



## **The PRISM fund: guidance for applicants**

**Notes to help potential applicants determine if they are eligible for a grant from the PRISM fund, and to explain the application process**

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**Contents**

**What is the PRISM fund? ..... 3**

**Who can apply? ..... 4**

**How much can PRISM award? ..... 5**

**Eligible and ineligible costs ..... 6**

**How do I apply? ..... 8**

**Completing the online application form ..... 11**

    Describing the significance of your object ..... 11

    Describing the proposed conservation work (if applicable) ..... 11

    Explaining how the object will be made available to visitors ..... 11

    Explaining the location of the object (if applicable) ..... 12

**How do I claim the grant? ..... 13**

**Complaints procedure ..... 14**

**How we treat your application under the Freedom of Information Act ..... 15**

**Promoting the PRISM fund ..... 16**

**Where can I get further information? ..... 17**

**Appendix: National organisations not eligible for PRISM funding 18**

    Bodies funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) ... 18

    Bodies funded by the Welsh Government (WG) ..... 20

    Bodies funded by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) ..... 20

    Others ..... 20

## **What is the PRISM fund?**

The Preservation of Industrial and Scientific Material (PRISM) fund was established in 1973. It funds the preservation of items or collections important in the history and development of science, technology and industry with grants awarded towards the costs of acquisition and direct conservation of such items.

## **About PRISM**

Applications can be submitted at any time of the year and will be assessed subject to budgetary constraints. We aim to give a decision within two months of receiving a full application. Applications submitted less than two months before the project start date may be rejected on this basis. Decisions are made by Arts Council England using established criteria together with the advice of expert assessors (normally from national institutions).

PRISM is a rolling fund with no deadline within the year. Applications should be for projects starting within the current financial year.

An annual report is published on the Arts Council website:

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/prism#section-3>

PRISM grant aid is offered through a funding agreement with details of all terms and conditions. The terms and conditions are available on request.

For more information contact:

[prism@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:prism@artscouncil.org.uk)

## **Who can apply?**

Charitable organisations in England and Wales are eligible to apply. Comparable schemes are administered in Scotland by National Museums Scotland (National Fund for Acquisitions) and Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Museums Council (Acquisition Fund).

National Museums of Scotland

<http://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/national-fund-for-acquisitions/>

Northern Ireland Museums Council

<http://www.nimc.co.uk/grants/>

Accredited museums are eligible except national organisations funded directly through central government, a list of which is supplied at the end of this document.

Applications are also accepted from other charitable or public bodies engaged in the preservation of eligible material. This includes specialist libraries, public repositories and archives or libraries formally linked to local authorities or eligible bodies such as universities and religious organisations. Other bodies may apply provided they can demonstrate that they are charitable trusts which are:

- established for educational and heritage purposes
- appropriately organised to hold and/or develop collections of artefacts (in some cases a single artefact)
- able to provide regular and ongoing access to the item to be funded, and
- viable in the medium to long term. The group should have a large membership base and be able to demonstrate that its membership is not static and that new members are replacing those who leave.

Private individuals, society-run or company-run museums without charitable status are not eligible. Grant-aided material must be held in the public domain and there must be a long-term intention to retain and care for it.

Community Interest Companies are not eligible to apply.

Applications for acquisitions of Fine and Decorative Arts should consider the V&A Purchase Grant Fund:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/the-ace-va-purchase-grant-fund>

## **How much can PRISM award?**

All grants are between £500 and £20,000 for any one application. An institution can receive up to £20,000 per year from PRISM for acquisition and direct conservation projects combined (museum services are considered as single institutions for this purpose). Any one object may receive up to £20,000 in its lifetime.

The maximum acquisition or conservation grant can be up to 90 per cent of eligible project costs. Applicants **must** be able to demonstrate sources of match funding to complete the other 10 per cent of eligible costs at the time of application. Identifying appropriate match funding is the responsibility of the grant applicant. Applicants are expected to name the source/s, amount and decision dates for match funding.

In the case of conservation grants, the notional value of volunteer labour on eligible works is allowable as match funding at a nominal rate of £50 per volunteer per day. Volunteer labour can be used as applicant contribution for the match fund and must be on tasks which directly further the project.

You must provide a breakdown of estimated volunteer working hours and activities within your Breakdown of Project Costs and Conservation Plan.

If you can reclaim VAT, this will be excluded from the grant calculation.

In the case of conservation grants, priority will be given to those that fund complete projects, rather than a single phase of a multi-phase project.

