# Accreditation guidance

An introduction

June 2014

# Contents

# Introduction

## Which version of this document do I read?

This version of the 'Guidance – introduction' dated June 2014 replaces the previously published version dated February 2013.

The Accreditation guidance documents supplement the published Accreditation Standard (2011) and outline how you might approach completing your return. The guidance documents are reviewed annually to ensure they remain current and relevant. Should you have any feedback on the guidance please email accreditation@artscouncil.org.uk at any time. The guidance will next be re-published with revision where appropriate in February 2015.

All substantive changes are contained with dated boxes for clarity .

## What is this guidance document for?

This guidance document contains information on how to apply for Accreditation, whether applying for the first time, or making a return application, and explains how each application will be assessed. It also details the types of documentation needed when making an application and contains information on scalability (see page 13). It should be read alongside the Accreditation Standard, which outlines the headline requirements for Accreditation – Organisational Health, Collections and Users and their experiences – and the three additional guidance documents which provide guidance on meeting each of those headline requirements. All of these documents are available to download from the Arts Council's website at www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme

## What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is the UK standard for museums and galleries. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. It is a baseline quality standard that helps guide museums to be the best they can be, for current and future users.

The Accreditation Standard was published in October 2011, replacing the previous Standard that was published in 2004. The Accreditation Standard is available to download from www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme and should be read alongside this guidance document.

# Aims of the Accreditation Scheme

The Accreditation Scheme aims to:

1 Encourage all museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards in:

- how they are run

- how they manage their collections

- the experiences of users

2 Encourage confidence in museums as organisations that manage collections for the benefit of society and manage public funds appropriately

3 Reinforce a shared ethical and professional basis for all museums

# Benefits of taking part in the Accreditation Scheme

**Performance**
Accreditation is a quality standard that serves as an authoritative benchmark for assessing performance, rewarding achievement and driving improvement.

**Profile**
Accreditation raises awareness and understanding of museums, building confidence and credibility both within the governing body and among the public.

**People**
Accreditation helps museums to improve their focus on meeting users' needs and interests and developing their workforce.

**Partnerships**
Accreditation helps museums to examine their services and to encourage joint working within and between organisations.

**Planning**
Accreditation helps with forward planning by formalising procedures and policies.

**Patronage**
Accreditation demonstrates that the museum has met a national standard, which strengthens applications for public and private funding and gives investors confidence in the organisation.

# Making an application

## Who is eligible to apply for Accredited status?

To be Accredited, museums must:

- meet the Museums Association's 1998 definition of a museum ('Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society')
- hold a long-term collection of artefacts
- have a formal constitution
- provide two years of relevant accounts
- make sure that they meet all relevant legal, ethical, safety, equality, environmental and planning requirements
- be committed to forward planning to improve the service for users

Further details on eligibility and the requirements for Accreditation are given in the Accreditation Standard, which should be read alongside this document.

## Who is not eligible to apply for Accredited status?

The following categories of organisations will not normally be deemed eligible for Museum Accreditation:

- science centres and planetaria, natural and archaeological sites, historical and industrial buildings and sites, and heritage centres, not having associated permanent collections
- institutions primarily displaying live specimens (e.g. zoos, aquaria, botanical gardens)
- educational loan services
- venues for temporary exhibitions with no permanent collections
- records centres (e.g. environmental, archaeological sites or monuments)
- libraries and archives (including sound, film or photographic archives)
- institutions whose collections are accessible only via the Internet
- charitable or non-charitable companies limited by shares who distribute dividends

**Consideration may be given to such institutions if they form part of a museum service which itself conforms to the Accreditation requirements.**

# How do I apply for Accreditation?

There are three stages to applying for Accreditation:

## 1 Read the Accreditation Standard
www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme.

## 2 Read the guidance

Read this introductory guidance document along with the three guidance documents on meeting the headline requirements for Accreditation, and the Accreditation Standard. All of these documents are available to download from the Arts Council's website at www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme.

## 3 Complete the eligibility questionnaire

Museums applying for Accreditation for the first time, or those re-applying after a period of non-participation, should complete the eligibility questionnaire. This is available to download from the Arts Council's website at www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme, or can be obtained from your relevant assessing organisation (see section three – getting help with your application for details of the assessing organisations).

If you have any queries about your eligibility, you can also speak to an Accreditation adviser. Please visit www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/where-can-i-get-help/ to find out who your Accreditation adviser is and how to contact them.

