Toolkit: Promoting your Designated collection
Cover: Astrolabe for Shah Abbas II, by Muhammad Muqim al-Yazdi, Persian, 1647/8
Credit: Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford
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Introduction

Designation is a mark of distinction, an accolade celebrating unique collections of national importance.

The Designation Scheme acknowledges inspiring collections stretching the length and breadth of the country. All Designated collections are held outside of nationally funded organisations and are a vital part of England’s culture and artistic heritage.

Arts Council England is passionate about these collections, and their ability to impact upon and enrich people’s lives. The Designation Scheme helps to highlight their important cultural value. This guide has been created to help organisations promote Designated collections and provides easy-to-follow tips and templates.

It should complement your existing promotional work and help you to:
• develop a story and key messages around your Designated collection
• gain media and social media coverage about your collection and the impact of achieving Designated status
• promote your collection through events, photography, branding and your website
• engage key stakeholders with your Designation story, for example, your staff or members of your board, MPs, local authorities or Local Enterprise Partnerships

All of this will enable you to:
• encourage people from all sectors of the community to use, enjoy and benefit from your Designated collection
• raise the profile of your Designated collection within governing bodies and the funding community to strengthen your case for long-term support
• make the case to the government for the sustained funding of arts and culture
Telling your story

This guidance can help you to communicate your Designation story to the media, local and national government and the public. The following key messages can be used when drafting your story, to help summarise the aims and impact of the Designation Scheme.

- The Designation Scheme identifies and celebrates collections held in England’s museums, libraries and archives that are of outstanding importance and value, and that deepen our understanding of the world.
- Designated collections feature strong characters and enduring interests from the world around us. These collections cross art and science in fascinating ways, tell gripping stories, help us to understand our past and suggest how we may shape our future.
- The Arts Council is passionate about England’s collections and their ability to impact upon and enrich people’s lives. The Designation Scheme put these collections in the spotlight, drawing attention to their important cultural value.
3.1 The media

Gaining media coverage is a powerful way to communicate your Designation story to all your audiences, including the public and national and local politicians.

Create your story
The main elements of a newsworthy story are:

1) it needs to have something new or different about it
2) it needs to be interesting
3) if targeted at the local media, it needs to have a local angle

Achieving Designated status is a great accomplishment and an opportunity to highlight the interesting aspects of your collection to the media.

Distributing a press release, preferably by email, is a good place to start when communicating your Designation story. A template press release, which can be adapted to your organisation, is provided in Appendix 1.

There are more helpful tips on what makes a good news story\(^1\) and writing a press release\(^2\) on the Arts Council website.

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1. [www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/information-funded-organisations/promoting-your-grants-arts-activity/gaining-media-coverage](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/information-funded-organisations/promoting-your-grants-arts-activity/gaining-media-coverage)
Shape your story

**Tailor**
Each story about your collection should be tailored to the media outlet you are targeting. For example, local newspapers will be most interested in how your Designation story impacts on local people and industry publications will be interested in how it fits with wider debates in their sector.

**Quote**
Quotes from influential people, or even your collection audience, workshop participants or staff members will help to bring your story to life, serving as a reminder of the tangible impact your Designated collection has on your local community. Having an interesting spokesperson who can take part in interviews and discussions with journalists can also help to build and sustain interest.

**Make it personal**
If an item in your collection has a moving or interesting story, this could be something to focus on. These stories are of particular interest to local media.

**Illustrate**
Images of your collection or related events will help to engage readers. Your story is also more likely to be published if you provide them.

The key messages in section 2 may also be useful when shaping your Designation story for the media.

**Connect and build long-term relationships**
You can also incorporate information about your Designated collection into other stories about your work. Sending out regular press releases to your media contacts will communicate that you are a reliable producer of content, who they may contact to fill space in the future.

Timing is crucial to securing coverage so speak to your media contacts about the best time to send your press release.
You can read more about how to get in touch with journalists and who to target your press releases at on the Arts Council website.

Follow-up phone calls can help you gain maximum impact from your press release, but don’t just ask journalists if they have received your release. Offer additional information, making sure you have material prepared, be brief and try and avoid the busiest news day for any weekly publications.

Staying in touch with individual journalists, inviting them to events and press nights (even if they are not covering them officially) will also help them to feel positively towards your collection and that you value their attention. There are more tips about this on the Arts Council website.

**Events**

Dedicated events can provide an important opportunity for media coverage and photographs, and help bring your Designation story to life. Events could include:

- a Designation plaque presentation (see below)
- the launch of a new initiative connected to your collection
- collection tours
- celebrating the acquisition of an important new item
- a fundraising event

**Designation plaque presentation**

We have provided you with a plaque to signify the inclusion of your collection in the Designation Scheme. Your plaque could be presented at an event – an ideal occasion for inviting the media and your community to take part in your Designation story. Arts Council staff are happy to provide guidance around developing the event, or to present the plaque at your ceremony.
The plaques can be fixed to most walls. We ask that you take care to keep the plaque clean by polishing it with a cloth, and that you avoid using chemical cleaners which will damage the surface.

