APPENDIX K: UNIFORM TECHNIQUES FOR RECORDING DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHTS

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Measuring museum property is important both for identification and for calculating storage and exhibition space requirements.

The equipment needed to measure and weigh objects and/or specimens may include:

- folding rule
- steel tape
- cloth tape
- steel or aluminum meter rule (or smaller)
- measuring stand (upright measuring rod and a movable arm at right angles to it; for measuring height of irregular objects or specimens)
- measuring frame (grid lines marked or inscribed on a board with a raised frame along two adjacent edges; for measuring length and width of irregularly shaped objects or specimens)
- calipers
- balance

All measurements are in the metric system. English measurements may be entered if there is a standard measuring convention that uses English measurements (e.g., Rodman Cannon bore diameter). Catalogers should not convert English measurements to metric. Instead, remeasure the object or specimen if necessary, or provide both metric and English measurements. Biological specimens should not be remeasured as original measurements were taken from fresh specimens.

The following abbreviations should be used to give the unit of measure:

centimeter	cm
feet	ft
gram	g
inches	in
kilogram	kg
ounce	oz
pound	lb

! meter m
! millimeter mm

Take measurements that are appropriate to the specific discipline. Cultural objects may be measured and/or weighed. Measurements of biological specimens, when needed, appear on the specimen label. Copy them exactly onto the catalog card. Measurements are generally not used for plants or insects, but are common for mammals, birds, and reptiles. Geological specimens should be measured, and weighed as appropriate.

B. RECORDING DIMENSIONS

1. Dimensions of Less Than One Meter

For dimensions of less than one meter, use centimeters, measuring to the nearest 0.1 centimeter, if possible. For natural history specimens, measure to the nearest millimeter, if possible. Do not list precision greater than can be actually measured. If possible, all measurements for a single object or specimen should be to same degree of precision.

2. Dimensions Larger Than One Meter

For dimensions larger than a meter, measure to the nearest centimeter. The following abbreviations should be used in designating dimensions:

! circumference	circ
! depth	D
! diameter	Dia
! height	H
! length	L
! radius	R
! thickness	T
! width	W

3. Dimensions Given in Same Order

Dimensions should always be given in the same order, to facilitate comparison among specimens as in the following examples:

! height, width, length abbr.: H, W, L
! height, width, depth abbr.: H, W, D
! length, width, thickness abbr.: L, W, T
! height, diameter abbr.: H, Dia

4. Ensure Consistency in Recording Measurements

Use the following system of recording measurements to ensure consistency.

! H 15.8, W 8.9, L 5.6 cm
! H 10.3, W 6.8, D 4.5 cm
! L 20.3, W 15.6, T 3.5 cm
! H 15.5, Dia 8.4 cm

5. Measuring Irregular Objects

When measuring irregular objects, always give maximum dimensions unless otherwise noted. For example, the measurements of a sherd might be:

! H 4.9, W 3.7, T 1.3 cm (irreg.)

The abbreviation "irreg." can be used if necessary. It always appears in parentheses. For irregular objects, the greater dimension is usually given as height or length, unless the orientation of the object is known to be different.

6. Principal Dimensions for Three-dimensional Materials

In general, the principal dimensions for three-dimensional materials are taken with notes indicating whether handles, bases, etc. are included.

! L 5.3, Dia 6.9 cm, w/handle

If an object is composed of several parts, indicate by notes whether the dimensions given are for the entire object or for one or more of the parts. Normally, overall dimensions should include separable parts, such as a container and its lid or a pipe and its stem. Those separable parts should also be separately measured.

7. Dimensions For Incomplete Objects and/or Specimens

If the object or specimen being measured is incomplete, specify that the dimensions given are for the incomplete object or specimen. This rule applies only to objects that are substantially complete, not to sherds or other fragments that constitute a relatively small percentage

of a whole. For example, if a projectile point is missing its tip, it would be recorded as follows:

! L 5.9 (inc.), W 3.2, T 0.8 cm

8. Using a Sketch of the Object and/or Specimen

If a small sketch of the object or specimen is provided, the dimensions may be indicated on the sketch, in addition to the dimensions in the "Dimensions" data field. This procedure clarifies which dimensions were measured, particularly on irregularly shaped objects. Drawings should be to scale when possible. The catalog record should bear a notation of the scale used. The drawing may be placed in the catalog folder.

C. WEIGHING OBJECTS AND/OR SPECIMENS

Weighing is the most efficient way to measure certain types of objects and/or specimens such as gold dust or pollen samples. Weigh to the nearest 0.1 gram or kilogram, for large objects or specimens. Abbreviate as g and kg.