We will undertake an assessment of submitted eligibility questionnaires to check your organisation's eligibility within four weeks of receipt. Usually we will be able to confirm the outcome within four weeks. Where assessment will take longer we will contact you.

If we decide your organisation is eligible, we will confirm the status of 'working towards Accreditation', and your organisation will be invited to complete a full application.

The status of 'working towards Accreditation' is awarded for 12 months in the first instance. 'Working towards' status is useful to demonstrate your commitment to effective management when applying to possible funders, and is a specific eligibility requirement for some funding, and development support streams.

Please note that completing the eligibility questionnaire is not an application for Accredited status. The status of 'working towards Accreditation' confirms that the organisation is eligible but is not an endorsement of Accredited status from the Accreditation Committee.

If we decide your organisation is ineligible, we will let you know why.

## 3 Eligible organisations submit a full application

Applications for Accreditation should be made through the Arts Council's online application system. Information on how to access the system will be detailed in your eligibility confirmation letter. A downloadable version of the application form is available to help you prepare an application www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme.

Should you wish to complete an application on paper you must contact your relevant assessing organisation in advance. Hard copy applications received without prior discussion with the relevant assessing organisation will not be accepted. See section three – getting help with your application for details of the assessing organisations.

If you wish to provide an application or return application in Welsh, please contact CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (a division of the Welsh Government) www.wales.gov.uk/cymal.

You will also need to attach certain documentation and information where requested. Please see section seven – appendix for details of this documentation.

## 4 Accredited organisations submit a regular 'Accreditation return'

Accredited organisations are invited to provide 'Accreditation returns' once every three years. Returns are part of the quality assurance process of the Accreditation Scheme, to provide an opportunity for participating museums to demonstrate they continue to meet the Standard. This in turn supports the work of the Accreditation partners in advocating on behalf of museums. The Accreditation return schedule is published on the Arts Councils' website.

Accreditation returns should be made through the Arts Council's online system, information on how to access the system will be detailed in your invitation to return letter. A downloadable version of the application form is available to help you prepare an application www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme.

Accreditation returns are not full applications for Accreditation, although the same basic system is used. You will be asked to identify where significant change has occurred since the last award, such as a workforce review, revised policy and planning documents. Where you have indicated no change to a particular Accreditation requirement, the online system will not ask you any further questions. However, if the assessor identifies significant change as part of their assessment you may be asked additional questions.

Museums completing a return should also ensure to provide information relating to any 'areas for improvement' applied by the Accreditation panel that made the previous award of full Accreditation. This will typically be through a short report that can be uploaded to the online return system or emailed or posted to the relevant assessing organisation.

Should you wish to complete an application on paper you must contact your relevant assessing organisation in advance. Hard copy applications received without prior discussion with the relevant assessing organisation will not be accepted. See section three – getting help with your application for details of the assessing organisations.

If you wish to provide an application or return application in Welsh, please contact CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (a division of the Welsh Government) www.wales.gov.uk/cymal.

You will also need to attach certain documentation and information where requested. Please see section seven – appendix for details of this documentation.