**Inviting the press to an event**

Give journalists between three to five working days’ notice to attend your event. You can issue a photocall or press call in advance of an event. Photocalls are for newspapers, specifically advising of a photo opportunity. Press calls are for radio or television, specifically outlining an interview or filming opportunity.

If members of the press are unable to attend your event, you could send them a press release afterwards that includes information on who attended, positive quotes and photographs. There are tips on creating impactful photographs and booking a photographer in section 3.4.

**Radio and television interviews**

Interviews with local radio and TV stations might take place in a studio, over the telephone or in your collection itself. Whatever the setting, try to follow these tips to make sure any interviews communicate your Designation story effectively:

- know what you want to gain from the interview and the story you want to communicate
- prepare two or three key points and rehearse them before the interview
- be clear on details in advance, for example -
  - what type of interview will it be?
  - how long will it last?
  - is it live or pre-recorded?
  - is anyone else being interviewed?
  - any questions or themes the media outlet is able to tell you in advance
- consider what you don’t want to say and rehearse your responses to difficult questions
- avoid using jargon and technical terminology
3.2 The government (local and national)

Local and national politicians are the key decision-makers on public funding for culture. With the Conservative government committed to public spending reductions up to 2020, it is vital that organisations with Designated collections help us make the case for continued investment in arts and culture.

For more information, visit the Making the case to local and national government\(^6\) pages of our advocacy toolkit. Visit the toolkit pages on MPs\(^7\), local authorities\(^8\) and Local Enterprise Partnerships\(^9\) to find specific information on how communicate and connect with these stakeholders.

**Create your story**

When shaping your Designation story for the government, your MP, local authority and councillors or Local Enterprise Partnerships, make sure you understand current agendas and priorities. Some relevant angles to think about include how your Designated collection supports:

- economic growth
- a connection to the creative industries and developing talent
- tourism
- job creation
- devolution – strengthening economies across the country
- a strong international reputation
- education

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Communicate your story
Write to your local MP, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local councils and individual council members to communicate your Designation story. Or, if board members or others in your organisation have an existing relationship with any of these contacts, try a more personal approach. You could also encourage people who have benefited from your work to write to their MP expressing support for your organisation.

Invite your target contacts to your Designation plaque presentation, or other events. Arranging special tour of your collection or a meeting with a high-level person in your organisation to discuss shared priorities can also help to get them involved. Make it clear what they will gain from attending, and whether any media outlets will be covering specific events.

Build long-term relationships
There are a number of things you can do to maintain a relationship with your contacts:

- continue to invite your contacts to your events, offering to provide any photos for their use
- provide regular updates on your organisation’s activities, for example through press releases (see section 3.1) and social media (see section 4)
- ask MPs to put down an Early Day Motion on something particularly successful you have done, encouraging other MPs to sign it
- host roundtable discussions, where local cultural organisations, MPs, councillors and business owners discuss cultural, social and economic issues
• offer to host a hustings event, where election candidates or parties debate policies and answer questions – you would be able to use this to highlight the importance of your collection to the area
• if you begin to establish good relationships, you can invite some of your contacts to join your board

Find out more about building long-term relationships with MPs in our guidance on working with MPs\textsuperscript{11}.

3.3 The public

Communicating your Designation story to the public is vital in order to gain support for your collection and related projects. Use the following tips when thinking about your advertising and marketing strategies. You can read more about this in our advocacy toolkit\textsuperscript{12}.

Create your story

Use the tips on shaping your story from the section 3.1.

Infographics can also be a useful tool when communicating your story to the public, making information more interesting and easier to understand. Find out how to create and share infographics on the Arts Council website.

Communicate your story

You don’t have to communicate everything at once. Instead, consider creating a timeline for sharing pieces of information, images and quotes. You could also think about how future projects could fit in with your Designation story. Over time, you can build your narrative and really engage your audience with your cause.

\textsuperscript{11} \url{www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/working_with_mps_130710.pdf}
\textsuperscript{12} \url{www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/value-arts-and-culture/advocacy-toolkit/making-case-public}
Mediums for communicating your Designation story to the public could include:

- email, either your regular e-newsletter or a special email about your Designated status
- website content (see below)
- social media (see section 4)
- posters, postcards or a printed programme of events
- advertisements, for example, in local newspapers, train stations or online

**Connect to build long-term relationships**
Offering to participate in, or even to host, local events such as festivals and fairs and offering prizes for local competitions can help raise the profile of your Designated collection in your area.