## **Eligible and ineligible costs**

### **The following costs are eligible:**

- the cost of art items where the subject matter is scientific/industrial and this is the primary reason for purchase/conservation
- purchase price, including auction premiums
- commission paid to agents for facilitating purchase at auction
- transportation and re-assembly costs of items commonly dismantled for transport or where specialist skill and equipment are required (eg aircraft or power generation units)
- buying in expertise for elements of activity contributing directly to the project (eg employing a freelance conservator with specialist expertise)
- the purchase of appropriate materials used in eligible work, such as conservation-grade paint or textiles
- the cost of re-housing collections in conservation-quality storage enclosures, such as sleeving of vulnerable archival/photographic collections, and acid-free boxes for natural history specimens (this includes materials and labour costs), and
- plant hire (for cranes etc)
- VAT if this is not reclaimable by the applicant institution

The fund will consider supporting the restoration of objects (excluding aeroplanes) to working order where this is deemed appropriate. Maintenance, repairs, running costs or renovation/replacement of worn parts arising from operation, eg re-tubing are not eligible (it is expected that the organisation will budget for these within their operating costs), unless the maintenance is essential to the conservation of the object. Applicants are expected to demonstrate the need for this work within the application.

### **The following costs are ineligible:**

- any costs incurred before the application has been approved and the grant contracted
- costs of art items where the primary reason for purchase/conservation is aesthetic
- removal costs not associated with acquisition or conservation
- cost of conservation to objects which are not owned by the applicant institution

- fees for professional services which are not directly related to conservation (e.g. surveys, valuations, legal advice, project management, etc)
- acquisition or conservation costs of buildings for development or storage purposes
- storage projects (except where there is a direct conservation/collection care benefit)
- infrastructure improvements (improvements to or furnishings for stores/galleries)
- the cost of provision of new motive power sources to exhibits (eg electric drives or modern steam plant)
- works or equipment required to meet health and safety regulations
- the purchase of capital equipment including IT equipment, tools and plant
- exhibition cases, interpretation and display materials, and related work costs
- costs associated with lighting, environmental control and monitoring equipment, and storage furniture
- the cost of cataloguing projects
- digitisation projects
- accommodation and subsistence costs.
- permanent staff salary and expenses
- VAT if this is reclaimable by the applicant organisation

The Fund has on occasion been able to support the acquisition or conservation of significant buildings, and the acquisition or conservation of models and replicas which are of scientific/industrial interest, but is no longer able to do so.

**Ineligible costs cannot be used as match funding for the project activity.**

Please note: this is a guide for applicants and does not constitute a definitive list of eligible and ineligible costs

## How do I apply?

There are separate application forms for acquisition and conservation grants, which are to be completed online at

[https://forms.artscouncil.org.uk/officeforms/arts\\_projects.ofml](https://forms.artscouncil.org.uk/officeforms/arts_projects.ofml)

If your project includes both acquisition and conservation work, you must complete both forms.

We advise you to contact us before submitting an application via [prism@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:prism@artscouncil.org.uk) to discuss your submission.

As part of your application, you must provide:

- At least two good-quality photographs (if you are purchasing an item at auction, you can provide a link to the vendor's images if they are available online). If you are applying for funding for a conservation project, we need to see the object in its current state.
- A supporting statement establishing the significance of the material in a local, regional or national context and explaining why your institution is a suitable home for the object. Priority will be given to objects of national significance. Explain how your material is important to the history of science, industry or technology (refer to page 11 for more information).
- A statement on how you will provide public access, alongside an ongoing interpretation/access plan for your object in order to evidence the public benefit of your project (refer to page 11 for more information)
- A full financial breakdown **and** estimates and quotes for all project costs (please separate out VAT costs).
- In the case of conservation grants you **must** also provide a full conservation project plan which explains the project work in detail, with a breakdown of tasks, along with information about time frames, materials, methods and workforce.
- In the conservation application form you will be asked if the Conservation Practice or Conservator to be used in your project is included on the conservation register maintained by the Institute of Conservation. To check this please telephone 020 3142 6799, visit [www.conservationregister.com](http://www.conservationregister.com), or email [conservationregister@icon.org.uk](mailto:conservationregister@icon.org.uk).
- If you are applying for funding for a working object you need to include an ongoing operation and maintenance plan, and a risk assessment document.