## 5 What should I do if my museum is not in a position to provide a return by the scheduled return date?
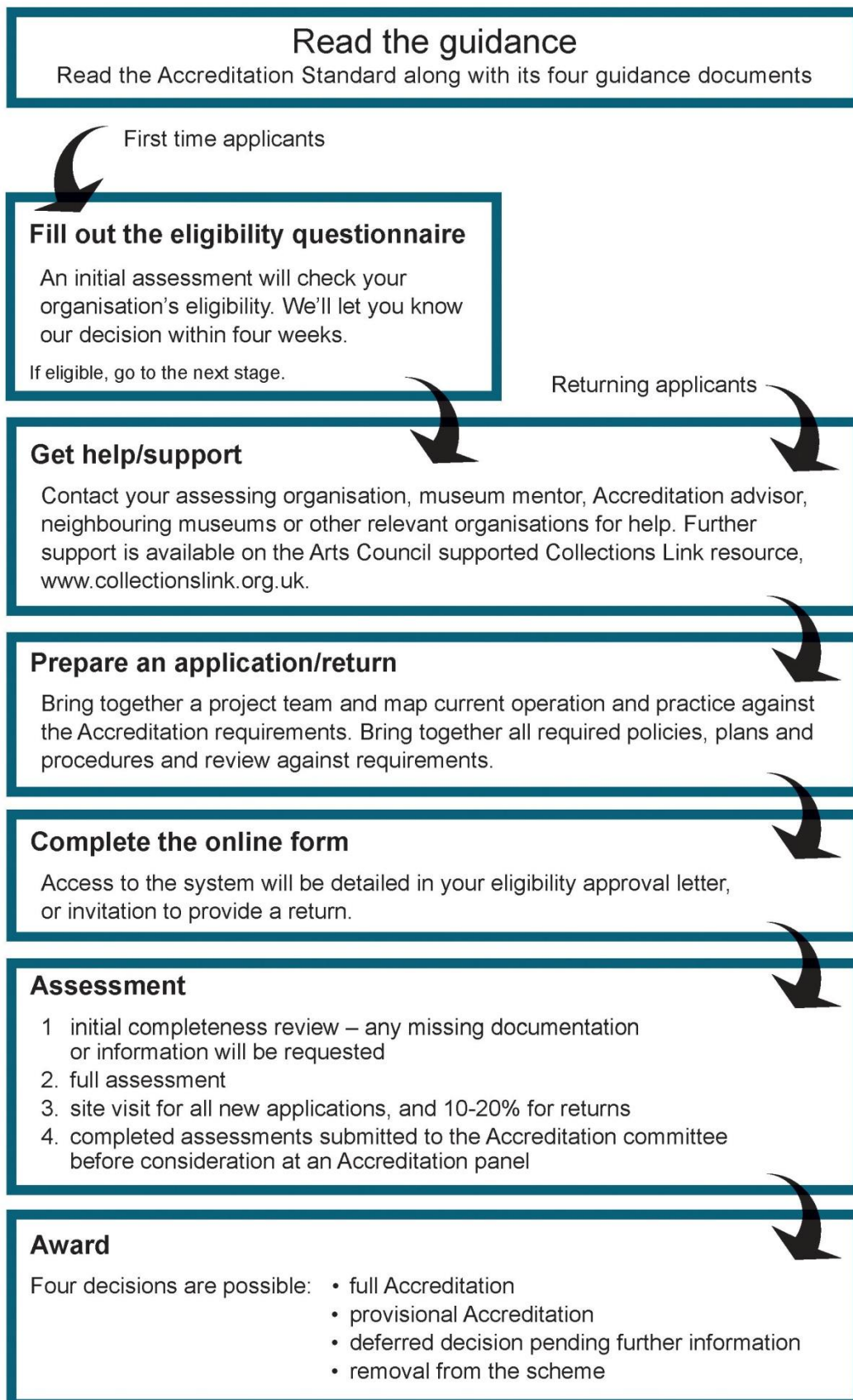
Museums may find themselves in a position where a return is not possible due to significant activity, such as a governance review, a major redevelopment or emergency. In these circumstances the Accreditation Committee has agreed that deferrals of two tranches within the schedule are appropriate, and that each circumstance will be dealt with on a case by case basis by the relevant assessing organisations (see page 14)

Where a museum has been granted a deferral, but remains unable to provide an Accreditation return, the Accreditation assessing organisation will undertake a light touch review by requesting (where changed) the museum's current forward plan, collections development policy, and dates of the last security review and review of the emergency plan.

As the provision of a return is itself a requirement of the Accreditation Standard it is likely that museums in this position will be referred to the next available Accreditation panel with a recommendation for an award change from full to provisional Accreditation for a period of up to 12 months, at which point a return should be provided.

If no return is provided at this point, the Accreditation assessing organisation will consider recommending removal of that museum from the Accreditation Scheme.

# The Accreditation process from application to award

**Read the guidance**
Read the Accreditation Standard along with its four guidance documents

First time applicants

**Fill out the eligibility questionnaire**

An initial assessment will check your organisation's eligibility. We'll let you know our decision within four weeks.

If eligible, go to the next stage.

Returning applicants

**Get help/support**

Contact your assessing organisation, museum mentor, Accreditation advisor, neighbouring museums or other relevant organisations for help. Further support is available on the Arts Council supported Collections Link resource, www.collectionslink.org.uk.

**Prepare an application/return**

Bring together a project team and map current operation and practice against the Accreditation requirements. Bring together all required policies, plans and procedures and review against requirements.

**Complete the online form**

Access to the system will be detailed in your eligibility approval letter, or invitation to provide a return.

