



**MUSEUM**  
ACCREDITATION

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Supporting Guidance for Accreditation  
Standard November 2024

# Accreditation: Provisional Review Information Sheet

November 2024

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## Introduction

Thank you for your continued interest in Museum Accreditation, the UK Standard for museums and galleries.

The Scheme sets out nationally agreed standards of good practice for the sector. It is managed as a partnership between Arts Council England, the Welsh Government, Museums Galleries Scotland and Northern Ireland Museums Council. Each organisation is a national development agency for museums. You can find out more about the aims and benefits of the scheme in the Accreditation: [How to Meet the Standard](#) guidance.

**This information sheet is designed to support Accredited museums prepare their Provisional Review.**

The [Assessment and Decision](#) section explains what happens after you submit your application, and how we made decisions.

The [Support and Advice](#) section provides information on who to contact if you have any questions while preparing your application.

## What is Provisional Accreditation?

If your museum is Provisionally Accredited you hold an Accreditation award. We award Provisional status to museums that are temporarily unable to meet all the Requirements of the Standard. It is a supportive measure which allows museums to stay in the Scheme while they work to respond to Required Action(s) by an agreed short-term timescale.

The length of the award will depend on the museum's circumstances. Provisional awards typically last 12 months. We may agree a shorter deadline of three or six months to ensure a priority action is addressed in a timely manner.

## What is a Provisional Review application?

In order to be awarded Full Accreditation you will need to submit a Provisional Review application evidencing you have completed the Required Actions.

You will need to submit your Provisional Review by the deadline in your award letter.

If you're able to complete the Required Actions before the deadline you can submit whenever you're ready.

## **How do I submit the Provisional Review?**

You'll submit your Provisional Review using the online [Application System](#). There is no standard Provisional Review application form. This is because Provisional Accreditation is a short, targeted award with bespoke Required Actions. We will email you with full instructions on how to upload your Provisional Review information.

## **What if I can't complete the Required Actions by the Provisional Review deadline?**

If the museum is not in a position to meet the Required Actions you'll still need to submit a Provisional Review by the deadline. Within the application form you'll need to provide an update on progress since your last award. This should include your target date and timeline for completing the Required Actions and meeting the Standard in full.

## **Do I have to complete Areas for Development by the Provisional Review deadline?**

You may have Areas for Development outstanding from a previous award recommendation. These will relate to a specific requirement where the museum is compliant but could make improvement. You don't have to complete the Areas for Development by your Provisional Review deadline. You should just let us know about any progress you've made against them.

## **What happens if I don't submit my Provisional Review by the deadline?**

Providing a Provisional Review is a condition of your Accreditation award. If you do not submit your Provisional Review update by the due date, we will contact you to discuss what happens next. We may recommend that the museum be removed from the Accreditation Scheme.

## **Can a further period of Provisional status be awarded?**

If the museum is going through a period of significant change, e.g. a major capital redevelopment or a governance change, then a further period of Provisional status can be awarded. This is subject to satisfactory reporting in your Provisional Review application. You would need to demonstrate that the museum is actively working towards the requirements, has a clear plan to address them and to meet the Standard fully within a reasonable timescale.

There may also be situations where a museum might resolve the initial issue that resulted in the Provisional 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 up to 12 months due to this new and different issue.

## Provisional Accreditation during a capital development

Museums undergoing redevelopment that are closed to the public for over six months will normally be moved to Provisional status during the closure period.

This is a supportive measure which allows a museum to stay in the Scheme while it is temporarily unable to meet the public access requirements of the Standard. Provisional status will be awarded for an initial period of 12 months from the date of the outcome letter. We'll usually add a Required Action for submission of a full Return once the redevelopment work has been completed. After a major capital project many policies and plans will be out of date and need review.

If your capital work is scheduled to take longer than 12 months then we understand that you won't be able to submit the full Return Required Action by the Provisional Review deadline. However we'll still require you to send in a Provisional Review with an update on how the capital work is progressing. You should tell us about the projected timeline to reopen the museum to the public, and any information about any ongoing public access arrangements to collections.

Provided you demonstrate a clear plan to reopen and meet the Standard fully within a reasonable timescale we can recommend a further period of Provisional status.

# Accreditation guidance and resources

To prepare your Provisional Review you'll need to use the guidance and resources in the [Accreditation Guidance Library](#).

- **Accreditation: How to meet the Standard** – the main guidance document for the programme. It explains how to demonstrate that your museum is meeting the requirements.
- **Accreditation: Museum scalability indicators** - some requirements are tailored according to museum size and type. To select your museum size and type, compare your museum against the characteristics outlined in the document.
- **Accreditation Returns Information Sheet** – advice and guidance if you have a Full Return as one of your Required Actions
- **Application System guidance**
- **The Collections Trust website** hosts Accreditation resources covering the three broad areas of museum activity: organisational health; collections; and users and their experiences. Under these main headings you'll find details of the requirements of the Standard along with relevant resources:  
<http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/accreditation/>

## Getting started

Here are some tips on getting started:

**Involve colleagues and stakeholders throughout your planning and preparation.** Your Provisional Award outcome letter describes the Required Actions agreed by the decision-making panel. You should ensure that relevant colleagues and members of the governing body have sight of the letter and are aware of the deadline.

**Read and familiarise yourself with the Accreditation Standard and accompanying guidance and resources.**

**If you have any questions or need help**, please contact your Accreditation assessing organisation, or local Museum Development provider. You can find their contact details in the [Support and advice](#) section below.

**Accreditation mentors** are experienced professionals in the sector, who help smaller independent museums achieve and retain Accreditation. If you have an Accreditation mentor, arrange regular catch ups for support throughout the application process.

**Get set up on Grantium** - you can find information tailored to the Accreditation Scheme in the Accreditation Guidance Library.

## Key tips on using the Application System

We can only accept applications submitted using the Grantium. The Grantium homepage address is: <https://grants.artscouncil.org.uk/frontOffice.xhtml>

To log on to Grantium for the first time you'll need to create a personal **User Account**. This is unique to each individual user and acts as your personal signature. Your User Account log on details should not be shared with anyone.

An **Applicant Profile** represents your museum or art gallery. Your applicant profile reference will begin with a **5XXXXXXXX**.

Your application form will have **Project Number beginning ACCR-** . This will help you locate the form when you log off and log on again. If you need to contact us with a query about your application, please reference your Project Number.

You need to fill the Accreditation application form **in page-by-page order**. The responses you give to questions early in the form inform which questions and prompts open up later in the application form.

You can work on your application form and begin uploading things as early as you like – nothing will come to us until you press 'submit' on the final screen of the application form.

## Assessment and decision

When you submit your Accreditation application, you'll receive an **automatic email notification** confirming we've received it. If you don't receive a notification within an hour of submitting please first check your junk mail folder, and then email [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk) quoting your ACCR- application project number.

Your application will be allocated to the assessing organisation for your geographic area: Arts Council England, the Welsh Government, Museums Galleries Scotland or the Northern Ireland Museums Council. The decision on your museum's Accreditation status will be made by an Accreditation Panel.

**We aim to have a decision on your application within six months of receipt.** If we don't have a complete application and everything we need for our assessment this might take longer.

## Assessment

We'll assess your application against the requirements of the Accreditation Standard and the associated guidance documents.

Your assessor will carry out an **initial review and may request additional information**, e.g. the documents available on request, or around statutory or legal requirements such as safeguarding policies. The request for information would be sent via Grantium to all User Accounts linked to the Applicant Profile.

## The four possible outcomes

The assessor will recommend one of the following four outcomes to the Accreditation Panel:

- **Full Accreditation**

Your application demonstrates you are meeting the Requirements of the Standard. The assessor may add Areas for Development to the award recommendation. These will relate to a specific requirement where the museum is compliant but could make improvements. These are primarily applied in the spirit of development, to help a museum focus on key areas but can also be used to informally flag an issue for future monitoring.

- **Provisional Accreditation**

You have previously held Full Accreditation but are currently unable to demonstrate that you meet all the Requirements of the Standard.

The assessor has identified Required Action(s) which you will need to respond to by a set timescale (a short-term deadline of between 3 and 12 months).

- **Remove**

The museum is removed from the scheme, following a request to be removed. This might be because of capacity challenges, closure or the venue no longer meeting the definition of a museum. It may also be because the museum has not taken timely action to provide the assessing organisation with information we reasonably require. The museum can apply to rejoin the Scheme as a new applicant by completing an Eligibility Questionnaire.

- **Remove and Exclude due to deliberate non-compliance**

The museum or its governing body have made an irreversible decision or action which contravenes the Standard and goes against the shared ethical basis of the Scheme. This includes but is not limited to the unethical sale of accessioned museum collection items.

Excluded museums may apply for eligibility to rejoin the Scheme five years after removal for non-compliance. They must demonstrate that former non-compliant issues have been addressed through appropriately amended and compliant policies, plans and procedures. Museums continuing to deliberately contravene a requirement or requirements of the scheme are not eligible to reapply.

## Decision panel

Completed assessments are scheduled for consideration at the Accreditation Decision panel. These are usually held every two months.

Panel members are drawn from the Accreditation Committee, a volunteer professional body of experts that acts as a representative of the museum sector in the UK.

Panel members review each assessment and make the final decision on the award outcome and any Required Actions and Areas for Development. They may also defer a decision and request further information from the assessor.

There's more information on the Accreditation Committee on the [Arts Council website](#).

## Award letter

You will be formally notified of the panel's decision around two weeks after the meeting. We'll send your outcome letter by email or via an Application System notification.

The letter will list any Areas for Development and / or Required Actions agreed by the panel.

We will also attach a copy of our terms and conditions for the award. You'll need to confirm your acceptance of these using Grantium. You should also read our **Post Award Information Sheet** which explains how to promote your award, and what to do if you're experiencing significant change.

If the panel has awarded Full Accreditation, we'll provide an award certificate normally within four weeks of you accepting the terms and conditions.

## How long does the award last?

An award of **Full Accreditation** remains in place until an updated assessment is reviewed by the Accreditation Panel. Once Accredited we'll periodically invite you to demonstrate that your museum is continuing to meet the Standard. This is called an Accreditation Return and will typically take place every five years.

An award of **Provisional Accreditation** can range from three months to a maximum of 12 months. The length of the award will depend on the museum's circumstances. Within the outcome letter you'll find full details of the deadline by which you'll need to respond to the Required Action(s). A further period of Provisional status can be awarded subject to satisfactory reporting in your Provisional Review application.

# Support and advice

Each UK Partner provides Accreditation advice and support within their geographic area. If you have any questions while preparing your application please contact:

## Scotland

### Museum Galleries Scotland

[Museum Accreditation - Museums Galleries Scotland](#)

Email: [accreditation@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk](mailto:accreditation@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk)

## Wales

### The Welsh Government

[Museum Accreditation Scheme | GOV.WALES](#)

Email: [MuseumDevelopment@gov.wales](mailto:MuseumDevelopment@gov.wales)

## Northern Ireland

### Northern Ireland Museums Council

[Museum Accreditation Scheme | N. Ireland Museums Council \(nimc.co.uk\)](#)

Email: [devofficer@nimc.co.uk](mailto:devofficer@nimc.co.uk)

## England

**Arts Council England** funds a programme of Museum Development to support the delivery of the UK Accreditation Scheme in England. For advice at application stage, please contact your local Museum Development team. Contact details are available on their website:

[Museum Development North](#)

[Museum Development Midlands](#)

[Museum Development London](#)

[Museum Development South West](#)

[Museum Development South East](#)

**UK National museums** (governed by national legislation and directly receiving central or devolved Government funding) please contact [accreditation@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:accreditation@artscouncil.org.uk) in the first instance.

Museums based in the **Channel Islands or the Isle of Man** please contact [accreditation@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:accreditation@artscouncil.org.uk) in the first instance.

**For queries relating to your Provisional review deadline please contact:**

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

## Support using the application system

You can find guidance tailored to the Accreditation Scheme on setting up a User Account, Applicant Profile and Application Form in the [Accreditation Guidance Library](#).

For help and advice using the Application System please contact the Arts Council's Customer Services team. Email: [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk) Telephone: 0161 934 4317 (10am-4pm) You can also Livechat by visiting:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/contact>