- Details of all required match funding for your project. Please note that ineligible costs cannot be used as match funding for the project activity. Below is an example of how to provide this financial information:

Total amount of eligible project costs:			
Total amount of match funding:			
Source	Amount	Secured yes/no	Date of decision
Non-local sources (eg HLF or Pilgrim Trust). Please specify:			
Local sources (eg friends association). Please specify:			
Your own funds (please submit accounts as evidence):			
Volunteer labour (at a notional rate of £50 per person per day):			
Total amount requested from PRISM fund:			

Please note that the above information **must** be submitted as part of a full application. If your application does not include any of the required supporting information, we will request its submission before we can commence assessment. This will delay the outcome of your application.

Any costs incurred prior to the commencement of an agreement will not be considered eligible.

Applications for acquisitions must be submitted before the object is acquired.

Applications are assessed by Arts Council England using the information in your application form, appendices and any other information submitted. Commissioned expert assessors will examine the strength of the case made in the application, the viability of the work and the level of costs. Inspections of the material by expert assessors or PRISM fund staff may also be necessary.

## **Completing the online application form**

As part of the online application process you will be required to enter basic details about your project and organisation. You will also be asked to provide more detailed information in the following areas:

### **Describing the significance of your object**

To complete this question, you need to cover all of the following:

- why the object plays an important role in the understanding of the development of its particular field of science (for example, medicine, industry, technology or natural sciences)
- information about the object's uniqueness or rarity, whether it is associated with a significant individual or event, and how it is significant in a local, regional or national context. Priority will be given to items of national significance
- why your organisation is the most appropriate repository for the object, and
- how the object fits with your collecting policy, and attach this document if you have one.

### **Describing the proposed conservation work (if applicable)**

To complete this question, you must ensure that the following information is included:

- why the conservation work needs to be carried out and how you intend to do this
- list the required skills to carry out this work – do you have the required skills in house or will you be contracting in services?
- the role of your volunteer workforce in the project, including the tasks involved
- the materials that will be used, and
- information from any completed condition surveys.

### **Describing how the object will be made available to visitors**

Although PRISM does not support costs associated with display and interpretation, applications must demonstrate that the object will be accessible, understood and enjoyed by the public. Please explain:

- whether the object will be on permanent display and, if not, how the public will access it
- how the acquisition or conservation project will be publicised (if appropriate)

- how you will educate and inform the public about the object, and
- how you will pay for this work.

**Describing the location of the object (if applicable)**

Objects supported by PRISM must be held in appropriate accommodation which provides security and suitable environmental conditions. This accommodation must have long-term security of tenure (at least 12 months), which is sufficient to keep the collections safe and allow effective forward planning. The objects must be maintained to relevant care of collection standards.

Guidance on how to complete specific questions can be accessed by clicking on the field help icon  throughout the application form.

## **How do I claim the grant?**

If your application is approved you will be offered a grant subject to agreement to adhere to our standard terms and conditions. You will be sent two copies of an offer letter and declaration form, one copy of which must be signed and returned to Arts Council England along with the appropriate bank details in order to secure the agreement. Please bear in mind that acquisition grants are usually held open for a maximum of six months from the date of the agreement. Conservation grants will be held open for an appropriate amount of time (maximum 12 months) from the date of agreement if appropriate to the scale of the project. **Grants unclaimed after these periods may be withdrawn without notice.**

PRISM grants are normally paid in two instalments. Requests for further stage payments will be considered at the discretion of the fund manager. Once your project is complete, you will need to evaluate it and submit an activity report (available on request from the PRISM team), including a full statement of income and expenditure signed and dated by a senior officer of your organisation, copies of all relevant invoices/receipts and end-of-project photographs.

Arts Council England retains the right to reclaim grants if:

- You dispose of, sell, mortgage, charge against or otherwise surrender rights to grant-aided material without receiving written permission from the PRISM fund.
- Your organisation ceases to fulfil the PRISM fund's eligibility criteria.

Long-term loans and transfer of ownership of grant-aided material to other institutions require written approval from the PRISM fund manager. Transfers will normally be approved if the proposed new exhibitor/owner can demonstrate that it meets our eligibility criteria.

## **Complaints procedure**

If you are not happy with the way we have dealt with your application, please contact us and we will discuss this with you. If you are still unhappy, you can ask us for a copy of our complaints procedure. Details can be found in [Making a complaint](#), which is available on our website [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk), by contacting our enquiries team by email via [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk) or by phoning 0845 300 6200.

Please note that you can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published procedures when assessing your application. You cannot appeal against the decision.