**Assessment**

1. initial completeness review – any missing documentation or information will be requested
2. full assessment
3. site visit for all new applications, and 10-20% for returns
4. completed assessments submitted to the Accreditation committee before consideration at an Accreditation panel

**Award**

Four decisions are possible:
- full Accreditation
- provisional Accreditation
- deferred decision pending further information
- removal from the scheme

# Getting help with your application or return

Advice and support is available to help you complete an application or return application. Each assessing organisation provides an advice team covering their particular geographic areas, details of this support is available from: www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/where-can-i-get-help/.

Museums benefitting from the support of a Museum Mentor should contact their Mentor when considering making an application or return application.

**Other ways in which Accreditation is supported**

In England a network of local museum development services support Accreditation by helping museums work together to improve their activities against the three sections of the standard and contribute Arts Council England's five strategic goals. Please see www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-for-funding/renaissance/museum-development/museum-development-network/ for further details.

Further support is available from the Collections Link resource, www.collectionslink.org.uk.

# Accreditation partners and assessing organisations

The Accreditation Scheme is governed by a partnership comprising Arts Council England, CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (a division of the Welsh Government), Museums Galleries Scotland and the Northern Ireland Museums Council.

Applications and return applications submitted through the online system will be received and processed by Arts Council England. Applications and return applications along with any supporting document attached will be sent to the relevant assessing organisation. The assessing organisations for Accreditation are:

- England, Isle of Man and Channel Islands
  Arts Council England, www.artscouncil.org.uk

- Wales
  CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (a division of the Welsh Government), www.wales.gov.uk/cymal

- Scotland
  Museums Galleries Scotland, www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk

- Northern Ireland
  Northern Ireland Museums Council, www.nimc.co.uk

- National museums
  Arts Council England, www.artscouncil.org.uk

These organisations assess each museum's application or return application. The assessments are passed to the Accreditation secretariat at Arts Council England, where they are processed, quality assured (moderation) and scheduled to be presented to an Accreditation panel.

Additional information about Accreditation is available on the website of each assessing organisation.

# A possible approach to your application

When approaching an application or return application, the following process might be useful to consider:

1   bring together a project team to lead on the application

2   map current operation and practice against the Accreditation requirements

3   bring together all required policies, plans and procedures and review against requirements

4   as necessary, revise policies, plans, procedures and activity

5   should a Museum Mentor be required, contact your Accreditation assessing organisation

6   plan ahead – what governance and approval timescales have to be met?

# How your application will be assessed

## New applicants

In order to meet the Standard, new applicants should evidence full compliance with the Accreditation Standard (2011) [1]. Your application will be assessed against the Accreditation Standard using the Accreditation guidance documents. Applications that do not meet the Standard will be declined without proceeding to an Accreditation panel. Feedback will be provided by the assessor outlining which requirements have not been met. New applicants may continue to work towards Accreditation using their existing 'working towards Accreditation' status, and an amended application may be re-submitted at any time within the working towards period.

## Returning applicants

In order to meet the standard, returning participants should evidence compliance with the Accreditation Standard (2011), unless policies and plans compliant with the Accreditation Standard (2004) remain in force for an appropriate period of time and their review date has not been reached. In these cases, museums should ensure that when approaching the planned review period, those plans and policies are revised to comply with the requirements of the Accreditation Standard (2011).

For example, a museum provides a return application in June 2014 with a forward plan compliant with the 2004 Standard for the period 2010-2015. This forward plan would be accepted as evidence of compliance with the Accreditation Standard, should the document/s meet the 2004 Standard. If a museum was working to a plan for the period 2006-2011, then a June 2012 return application would need to include a new and approved forward plan for the period 2011 onwards compliant with the Accreditation Standard (2011).

## National 'museum authorities'

National organisations which manage multiple museum sites, such as English Heritage or the National Trust, will be assessed through a two-step process. The first step will be to assess the relevant policies, plans and approaches managed by the national corporate body rather than individual sites. The second assessment step will be for each individual museum site to provide a return application or new application (as appropriate).

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1 www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/

# Multi-site services

Where a group of museums is operated by a corporate body, such as a local authority service, then each individual museum will be asked to provide a return, or apply (as appropriate). Documents common to more than one museum need be submitted only once and information common to more than one museum need be given in detail on only one form. Return applications should detail progress against both service wide and site specific areas for improvement or required actions.

