

Museum Accreditation 2011

Coping with Accreditation in 26 weeks

Helping museums take a positive and planned approach

The guidance in this resource is aimed at Museum Development Officers/ Museum Mentors and museums starting to plan their workload in the six month run up to submitting their Accreditation return

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Think about - Some areas to consider

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Accreditation

Accreditation is a scheme which distils professional, basic good practice and the legal obligations of running an institution which receives public money into a comprehensive framework that covers every area of the museum's operation. Working to that framework enables museums to use their resources efficiently and effectively, to the benefit of their users, collections and workforce.

Museums are supported in their endeavours to achieve Accreditation. Participation in the scheme is voluntary, though being Accredited brings public and professional recognition, eligibility to apply for certain sources of funding and celebrates the commitment and professionalism of a museum's workforce.

And yet Accreditation is seen by many as a bureaucratic set of demands that get in the way of running the museum. How to overcome this?

Tips and strategies

- Regard Accreditation as a framework to structure your work rather than a set of requirements and a pile of policy documents to gather together at a point six months after the invitation to submit has been received and then leave on a shelf to gather dust.
- As a framework it impacts on everybody involved in running the museum, so share the vision and the workload with others. Convene an Accreditation project team.
- Recognise that your museum is already working to many of the standards required. Commit this existing policy and practice to paper, check it against the Standard, make it available to the workforce and hey presto you can tick another box on the Accreditation return.
- As a framework, Accreditation is an ongoing way of working, not a six months prescription for stress. Do not wait for the invitation to submit a return to drop into your inbox, but keep the requirements in mind throughout the year and keep everything up to date as you go along.
- Ask for help: if you have one, keep in touch with your Museum Mentor throughout the year. Contact your Museum Development Officer and the Accreditation Adviser for the South East, East Midlands and East of England (Elaine Sansom at elaineconsult@f2s.com). Attend meetings of your county or regional museum group. Keep an eye out on the SHARE website (www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk) for downloadable resources (for all) and training opportunities (for those in the East of England).
- Use the guidance and resources available.

- Plan your approach to submitting your Accreditation return. The timetable below is just an illustration – your Accreditation project team will have to set actual dates at its first meeting and monitor these at regular intervals during the six months of the application period. Be certain to plan in:
 - The Governing Body's meeting cycle – several documents need formal approval
 - Public and team member holidays
 - Team members' other commitments to the museum and the world outside
 - The availability of your Museum mentor (if applicable)
 - Contingency time



The Statement of Purpose

Take time once every 2 years or so, certainly before you begin working on your Accreditation return or a major planning cycle, to step back as an organisation and consider the role and purpose of your museum, the collections it holds, the people who use it. Involve as many of your governing body, workforce and even your users in this process either through one big meeting or several smaller gatherings.

If your museum's statement of purpose is in need of updating this is a good way to do it. If the statement of purpose has been reviewed recently this is a good way of unpicking and sharing what it actually means for the collections, the services and the workforce.

Ask the gathering:

What is the purpose of the museum?

How do the collections fulfil that purpose? Does the collection need to develop to meet that purpose? Are there elements of it that do not meet that purpose? Is the collection in a fit state to meet the purpose and is it accessible enough?

How do the museum's public activities help meet that purpose? Exhibitions, learning programmes, lectures and other activities, outreach, publications, loans are just some of the things to consider.

What resources – staff, volunteers, buildings, cash – are there to devote to that purpose? Do people have the skills and direction they need? Are the buildings secure and in a good state of repair? Is the organisation's structure fit for purpose and are the finances understood?

Keep coming back to the purpose of the museum: emphasis may change, people will have different views. By the end of the discussion you will be able to see how everything the museum does is geared towards the STATEMENT OF PURPOSE which is at the

