 and 102.
212 Setting up a bar-coding system	Introduces bar-coding as a linking tool that can greatly increase speed and accuracy of collections management activities and discusses options for barcode software and equipment. Addresses terminology, processes and protocols, and trouble-shooting. Participants should have completed module 103.
213 Organising a campaign of inventory control	Now a legal requirement in some countries, all museums should periodically carry out a complete check of their basic inventory information, verifying the presence, location and identity of all documented items. Depending on the size if the collections, this can be an enormous undertaking. This module covers the steps involved in organising a campaign of inventory control, tools and procedures, common risks and problems. Participants should have completed courses 101-104, or have prior experience in museum documentation.
214 Backlog cataloguing (Reactivating abandoned or incomplete systems)	The course covers the main issues when dealing with problematic documentation systems that are incomplete or out of date. The course covers the following topics: identifying and evaluating the scale of the problems, establishing a realistic documentation plan; risks and insurance; estimating productivity, resources and planning; managing expectations. Participants should have completed courses 101-104, or have prior experience in museum documentation.

300 level advanced modules

Organising and preserving photographic images	
301 Organising and running a photo library	A photographic collection is an essential part of any documentation system. Today, identification photographs are often integrated within database applications, but a separate photographic library can be a useful tool, both for research and promotion. The course explains the basic principles of organising a maintaining a photographic library: physical storage and space requirements; access, lending and sales policy. Participants should have completed module 104 or have some experience of working with photographic collections.
302 Digitising an existing photographic collection	Digitising a collection of photographs raises technical and organisational issues. This course covers the major questions: what sort of equipment is available; outsourcing digitisation; trade-offs between speed and quality; colour spaces and gamma curves; embedded image metadata; storing and organising digital images; avoiding common mistakes. What to do with your original photographs once they are digitised. Participants should have completed module 104 or have some experience of working with photographic collections.
303 Conditioning and preserving photographs	Photographic material requires specific environmental conditions to maximize its lifespan. This course offers advice on how to condition and store different types of photographic material; ideal environmental conditions; handling and consultation; dealing with typical problems. Participants should have completed module 104 or have some experience of working with photographic collections.
304 Publishing images online	Many advanced techniques now exist for publishing high-quality images online. This module gives an overview of the latest techniques and tools that are available. Topics include: jpeg, tiff and other image formats; image tiling; scan and zoom software; colour calibration; bandwidth issues; 3D images; panoramic images. Participants should have completed 100 level courses and have some experience of working with digital images.
305 Copyright and licensing issues	This module gives an overview of the copyright law and licensing issues. Topics covered include international copyright law; collective commons licensing; original and derivative works; fair use; risk assessment; institutional policy. Participants should have completed 100 level courses and have some experience of using a documentation system.
Computerising your documentation system	
311 Requirements analysis: off the shelf, bespoke or development?	This module offers a general overview of the problems involved in computerising a documentation system and provides participants with the tools they need to choose the most appropriate solutions - buying existing software, commissioning an application or building a new system in house? Participants should have completed 100 level courses and have some experience of using a documentation system. The module will be of interest to anyone wishing to automate a manual documentation system, but also to those wishing to upgrade to a new computer system.