# The assessment process

Once you have submitted your application or return application, the following process will be followed by the assessing organisation:

1  An initial assessment will then be undertaken by an assessor, which may include further requests for additional information

2  The assessment may include discussion with relevant advisory officers within each of the assessing organisation. In England draft assessments will be shared with the relevant Relationship Manager  and/or the Designation Manager(where relevant) for comment

3  All new applications will be visited on site as part the assessment. A minimum of 10 per cent of returning participants will also be visited. Any assessment of a museum with provisional status where that museum has undergone a significant physical re-development or re-build will also be visited. Museums may request to be visited, however, please note that assessing organisations may not be able to guarantee such visits

4  Completed assessments are submitted to the Accreditation Committee secretariat at Arts Council England for a quality assurance review. This review is known as 'moderation' and may result in additional information being requested from the applicant.

5  The return timetable has been published on the Arts Council website[2]. Assessment may last up to five months.

6  All award decisions are made by an Accreditation panel and not by your assessor

7  Museums will be formally notified of a panel's decision within two weeks of panel. Should the panel have awarded full Accreditation a certificate will also be provided.

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[2] http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/accreditation-returns/

# Scalability indicators

The Accreditation Standard is the national standard for museums in the UK, but is not a 'one size fits all' standard. Museums come in many sizes and governance types. The scalability indicators below indicate broad characteristics of the funding, visitor numbers and services of different types of museums operating within the UK, and to provide transparency to the assessment process. Assessors will use the scalability indicators as a guide.

Museums do not need to meet each and every indicator on the scale, and may find they sit between two types. Museums should use the appropriate assessment indicators within this document to decide which set of indicators most closely matches their operation. Not all requirements are differentiated as there will be areas common to all museums. Please note that collection size has deliberately not been used as an indicator.

Acknowledgement is given to the Economic Impact Toolkit[3] published by the Association of Independent Museums, the Quality Improvement System[4] developed by Museums Galleries Scotland, the West Midlands Fast Forward Survey[5], and the East of England Benchmarking Survey[6], all of which have been invaluable in developing these indicators.

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[3] http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/
[4] http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/
[5] http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/
[6] http://www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk/

# Independent museums indicators

|  | Type one | Type two | Type three |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Workforce** | operated entirely, or mostly, by volunteers; usually supported by a Museum Mentor | mostly volunteer workforce, with some paid staff; may be supported by a Museum Mentor | paid senior manager/s, paid and voluntary workforce |
| **Management** | managed directly by the trustees or through a delegated management committee | managed directly by the trustees or through a delegated management committee | managed by a paid director/manager reporting to the trustees or delegated committee |
| **Operating budget** | less than £30,000 per year | £30,000-£250,000 per year | over £250,000 per year |
| **Opening** | seasonal or weekend/ special event opening. Appointment only where appropriate, for example, prison or 'behind the wire' military museum | seasonal, or open all year | open all year, or seasonal opening |
| **Learning offer** | relevant lectures/talks, learning groups welcomed on site | formal learning offer, subject specialist lectures/talks/ events offered | formal learning offer to multiple educational and user groups, regular subject specialist lectures/talks/events |
| **Visitor numbers** | up to 10,000 site visits per year | up to 49,999 site visits per year | over 50,000 site visits per year |

# Local authority museums indicators

| | Type one | Type two | Type three |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Workforce** | paid professional curator/manager or equivalent, volunteer workforce | paid professional curator/ manager or equivalent, volunteer workforce | paid senior managers, professional managers including curators, learning experts |
| **Site** | a single site or one of several branch museums within a service | a single site or one of several branch museums within a service | a single site or one of several branch museums within a service |
| **Management** | managed by a paid museum professional | managed by a paid museum professional | managed by paid museum professionals |
| **Operating budget** | less than £100,000 | £100,000-£500,000 per year | over £500,000 per year |
| **Opening** | seasonal and/or weekend/special event opening | seasonal, or open all year | all year, or seasonal opening |
| **Learning offer** | formal learning offer, subject specialist lectures/talks offered | formal learning offer to multiple educational and user groups, regular subject specialist lectures/talks | formal learning offer to multiple educational and user groups, regular subject specialist lectures/talks |
| **Visitor numbers** | up to 30,000 site visits per year | up to 99,999 site visits per year | over 100,000 site visits per year |

