The Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom

Museum Mentor Workshop, July 2013

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Porcelain table light and candle holders
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Photo: Theo Moye

Developing the national standard

- Evidence of 22 years of consistent support
- Working with museums to raise standards
- Sector based consultation to review and develop
- High levels of voluntary participation & new interest
- Externally validated standard, highly valued
- An improvement framework, not just a Standard

New emphasis and approach

- Focus on resilience
- Responsive to communities, consultation and feedback
- Interest in how things are done, not just what
- Less of a straight jacket
- More transparent assessment scalability
- Less of a discrete exercise

What has stayed the same?

- A standard for the United Kingdom
- Awards agreed by an independent expert panel
- VAQAS shortcut remains
- Scalable assessment approach

Three Sections

1. Organisational Health: Museums are responsible, responsive and resilient
2. Collections: Museums manage collections effectively and make them and the information they hold about them available for everyone
3. Users and their experiences: Museums are welcoming and accessible. They exhibit collections and have a planned approach to identifying and providing a good-quality services for a broad range of users.
How Accreditation 2011 is being rolled out

Submitting a Return
- Returning museums are grouped into 10 Tranches and invited to submit a return by letter
- Museums have 6 months to submit their return from their invitation date
- To date, 4 tranches out of 10 have submitted returns – the first Tranche submitted in June 2012 and the last Tranche submits in July 2014

New Applications
- Complete the Eligibility Questionnaire
- Submit for assessment
- Awarded 'Working Towards Accreditation' status for 12 months
- Submit application/report and renew status
- 75 Eligibility questionnaires received to date

The Role of Museum Mentor
- Highly valued
- Development of the Curatorial Adviser role
- To fulfill the requirements of Accreditation all museums must have access to appropriately qualified professional staff
- Widened in scope as Accreditation has developed
- A mentor is…. A professional adviser who supports a museum in developing its Accreditation application and subsequent returns

What do mentors do? (1)
- Provide support & advice relating to Accreditation from their own expertise
- Confirm the Accreditation application or Accreditation return
- Work with the museum to establish what other areas of expertise are required to meet and maintain Accreditation standards

What do mentors do? (2)
- Act as an ‘advice coordinator’ – from your own networks or through other professionals
- Act as an advocate for the museum - help it to develop links and relationships with the wider museum profession
- There are currently 282 mentors working with 498 museums across the UK (Oct 2012)

Resources for Mentors...
Museum Mentor handbook
- Section 1- becoming a mentor
- Section 2- starting and reviewing the mentor role
- Section 3- techniques for advising and consulting
- Section 4- templates

Resources for Mentors
Arts Council Museum Mentor webpages
- Explains the mentor role
- Download mentor handbook
- FAQs section including Expression of Interest form for new mentors
Becoming a mentor...

Museum professionals wishing to undertake this role should match the following profile:
- a minimum of five years experience working professionally in museums, with recent experience at curator/manager level. At least three years should be in an area of competence relating to organisational health, collections, or users and their experiences
- a relevant or linked qualification
- a commitment to career-long continuing professional development (CPD). This could be through participation in formal channels, such as the Arts Marketing Association and continuing professional development (CPD)schemes, or through logging their CPD activity on their CV

Practical steps...

If you are a new mentor...
- Meet with the museum staff and trustees
- Establish a mentor agreement with the museum (sample available in the handbook)
- Induction
  - Undertake the first Accreditation Review
  - Plan your engagement with the museum
- Ensure that the governing body appoints you to the role (need a signed minute)

If you are an existing mentor...
- Get a mentor agreement in place if it isn’t already (sample available in the handbook)
- Undertake an Accreditation Review with your museum
- Plan advice and engagement for the year ahead - pre and/or post application or return

Mentor commitment
- Support the museum through visits, emails and phone calls
- Minimum of 2 visits a year typically...
  - Annual review visit
  - Attendance at a Trustee meeting
  - Visiting the museum while it is open to the public
  - Annual general meeting / other events
- Confirm the Accreditation application or return

Museum commitment
- To appoint you
- Consult you and use you effectively
- Invite you to trustee mtgs with due notice
- Develop a good relationship with you
- Keep you informed
Sources of advice and support

Arts Council England website
• How do I apply pages (new applicants)
• Accreditation returns pages
• Guidance documents download pages

Collections Link
• http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/museum-accreditation

• Advice
  accreditation@heatherlomas.co.uk
  accreditation@emmachaplin.co.uk