

ASHMOLEAN

ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ACCESS POLICY & PLAN 2018-2023

Governing body: The Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

Date approved by governing body: 7th May 2019

Reviewed annually.



ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ACCESS POLICY & PLAN

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1 Policy Statement

- a) We are committed to providing full and equal access to all Ashmolean spaces, collections and experiences for everyone.
- b) We understand that access needs are broad and diverse and can include physical, sensory, emotional, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal and financial needs.
- c) An accessible museum is one that understands diverse needs and embeds an inclusive design approach throughout all strategic planning.
- d) We understand that access is also about staff and volunteers – who we recruit and how we recruit - so that diversity and access is reflected in the workforce and well as in galleries and programmes.

2 Access Philosophy

We are:

- Always Learning
- Audience-led
- Open
- Flexible and responsive

Our access practice is:

- Inclusive
- Developed through consultation and collaboration with key partners, organisations, activists & advocates
- Rigorously researched & informed by current theory and good practice in the sector.

We:

- Listen
- Innovate, test and evaluate
- Try new things
- Makes changes to improve access
- Build relationships and work collaboratively with partners
- Share access information online
- Design vibrant & diverse programmes
- Offer bespoke programmes to meet different needs
- Train & support our staff and volunteers
- Work towards being a truly inclusive museum

3 Strategic framework

- a) The access policy and access plan are key strands of Ashmolean for All (A4A) and the Ashmolean's Strategic Plan 2018-2023.
- b) Ashmolean for All focuses on equality and inclusion. It aims to improve the way the Ashmolean represents, includes and engages with both new and existing audiences.
- c) The Ashmolean access policy sits within the policy framework of: University of Oxford - OU Equality and Diversity Unit <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/> and GLAM (Gardens Libraries and Museums) <https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/statement-on-inclusion>
- d) The access policy & plan and A4A are informed by audience research and consultation. Access needs of all audiences are considered as part of all decisions taken.

4 Scope

The policy and plan cover access to:

- Collections
- Buildings
- Programmes & Activities
- People

5 Ashmolean Access Plan

5.1 Physical, Sensory and Intellectual Access

- a) Detailed initial access audit by AccessAble <https://www.accessable.co.uk/> with a commitment to an annual review to refresh and update.
- b) Level access route from the pavement outside the museum to the front door. Lifts to all floors and level access to all public spaces and to most of the study rooms.
- c) All visitors are welcome to access study collections for research or enjoyment. Some study rooms are only accessible via stairs; if this is a barrier to a visitor then material can normally be brought to another space for people to use.
- d) Detailed access information is available on our website to help visitors plan their visit. <https://www.ashmolean.org/access>. Visitors are also welcome to call or email the museum for specific information. Includes information and social-narratives for neuro-diverse visitors (schools, families, adults) to help plan and enjoy an independent visit.
- e) Accessible toilets in the Museum.
- f) Wheelchairs available for people to borrow.
- g) Induction loops in the Lecture Theatre and the information desk.
- h) Large print labels in the temporary exhibition. Moving forward we're investigating the provision of large print in the permanent collections.
- i) We are introducing more social seating in the galleries – a mixture of seating to support a variety of needs developed in consultation with visitors and partners. Currently we have folding stools available around the museum for people to pick up and use & benches and armchairs in some galleries.
- j) Breastfeeding welcome.
- k) Assistance Dogs welcome.
- l) All public programmes are open and accessible to people with diverse needs moving towards an inclusive design approach for learning & public programmes so all are welcome e.g. greater

diversity in our programmes; greater diversity of people delivering programmes; co-curated and co-designed strands in our public programme.

- m) Relaxed exhibition openings.
- n) Free hands-on session for blind and partially sighted people and free BSL signed tour for deaf and hearing impaired people as part of our regular What's On public programme. We organise bespoke visits for groups on request.
- o) Learning Department designs bespoke sessions and visits for groups with additional needs e.g. special schools. These are developed in partnership with the group leader. Our regular learning programmes are designed to naturally differentiate but can be adapted to support children, young people or adults with additional needs on request. This would be discussed at the time of booking.
- p) Ongoing and established relationships with key partners, organisations, activists & advocates e.g. MIND, Age UK, RNIB. Varied projects and partnerships with diverse audiences.
- q) Staff and volunteers supported and encouraged to take part in access training and development e.g. all learning department staff and many of the volunteer tour guides trained in audio description; key learning department staff have SEND training. Moving forward we are working towards an organisation where access and inclusion training for all staff and volunteers is invested in and embedded; staff and volunteers encouraged to share ideas for improving access and visitors experience and Ashmolean for All embraces and takes forward the access agenda

5.2 Cultural and Social Access

- a) Cultural and social access is a key strand of Ashmolean for All.
- b) Current galleries are designed using the gallery text toolkit developed during the 2009 redevelopment: the style and structure were developed in consultation with focus groups.
- c) Research shows that for many visitors the 2009 galleries- for a range of reasons- are not engaging so we will embrace a more inclusive design approach embedding a co-curation model.
- d) We will consult and collaborate with community partners to develop galleries that welcome and connect with visitors from diverse communities.
- e) Ashmolean staff and the GLAM-wide Community Engagement Team will continue to work with partners in the city and region.
- f) We will work to diversify the demographic profile of staff and volunteers.
- g) We will introduce information in languages other than English.

5.3 Financial Access

- a) Ashmolean is committed to the policy of free entry to main galleries.
- b) Differentiated pricing for events, exhibitions and membership e.g. *For exhibition tickets:* Concession exhibition tickets are available for University of Oxford staff and alumni, over 65s and those who are unemployed are eligible for concession tickets. All non-Oxford University students, children aged 12–17, and Art Fund Members may purchase half price tickets. Free admission for Members *For event tickets (talks/courses/tours):* The above list applies. Lower event prices for Ashmolean Members.
- c) We are currently investigating a free membership scheme for young people aged 16-19. Aim to launch in late 2019/ early 2020.
- d) Taught sessions free for special schools and some community/ access groups.
- e) Booked UK school groups free for temporary exhibitions.
- f) Free tickets to charging exhibitions for key community partners and their clients.

- g) GLAM wide bursary scheme for local (Oxford) target schools to cover free session and travel.
- h) Wherever possible, family friendly and community outreach activities offered free of charge or on a cost-recovery basis.

5.4 Virtual Access

- a) Resources and information available on the Ashmolean website www.ashmolean.org

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