# University museums indicators

| | Type one | Type two | Type three |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Workforce** | operated entirely, or mostly by volunteers. Usually supported by a Museum Mentor | paid and voluntary workforce, may be supported by a Museum Mentor | paid senior professional manager/s, paid and voluntary workforce |
| **Management** | managed by a delegated management committee or department and overseen by a member of the teaching staff | managed by a delegated management committee or department and overseen by a member of the teaching staff | managed by a delegated management committee or department and overseen by a member of the teaching staff |
| **Operating budget** | less than £30,000 per year | £30,000-£250,000 per year | over £250,000 per year |
| **Opening** | seasonal and/or weekend/special event opening/appointment only | seasonal, or open all year | open all year, or seasonal opening |
| **Learning offer** | formal learning offer within university, regular subject specialist lectures/talks external to the university | formal learning offer within university, offer to other educational and user groups in addition to university users, regular specialist lectures/talks and publications | formal learning offer within university and to multiple educational and user social groups in addition to university users, regular specialist lectures/talks and publications |
| **Visitor numbers** | up to 10,000 site visits per year | up to 49,999 site visits per year | over 50,000 site visits per year |

# National museums

A UK national museum is funded directly by a department of government, whether UK or devolved. It will offer visitor facilities appropriate to a national organisation, holding and acquiring a collection of national and international significance, and providing excellent engagement opportunities through exhibitions, displays, learning, and research opportunities. The museum will provide expertise regarding its specific subject matter to other museums, galleries and collections. The museum will be open all year or seasonally.

National museums must complete 12 additional questions, published on the Arts Council's website.

# Nationally styled museums

A nationally styled museum is a non-national museum using one of the national names listed below and which claims nationally significant reach and meaning.The museum may be any of the governance types described above, and will offer visitor facilities appropriate to a national organisation. It will hold and acquire a collection of national significance and international interest, providing excellent engagement opportunities through exhibitions, displays, learning, and research opportunities. The museum will provide expertise regarding its specific subject matter to other museums, galleries and collections. The museum will be open all year or seasonally.

Nationally-styled names include the following, or equivalent, words:

International, World, Nation, National, Europe, European, Commonwealth, Empire, United Kingdom, Great Britain, Britain, British, England, English, Wales, Welsh, Cymru, Cymreig, Scotland, Scottish, na h-Alba, Ulster, Northern Ireland, and Northern Irish.

Nationally styled museums must complete 12 additional questions, published on the Arts Council website.

# Making a decision about your application

## How long does the decision process take?

The time between submission of your application or return is taken up with assessment activities, both desk based and potentially a site visit, quality assurance of the subsequent assessment, and scheduling to an appropriate panel. If an application or return is incomplete or unclear, additional information will be requested. Considering the high workload of the assessment team, there is therefore a flexible target for assessors to complete assessments and notify the museum of the appropriate award within five months as a maximum. It is likely that most assessments will take less time than this.

## Who makes the award decision?

Decisions on applications are made by Accreditation panels, sub-committees of the full Accreditation Committee.

## What are the possible decisions?

Four decisions are possible:

**Full Accreditation** is awarded, on the basis that the applicant has satisfied all the requirements of the standard

**Provisional Accreditation** is awarded – the applicant has failed to meet all the requirements that make up the standard, but the assessor believes there is the willingness and intent to achieve what is required for full Accreditation within 12 months

Provisional status can be awarded for 12 months in the first instance where there is a plan to resolve the issue/s. Provisional status can be re-awarded after the initial 12 months for the same issue, such as a major physical redevelopment or governance change. However, the museum must have demonstrated either significant progress, or, where the museum has no control over the issue (such as legally challenging lease arrangements between parent bodies), they have demonstrated that they are doing everything they can to address it.

There may also be situations where a museum with a provisional award might resolve the initial issue that resulted in that award, only for a new and different issue to be identified through assessment. In these circumstances the museum may once again be awarded provisional Accreditation for 12 months in the first issue due to this new and different issue.

**Decision is deferred**, on the basis that the panel is not convinced by the assessment, and additional information is required

**The museum is removed from the scheme**, following: a request to be removed; or as a result of the museum not taking timely action to progress to full Accreditation status; or by failing to re-apply for a status under the Accreditation Standard; or by substantially breaching the Accreditation Standard

# How and when will I know the decision after the panel?

Outcome letters and award certificates are sent within three weeks of the panel meeting. Please visit the Arts Council website for details of when the panel meetings will take place see www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/museums-and-libraries/museums/accreditation-scheme/accreditation-committee

# How long does the award last for?

An award of full Accreditation will last for three years, after which the participant will be invited to provide a return application for assessment. Museums failing to provide a return will lose their Accredited status.

# What happens if circumstances at the museum change in a way that affects the museum's ability to maintain the Accreditation Standard?

Accredited museums should keep the Arts Council informed during the lifetime of the award of any changes likely to impact on the museum's Accreditation status, such as a governance change, a major capital re-development, a significant workforce review or a proposal to sell items from the museum's collection.