312 Procurement: selecting a commercial package	Many commercial software packages are available offering collections management and documentation functions for museums. This module looks at the criteria that can help select one solution over another and gives advice on the process of software procurement: formulating a call for proposals, evaluating offers, contracts, guarantees, and service-level agreements. Participants should have completed module 311 and have some experience of using a computerised documentation system.
313 Writing specifications for a bespoke application	The development of a bespoke requires precise functional and technical specifications if the end results are to meet your requirements. This module provides advice on requirements analysis and formulating specifications that can be used as a basis for software development and to provide a contractual framework. The module will be of interest to anyone with specific needs that are not met by existing applications. Participants should have completed module 311 and have some experience of using a computerised documentation system.
314 Designing, building and maintaining your own database	Designing and building a museum documentation database is not for the faint hearted, but in some circumstances it may be the best option. This module looks at the tools available, database design issues and requirements for long term maintenance. The importance of building in data export functions to avoid 'lock-in' is emphasised. Participants should have completed module 311 should have some experience of working with database management tools and software programming.
Data management	
321 Publishing collections data on the web	Many institutions now publish details of their collections on the web. This module offers an overview of the technical, organisational and legal issues involved. Topics covered include: data for publication; quality control; image quality; terminology and tagging; security; identification numbers; linked data; translation and multilingual data; available software; load balancing; use tracking. Participants should have completed module 100 levels courses and have some experience of working with a documentation system.
322 Migrating data between computer systems	Migrating data between computer systems can be a complex process. This modules offers advice on ensuring that the transition goes as smoothly as possible. Topics include: field mapping and data mapping; pre and post processing rules; pivot formats; quality control; work flow; planning. Participants should have completed module 100 levels courses and have some experience of working with a computerised documentation system.
323 Data exchange between institutions	Institutions often need to exchange data about items in their collections, for exhibitions, loans or research. This module gives an overview of the standards, formats and techniques that are currently available. Topics include XML, the CIDOC CRM and LIDO; software issues; legal issues. Participants should have completed module 100 levels courses and have some experience of working with a computerised documentation system.
324 Managing multi-lingual data	Institutions are increasingly expected to offer information about their collections in more than one language. This module offers an overview of the tools and techniques that are currently available. Topics include: limitations of translation software; multi-lingual thesaurus; multiple language data entry; optimised translation policy; software issues; UTF-8 encoding. Participants should have completed module 100 levels courses and have some experience of working with a computerised documentation system.

325 Digital preservation	Many people worry about the lifespan and stability of media users to store digital information. This module offers advice on ensuring the long-term preservation of your digital information. Topics include: lifespan of digital vs analogue media; backups and archiving policy; commercial storage facilities; dealing with new software formats. Participants should have completed module 100 levels courses and have some experience of working with a computerised documentation system.
Project management essentials	
331 Basic project planning techniques and tools	A course for all those who have to organize or participate in documentation projects. Making the most of vital time and resources. What is and what should not be a project Project planning techniques and tools Common planning mistakes to avoid Evaluating and reporting on your project's progress
332 Managing and motivating a project team	This module deals with the human aspects of project management: motivating and leading a project team.

400 level specialist modules

Specialist topics	
401 Ontologies: the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model	An introduction to the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model. Students should have completed at least one 300 level module or have some previous experience of database design. Topics covered include: Classes and properties - the basic design elements, Conceptual versus physical schemas, the event-centred model, the core CRM classes, Case studies of CRM applications.
402 Documenting Intangible Heritage	An introduction to the principles of documenting intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Students should have completed at least one 300 level module or have previous experience of working within the field of museum documentation. The course covers the UNESCO and ICOM protocols on intangible heritage, definitions of the scope of ICH, different approaches to documenting ICH, UNESCO and CIDOC guidelines. Relating tangible and intangible heritage. Case studies and exercises in documentation. The course requires active participation in the discussion.
403 Independent study assignment	Students are expected to have completed at least one 300 level module or to have considerable experience working in the field of museum documentation. The study topic is established in advance by agreement with a recognised CIDOC Summer School tutor. The tutor will provide support and guidance, usually by email and phone, but students are expected to be able to work independently. In general, the assignment will be judged by a panel on the basis of a written dissertation or report. The assignment will normally be completed within a period of 3 months.
404 Museum procedures and business processes	Participants should be familiar with common museum business processes, either through experience or by following module 112 <i>Defining and maintaining a Procedural Manual</i> . The course covers the basic elements of business process engineering and their application in modelling museum procedures.
405 Documenting Contemporary Art	The course aims to offer an introduction to the principles of documenting contemporary art. Students should have completed at least one 300 level module or have previous experience of working within the field of museum documentation. The course covers the discussion on virtual, performance and conceptual that imposes a new paradigm on preserving, collecting and exhibiting contemporary visual arts. Case studies and exercises in documentation. The course requires active participation in the discussion.