You could also contact other local organisations to explore partnerships or reciprocal links on websites or newsletters, helping to spread your Designation story and build support for your work. Think about targeting places where your potential visitors would go such as other cultural institutions, schools and libraries or local business such as hotels and restaurants.

**Branding**
[logo images, dimensions and colour reference from old toolkit]

In order to instantly link your collection with the Designation Scheme, please include the Designation logo on both web and print-based promotions. The logo and guidelines for use are available from our Enquiries team at enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk.

The logo communicates the prestige of the Designation Scheme and associated organisations, so it is important that these guidelines are followed when using the logo.
**Logo colour**

The logo should be reproduced in Pantone 7476u, 5405c or CMYK or RGB equivalents (please see the colour references to left). The logo can also be reproduced in black or in white when reversed out of an image or solid colour.

**Logo size**

The size of the logo will vary according to where it is used, but it should never be reproduced below 25mm in diameter. If a smaller logo is required where space is restricted, the small-use logo should be used. The small-use logo should not be reproduced larger than 20mm high or smaller than 7mm high.

![Logo size examples](image)

**Logo positioning**

The logo should appear in one of the four corners of the page, but can be aligned with a headline or other text on a brochure cover, for example. On partner communications it will sometimes be necessary for the Designation logo to appear at the bottom of the page with other logos. In these cases it is preferable that the logo is to the left of the page and set to the same scale as the other logos.

![Logo positioning examples](image)

**Websites**

Remember to promote your Designation story to the public through your organisation’s website. You may find it helpful to use the key messages in section 2.

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**Colour reference**

- Pantone 7476u/5405c
- CMYK 60.20.20.40
- RGB 75.115.135
- HTML 4B7387

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You should also include a link to more information about the Designation Scheme on the Arts Council website at www.artscouncil.org.uk/designation

**Shaping your story for an online audience**

People tend to scan read websites. Following the tips below can help to structure your Designation story for an online audience.

- use a front-loading technique where you put important information first, for example, you could mention in the opening line or paragraph that your collection is Designated as it is of national and international significance
- keep your text succinct so that readers don’t have scroll down the page to get the information they need
- write in short, concise sentences (of 16-20 words) using plain English
- use short paragraphs that convey a single point
- use bullet points, but not too many

**Culture24**

Your Designated collection has a venue record on the Culture24 website, which you can update with information about your institution and work. Culture24’s direct data entry system (DDE) system is free and easy to use. You can use it to promote your temporary and permanent exhibitions, events and educational resources, which can also be tagged to National Curriculum areas to make them easier for teachers to find. The listings are shared with a range of other partners.

For more info please contact Culture24 at:
Email: info@culture24.org.uk
Telephone: 01273 623 266
Website: www.culture24.org.uk
3.4 Photography

A striking, impactful image can help draw attention to your Designation story. Use images as often as you can, in promotional literature, on websites or to accompany news stories.

**Taking your own photographs**

Allow around £70+ an hour for a photographer, excluding expenses and VAT. You will need to write a clear brief for the photographer detailing your requirements, as shown in Appendix 2.

Think about the kind of photographs you want to take and what they will be used for, ensuring that you have enough people and props. It may also be useful to take some photographs that feature your museum name and Designation plaque. Write down the names of any people in your photographs, with titles if appropriate.

**Rights and permissions**

When using any images that you do not own the rights to, ensure you have written permission from the copyright holder and that you use the correct credits including the name of the photographer. When using images of children below 12 years of age, full written parent/guardian consent is needed. For young people between the ages of 12 and 16, consent is recommended but not essential.

From time to time the Arts Council may ask for images of your Designated collection/s to be used to promote the Designation Scheme. Please bear this in mind when commissioning photographs, and if you would like to send us some of your best shots – please do so to designation@artscouncil.org.uk.
Social media

Social media can help to communicate your story to the public as well as journalists, MPs and other key influencers who may come across your content. Common platforms you may wish to use are Facebook\textsuperscript{13}, Twitter\textsuperscript{14}, Tumblr\textsuperscript{15} and Instagram\textsuperscript{16}.

Read the guide to social media\textsuperscript{17} on the Arts Council website for more tips, or take a look at our social media resources\textsuperscript{18} page for help on developing, and monitoring the success of, your social media story.

The Arts Marketing Association has also produced a useful Twitter guide for cultural organisations\textsuperscript{19}. The guide contains information on writing and targeting content, lots of which can be applied across social media platforms.

Creating your story

Think about who you are targeting on social media and tailor your content so that it is interesting and relevant to your audience. Where relevant, try to incorporate some of the topics in sections 3.1 and 3.2 into your messages.