In cases where a significant change is likely, or has occurred, the museum should contact its assessing organisation.

# What can I do if I don't agree with a decision?

If you are not happy with the way we dealt with your application, please contact us and we will discuss this with you. If you are still unhappy you can ask for a copy of our complaints procedure by contacting our enquiries team by email to enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk or by phoning 0845 300 6200. You can complain if you believe we have not followed the published procedures when assessing your application. You cannot appeal the decision.

We will ensure that the relevant assessing organisation carries out an appropriate investigation of your concerns and if appropriate, we will refer the matter to a review panel of the Accreditation Committee.

# Freedom of information

The Arts Council is committed to being as open as possible. We are listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks for them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Information Commissioner's Office website for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process. However, we will after completion of the process publish a list of all successful applicants.

# Appendix

## Documents which may need to be attached to an application or return application

Listed below is the full range of possible documents required by Accreditation. Most organisations will not have each as a separate document, and many may be combined, for example, all collections policies (see 2.2-2.4) may be within one collections management policy. Museums must be able to evidence where the information is situated, if multiple elements are combined into one larger policy or plan.

- governing document (see requirement 1.2 in the Accreditation Standard)

- organisation structure (see requirement 1.3)

- succession procedures (see requirement 1.3)

- management agreements or service level agreement - where present (see requirement 1.3)

- forward plan, in date, approved (see requirement 1.4)

- approval of forward plan, usually in the form of a minute (see requirement 1.4)

- two years of relevant financial accounts (see requirement 1.6)

- two years of relevant financial accounts for management organisation - where relevant

- workforce chart (see requirement 1.7)

- template volunteer agreement (see requirement 1.7)

- evidence of appropriate professional expertise (see requirement 1.8)

- Museum Mentor agreement, if appropriate, approved (see requirement 1.8)

- evidence of appointment of Museum Mentor, if appropriate (see requirement 1.8)

- environmental sustainability policy statement, approved (see requirement 1.10)

- approval of environmental sustainability policy statement (see requirement 1.10)

- collections development policy, in date, approved (see requirement 2.2)

- approval of collections development policy (see requirement 2.2)

- documentation policy (see requirement 2.3)

- approval of documentation policy (see requirement 2.3)

- care and conservation policy (see requirement 2.4)

- approval of care and conservation policy (see requirement 2.4)

- collections documentation plan, where backlog exists (see requirement 2.5)

- care and conservation plan (see requirement 2.6)

- access policy statement (see requirement 3.1)

The following documents may be larger, or sensitive to the museum, and will therefore be reviewed by an assessor should a site visit be undertaken as part of the quality assurance process. These documents can also be attached to the new application or return application form:

- workforce handbook (see requirement 1.7 in the Accreditation Standard)

- evidence of qualifications and/or experience for at least two members of the workforce (see requirement 1.7)

- emergency plan (see requirement 1.9)

- documentation procedural manual (see requirement 2.7)

- security review with recommendations, implementation plan (see requirement 2.8)

- evidence of consultation activity (see requirement 3.1)

- evidence of evaluation and analysis of consultation advice (see requirement 3.1)

- evidence relating to the organisations commitment to a culture of customer care (see requirement 3.1)

- a range of accessible marketing material (see requirement 3.2)

# Glossary

**Access** Usually seen in terms of the identification of barriers that prevent participation and the development of strategies to dismantle them. Barriers come in many forms and may be physical, sensory, intellectual, attitudinal, social, cultural or financial

**Accessible** Includes all forms of access – being open to visitors, access by appointment, access to specific user groups, virtual access, etc.

**Acquisition** The process of legally acquiring an item for the long-term collection

**AIM** Association of Independent Museums

**AMA** Associateship of the Museums Association

**AMA+** Associateship of the Museums Association CPD framework

**AMOT** Army Museums Ogilby Trust

**Approval** The governing body or delegated authority has made a decision to support a proposal and this has been ratified and recorded

**Benchmarks in Collections Care** A self-assessment checklist, which sets out clear and realistic benchmarks for the care of collections.

**Budget** The annual budget of the museum, including income and expenditure accounts

**Collection** A body of cultural and heritage material. Collections may incorporate physical, non-tangible or digital objects and works. Purely digital collections are not eligible for museum Accreditation (see eligibility below)

**Collections management** The organisational approach to balancing collections development, care, access and information

**Conservation** Methods of care or intervention applied to an item with the aim of slowing the process of degradation and extending the item's life

**Constitution** A legal set of fundamental principles according to which an organisation is governed

**Consultation** Formal or informal methods of finding out what users and non-users think, want or need

**Continuous improvement** A drive and desire to improve performance, the process of setting and monitoring targets for improvement

**CPD** Continuing professional development

**CyMAL** CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (a division of the Welsh Government)

**DCMS** Department for Culture, Media and Sport

**Deaccessioning** The process of removing an item from the museum's accession register

**Disposal** The physical process of permanently removing an item from the museum's care

**Documentation** The information records about collection items

**Environmental Sustainability** How a museum uses its resources responsibly to minimise its detrimental impact on the natural world

**Equalities analysis** A way of considering the effect of policy and planning decisions on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act

**FE** Further education (college, etc)

**Forward plan** A forward-looking document that sets out the detailed aims and objectives of an organisation, to be achieved within a defined planning cycle. It is sometimes called a business plan

**Forward planning** A considered way of setting strategic direction and overarching ambition by taking stock and prioritising work in line with the organisation's statement of purpose and in consultation with its stakeholders, aligning resources with objectives

**FRS30** Financial Reporting Standard 30 is the accounting standard which sets out disclosure requirements for reporting heritage assets

**Governing document** A document defining the mission, purpose and remit of an organisation. An example would be a charitable constitution such as a Deed of Trust, or the Memorandum and Articles of an incorporated charitable company

**HE** Higher education (university, etc.)

**HMRC** Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs
**IiP** Investors in People

**IlfA** Inspiring Learning for All, a framework for evaluating and planning learning activity within museums

**Induction procedures** The formalised process of informing everyone with a role in the museum all about the museum, its purpose and priorities

**Interpretative methods** The way in which ideas and information about the collections are communicated to users

**Key aims** These are the overarching priorities for the museum to deliver the statement of purpose

**LA** Local authority

**Learning** Includes both formal and informal learning. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings, or an increase in the capacity to reflect

**Learning offer** What the museum offers its users in terms of learning opportunities

**MGS** Museums Galleries Scotland

**MA** Museums Association

**Museum Mentors** Museum professionals supporting smaller museums without paid professional members of the workforce to achieve Accreditation. Mentors were previously known as Curatorial advisers

**MOD** Ministry of Defence

**NIMC** Northern Ireland Museums Council

**Non-users** People who do not currently make use of the museum

**Objectives** The tasks that ensure key aims are achieved. They should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely

**Occupancy** The formal terms under which an organisation is based in a building or on a site

**OSCR** Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

**QIS** Quality Improvement System, developed by Museums Galleries Scotland

**Policies** Approved documents or statements that provide strategic direction for the organisation

**Procedures** Procedures define standardised processes. They are a practical operational guide and may also be called manuals, handbooks, instructions, etc.

**Professional** With a suitable qualification supported by recent relevant experience

**Protected characteristics** Defined in the Equality Act 2010

**Rationalisation** The process of refining a collection in line with the museum's statement of purpose and the priorities set out in the collection's development policy

**Regional plan** A type of planning utilised by larger organisations whose remit covers a larger area; may strategically guide and influence a number of local or site plans (for example property management plans)

**Resilience** The long-term viability of an organisation to survive and adapt in a changing environment

**Resource plan** Identifies and quantifies the people and money available to realise objectives within the current forward plan. The resource plan should cover the same years as the forward plan even if figures for years other than the current one are only indicative

**Risk** Combination of threat, likelihood and impact of it occurring, risk is the potential for a chosen action or activity (including the choice of inaction) to lead to a loss

**SCAM Code of Practice** The Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002)

**SORP** Statement of recommended practice

**Sustainable** Capacity of the museum for long-term survival as an organisation

**SPECTRUM** The industry standard for collections management, defining agreed procedures and data requirements for: object entry; acquisition; location and movement control; cataloguing; object exit; loans out and loans in

**Statement of purpose** Defines why the museum exists and who it is for. The statement of purpose may be found within the museum's governance document

**Succession procedures** An agreed set of processes to ensure the business continuity and accountability through changes of leadership or of key members of the workforce

**Users** A description of the number and type of users of the museum, including formal and informal users, often broken down into social groups, for example, families, residents, and school children

**VAQAS** Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme

**Visitor profile** The general numbers/types of users to the museum (drop in, booked, and learning activities combined)

**Workforce** The people, both paid and unpaid, who work at the museum