## **How we treat your application under the Freedom of Information Act**

We are committed to being as open as possible. This includes being clear to you about how we assess and make decisions for PRISM funding. If you apply to us for a grant, we are happy to give you copies of the information we hold about you, including our assessment of your application. We are also 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. However, we will not release those parts of the documents covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Visit [www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act](http://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act) for information on the exemptions and freedom of information generally.

## **Promoting the PRISM fund**

Grant recipients are requested to use the 'Supported by Arts Council England' logo.

When promoting items benefiting from the fund please use this logo:



To download this logo and for guidance on how to use it, please visit:  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk/grantawardlogo](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/grantawardlogo)

The minimum size for this logo is 15mm; measured by the diameter of the Arts Council England roundel. The logo is available in black, white or with a transparent background.

Please also take note of the 'exclusion zone', which is the minimum area around the Arts Council logo. This area must remain clear and can be measured by the calculation of twice the height of the 'A' in Arts Council and varies in direct proportion to the size at which the logo is reproduced.

## **Where can I get further information?**

If you would like to discuss the application process, or the eligibility of your organisation, please contact:

[prism@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:prism@artscouncil.org.uk)

For logo or brand queries please contact the enquiries team:

Telephone: 0845 300 6200

Email: [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk)

## **Appendix: National organisations not eligible for PRISM funding**

### **Bodies funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)**

- 1 Arts Council England, London
- 2 British Film Institute, London
  - i) BFI National Archive
- 3 British Library, London
  - i) British Library Sound Archive
- 4 British Museum, London
- 5 English Heritage
  - i) See English Heritage Handbook for list of all properties
- 6 Imperial War Museum
  - i) IWM London
  - ii) IWM Duxford
  - iii) IWM North, Manchester
  - iv) Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, London
  - v) HMS Belfast, London
- 7 National Gallery, London
- 8 Royal Museums Greenwich
  - i) National Maritime Museum
  - ii) Royal Observatory
  - iii) The Queen's House
- 9 National Museums Liverpool
  - i) International Slavery Museum
  - ii) Lady Lever Art Gallery
  - iii) Merseyside Maritime Museum
  - iv) Museum of Liverpool
  - v) National Conservation Centre
  - vi) Sudley House

- vii) Walker Art Gallery
  - viii) World Museum Liverpool
- 10 National Museum of Science & Industry
    - i) Science Museum, London
    - ii) National Railway Museum, York
    - iii) National Media Museum, Bradford
    - iv) Science Museum Swindon, storage facility
    - v) Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester
    - vi) Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon
  - 11 National Portrait Gallery, London
    - i) Displays at Montacute House, Bodleywyddan Castle and Beningborough (buildings – National Trust)
  - 12 Natural History Museum
    - i) Natural History Museum, South Kensington
    - ii) Natural History Museum, Tring
  - 13 Royal Armouries
    - i) Royal Armouries, Leeds
    - ii) Royal Armouries, Fort Nelson
    - iii) Royal Armouries, Tower of London
  - 14 Sir John Soane's Museum, London
  - 15 Southbank Centre, London
    - i) Hayward Gallery
  - 16 Tate
    - i) Tate Britain, London
    - ii) Tate Modern, London
    - iii) Tate Liverpool
    - iv) Tate St Ives (including the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden)
  - 17 Victoria and Albert Museum
    - i) V&A in South Kensington
    - ii) V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green

18 The Wallace Collection, London

**Bodies funded by the Welsh Government (WG)**

- 1 Arts Council of Wales, Cardiff
- 2 Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales
  - i) National Museum Cardiff
  - ii) St Fagans: National History Museum
  - iii) Big Pit: National Coal Centre, Blaenafon
  - iv) National Wool Museum, Drefach
  - v) National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon
  - vi) National Slate Museum, Llanberis
  - vii) National Waterfront Museum, Swansea
  - viii) National Collections Centre, Nantgarw
- 3 National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

**Bodies funded by the Ministry of Defence (MOD)**

- 1 Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth
- 2 Royal Marines Museum, Southsea
- 3 Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Gosport
- 4 Fleet Air Arm Museum, Somerset
- 5 National Army Museum, London
- 6 The Royal Air Force Museum
  - i) Royal Air Force Museum Cosford
  - ii) Royal Air Force Museum London
- 7 Explosion! Museum of Naval Firepower
- 8 National Army Museum

**Others**

- 1 Government Art Collection, London
- 2 The National Archives, Kew
- 3 Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew