



Supporting
University Museums
and Collections

Briefing on University Museums and Galleries May 2011

Purpose

To draw attention to the key role played by University museums and galleries in the nation's educational system and as part of the national heritage

To celebrate the achievements of recent years of investment by HEFCE

To ensure that the importance of university museums and galleries does not get lost in the larger agenda higher education, their principal funder

Key facts

- There are c. 100 university museums in the UK which are regularly accessible to the public, with a further c. 300 collections used for academic research and teaching.
- HEFCE provides £10.45 million of core funding for 31 of the publicly accessible university museums, galleries and archives in England and represents c.20-50% of their funding in different cases. Parent universities provide the bulk of the additional funding.
- Although they comprise less than 2% of the museums in the country, university museums hold 30% of all the Designated Collections of national and international importance.
- University museums are very diverse, from the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers in Oxford to the Fitzwilliam and Kettles Yard in Cambridge and from the Women's Library in London to the Lapworth Museum of Geology in Birmingham (see Appendix).
- A review by HEFCE of its funding of university museums and galleries in 2009-10 affirmed the importance of this strand of funding and for 2010-11 maintained it at the previous year's level. i.e. £10.6 million. A small number of new museums received funding, and some previously funded museums had their funding cut completely. Funding for 2010-11 has been reduced to £10.45m, principally by removing museums deemed ineligible as their university status was not sufficiently demonstrable.
- Overall the £10.45m funding represents a modest amount in terms of HEFCE's budget, but provides vital core funding to many university museums, and it provides excellent value for the investment.

Performance of University Museums

In the last five years for which we have full figures, HEFCE funding has helped university museums to achieve the following:

- Increase public visits by 95% to 4 million a year
- Increase total educational visits by 57% to 263,000 a year

- Increase dedicated further and higher education visits by 186% to 50,000 a year
- Increase public events and lectures by 144%
- Increase website visits by 370% to 75 million
- Increase leverage of non-HE funding by 179% from £7.28 to £20.34 million
- Greatly improve access to collections by:
 - Making 27,578 loans to other institutions
 - Creating new records for 1.93 million objects
 - Enhancing records for 1.12 million objects

Key issues and opportunities

1. They are institutions of national benefit

University museums and galleries (UMGs) have an importance well beyond their higher education institutions. They hold some of the most important collections in the country outside the national museums, and institutions such as the Courtauld, the Petrie Museum, the Ashmolean, the Whitworth, the Pitt Rivers, the Fitzwilliam, the Manchester Museum and the Sainsbury Centre are nationally and internationally renowned.

2. They are key to universities' engagement with the wider community

Universities' museums and galleries are superb vehicles for widening participation in higher education, for engaging the public in the importance of research, and more generally for opening up universities to the community.

3. They play an important role in university teaching, and with schools

UMGs continue to be used extensively for teaching HE students both within and outside the university, increasingly in interdisciplinary courses. Their use by schools has nearly doubled and in many areas is the main museum-school service.

4. They are an important resource for research, and demonstrating impact

The collections held in UMGs, and the expertise within them, are vital for research ranging from climate change to the human past, and from medicine to geology. Their public accessibility means that they are natural vehicle for engaging the public with the results of research programmes.

5. They are good value for money

The stability provided by core funding has been key to university museums leveraging significant support from other sources. To take a recent example, without the £2m of HEFCE core funding, the Ashmolean would never have been able to launch its successful £61m re-build. Given their performance summarised above, the c. £10m of HEFCE core funding is exceptional value for money.

6. They are potentially vulnerable

University museums and galleries are a very small part of the higher education sector, and the £10.45 million funding for the 31 key ones is a tiny element within the HEFCE budget. They are not formally part of DCMS's remit, as they are funded from within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. This means that this small number of museums and galleries are potentially vulnerable to changes in policy and funding within higher education, and they run the risk of being overlooked in wider museum strategy developments.

APPENDIX: HEFCE Museums and galleries, and funding allocations 2011-12

Higher education institution	Museum/Gallery	Funding 2011-12 (£)
University of Bristol	Theatre Collection	60,000
The Courtauld Institute of Art	Courtauld Gallery	825,000
The Courtauld Institute of Art	Courtauld Libraries	140,000
Durham University	Oriental Museum	80,000
University of Kent	British Cartoon Archive	90,000
London Metropolitan University	Women's Library	90,000
University of Manchester	Manchester Museum	1,350,000
University of Manchester	Whitworth Art Gallery	720,000
Middlesex University	Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture	80,000
Newcastle University	Great North Museum	240,000
University of Reading	Museum of English Rural Life	300,000
Royal Academy of Music	Royal Academy of Music Museum	150,000
University College London	Grant Museum	50,000
University College London	UCL Art Collections	31,000
University College London	Petrie Museum	180,000
University of East Anglia	Sainsbury Centre	300,000
University for the Creative Arts	Crafts Study Centre	70,000
University of Birmingham	Barber Institute	160,000
University of Birmingham	Lapworth Museum	40,000
University of Brighton	Design Archives	60,000
University of Cambridge	Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	175,000
University of Cambridge	The Fitzwilliam Museum	1,420,000
University of Cambridge	Kettle's Yard	90,000
University of Cambridge	Museum and Collections of the Scott Polar Research Institute	160,000
University of Cambridge	The Whipple museum of the History of Science	31,000
University of Cambridge	University Museum of Zoology	80,000
University of Oxford	Ashmolean Museum	2,200,000
University of Oxford	Museum of the History of Science	100,000
University of Oxford	Oxford University Museum of Natural History	330,000
University of Oxford	Pitt Rivers Museum	725,000
University of York	Borthwick Institute	120,000