Creating a long-term plan to communicate information slowly over time may also help people to engage with your story, without being overloaded with information. Observing what is being said on your social media networks and incorporating relevant themes into your

\textsuperscript{13}www.facebook.com
\textsuperscript{14}twitter.com
\textsuperscript{15}www.tumblr.com
\textsuperscript{16}instagram.com
\textsuperscript{17}www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/information-funded-organisations/promoting-your-grants-arts-activity/using-social-media
\textsuperscript{18}http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/information-funded-organisations/promoting-your-grants-arts-activity/using-social-media/social-media-resources
Designation story will also help you to relate to your audience and gain new followers.

**Connect to build relationships**
Tweet the Arts Council so we can retweet your Designation story. We have many followers and it is more than likely some of them will want to hear about your activity.

Be aware of influential organisations and individuals on social media that you think may be interested in your Designation story (for example, other cultural organisations, venues, bloggers and news sites), and contact them about it.

‘Like’ and ‘follow’ people. If you are active and share other people’s content, they are more likely to return the favour. Look to your stakeholders, investors and people involved in your collection such as curators and academics. These people are likely to be passionate about your Designated collection and will want to talk about it. Let them have your key messages, web links and hashtags (see below) to help them spread your story.

**Communicate your message**
Interesting online content will get shared and reshared. If you have any interactive or exclusive material like video, soundclips, images or multimedia (rich) content, use it. Rich content is often required by local newspapers to build their online presence so it is worth making them aware of any that you produce.

Don’t just put the same message out on each of your social media channels. Spend some time getting to know what works on different platforms, which have different features and audiences.

**Hashtags**
Messages on social networking sites may be tagged by putting “#” before important words, either as they appear in a sentence, or at the end of the message. This groups messages so that you can search for the hashtag and get the set of messages that contain it.
Using a hashtag can draw attention to your project and allows you to track who is talking about it. You can create your own hashtags, specific to your Designated collection, but it is also useful to use existing hashtags to make Tweets noticed. The following hashtags are also important in communicating your Designated story as part of wider conversations about public funding for the arts and culture:

#culturematters
When you are talking about the value of your Designated collection, for example how it supports education in your local community, include #culturematters. This will make sure you join the wider conversation about the value of culture to society. To find out more about this read our advocacy toolkit.

#ACEsupported
You can also use #ACEsupported to show that public funding and support is vital to your Designated collection. This will also help to associate your collection with the diverse and important cultural projects in your local area, and England as a whole.

#Designated
Use this hashtag to show off your Designated status and to connect your collection to others of outstanding and valuable importance up and down the country.

#collections
Using a hashtag such as #collections could help you make links further afield than the Designation Scheme, showing that you value the importance of collections across the world.

It is important to keep up-to-date with conversations on social media. Use any other relevant industry or local hashtags that you come across to communicate your Designation story, helping to connect it to issues that are important to your audiences.
Appendix 1: Template press release

For immediate release: [INSERT DATE]

[Insert organisation name] gains national quality accolade

[Insert name of organisation] in [insert name of town] has been officially awarded Designated status by the Arts Council England for its [insert collection].

[Insert paragraph here about the organisation and any other information of note. For example: The organisation, which holds a fine archaeology collection, has recently completed new displays of the collection.]

Arts Council England’s Designation Scheme identifies the pre-eminent collections of national importance held in England’s non-national museums, libraries and archives, based on their quality and significance. [Insert name of organisation]’s award proves that it delivers the highest standards, and that [insert organisation] is committed to the continued recognition and promotion of this remarkable collection, for the enjoyment of generations to come.

[Insert name and job title, Chairman, Director, Curator, etc] commented: “[insert quote. For example: how pleased / thanks to staff for taking part / what this means for the organisation].”

Darren Henley, Chief Executive of Arts Council England, said: “We are delighted to be awarding this prestigious accolade to [insert organisation name]. [Insert name of collection(s)] offer a fascinating and important insight into the history of the nation, and should be celebrated and shared with new audiences.”

-end-
Note to editors:

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people’s lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspire us, bring us together and teach us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, they make life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

www.arts council.org.uk

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Appendix 2: Example photography brief

Photographer name: [name]
Address: [address]
Location: [location]
Time: [time]
Meeting: please ask for [contact name] on arrival.
Details:

We have arranged for [name] to come and celebrate our Designated collection(s) on [date] and have arranged a photocall to take place at [time]. We would like colour photography taken for press purposes depicting the story and would ask that you attend before [time] to discuss any last-minute lighting/position arrangements. We anticipate the photocall lasting [number of hours] hours. Our budget is £[amount]

[include any relevant information on style/format, etc]

Please ensure the supplied consent form is completed by any members of the public who are photographed. This is particularly important if children are involved.

[insert your contact details]

Parental consent is legally required when photographing children under 12 years, in line with your Child Protection Policy or policy for working with children and young people. A parental consent form will need to be filled in by parents if you are commissioning your own photographs.
Back cover: The Crystal Gallery
Credit: Royal College of Surgeons (John Carr - college photographer)