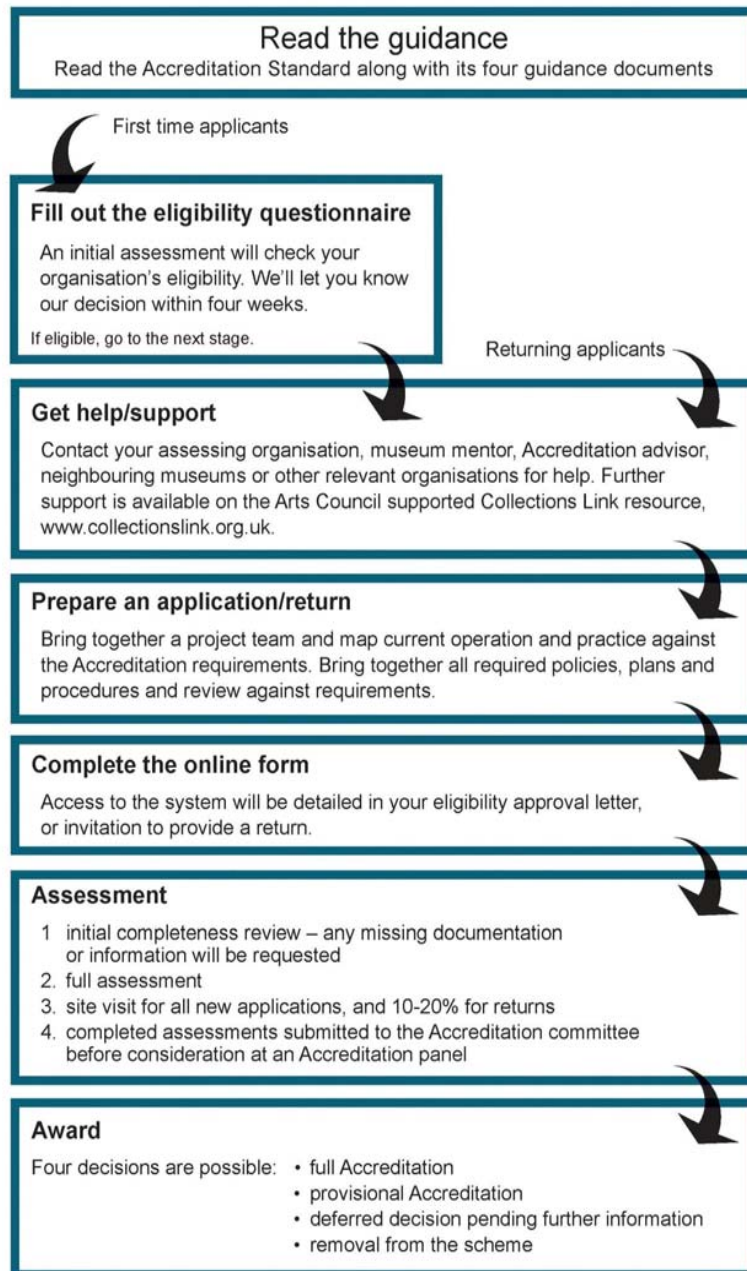
Suggested timetable

When by	What	Who	Why
Week 1	The invitation to submit an Accreditation return arrives	Arts Council England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a widely recognised mark of quality for museums in the UK
Week 1	Contact your <u>Museum Mentor</u>	Curator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invite them to the museum, preferably to the meeting of the team that will oversee the Accreditation return.
Week 1 to 3	Convene a meeting of the team that will oversee the Accreditation return	? Governing Body ? Management Group ? Specific project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegation of tasks, roles and responsibilities To set and agree a timetable for gathering together the evidence required, approving policy documents and filling in the application form
Week 1 to 3	Log on to the online application form on the <u>ACE website</u>	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To look at the format and interactivity of the application form. It can be added to, saved and edited by anyone your museum authorises as you pull together your application.
Weeks 2 to 6	Audit existing legal documents, policies, procedures and plans and map them against the Accreditation Standard <u>1. Organisational health</u> <u>2. Collections management</u> <u>3. Users & their experience</u>	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check which you have, which need updating, which you don't yet have
Weeks 2 to 6	Audit any other operations and practices covered by the Standard but not contained within a document	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check that you have the necessary information

Week 6	Meeting of the Accreditation project team	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check progress, adjust timetable, Set date for meeting for formal approval of documents (eg Forward Plan, Environmental Sustainability policy)
Weeks 6 to 20	Update, create documents as required	Accreditation project team and members of the workforce with specific responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have the evidence required to submit with your Accreditation return
Week 10 (tbc)	Meeting of the Accreditation project team	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check progress, adjust timetable,
Weeks 10 to 24	Fill in sections of the online application form	Authorised members of the Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To progress your application and keep track of what still needs doing
Week 14 (tbc)	Meeting of the Accreditation project team	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check progress, adjust timetable,
Week 22 (tbc)	Meeting of the Governing Body OR Meeting with the person with delegated responsibility	Governing Body and representatives from the Accreditation project team and workforce (as required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve all new policy documents
Week 23	Production and verification of Governing Body minutes	Secretary and Chair of Governing Body or body with delegated power to approve policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To verify and sign the minutes as a true record
Week 24	Meeting of the Accreditation project team	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check that the on line application form is complete To take action on anything that is incomplete
Week 25	Contingency		

Week 26	Submit online application form	Accreditation project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To gain recognition for the professional standards you work to and the quality of the museum service you provide
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The Accreditation process from application to award



Further resources at

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/how-do-i-apply/>

Accreditation guidance - introduction

[Download](#)

Accreditation guidance - section one

[Download](#)

Accreditation guidance - section two

[Download](#)

Accreditation guidance - section three

[Download](#)

Eligibility questionnaire

[Download](#)

Museum mentor handbook

[Download](#)

Template - collections development policy

[Download](#)

Resource list

[Download](#)

Guide to the online application system

[Download](#)

This guidance has been developed by the South Western Federation of Museums & Art Galleries with funding from Renaissance South West, based on the guidance published by Arts Council England.

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It has been revised by Elaine Sansom, Accreditation Adviser for the SE, East Midlands and East of England with local contact details.

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