

Access Policy 2024 – 2029
Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

Date approved by Pitt Rivers Museum Executive Board: 21 May 2024

Date approved by The Visitors of the Pitt Rivers Museum: 25 February 2025

Date at which policy is due for review: February 2030

The Museum's statement of purpose is:

1As given in the University of Oxford's regulations, the Museum's purpose is 'to assemble, preserve and exhibit the Pitt Rivers Collection and to promote the public understanding of anthropology and world archaeology, and their teaching and research, based on the Museum's collections.' see Council Regulation 4 of 2019 <https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/council-regulations-4-of-2019#collapse1421161>

The Museum's mission statement:

As outlined in the Museum's Strategy 2022-27 "The Pitt Rivers Museum wants to become a welcoming space to all where stories are shared by many voices. Working collaboratively and creatively with staff, volunteers, and communities we will transform how our iconic collections are engaged with, both online and in the museum. In an increasingly disconnected world, we want to inspire empathy and deepen cross-cultural understanding."

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2. Policy Statement

2.1 We are committed to being a welcoming space to all and aim to provide full and equitable access to Pitt Rivers Museum spaces, events, collections and experiences. We understand that access needs are broad and diverse and can include physical, digital, sensory, emotional, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal and financial barriers.

2.2 An accessible Museum is one that understands diverse needs and embeds an inclusive approach throughout all strategic planning. We understand that access is about visitors, staff and volunteers. We aim to recruit so that visitors see themselves reflected in our workforce.

3. Aims and commitments

3.1 Physical and Sensory Access

- We will make changes to improve access by trialling and evaluating new and innovative approaches carefully researched and informed by audience research and current theory and good practice in the sector.
- We will increase access to suit different learning styles and motivational factors.

- The majority of the collections on display are presented in a dense typological style. Interpretation is through labels, interactive elements, digital resources, tours, trails, workshops, talks and events.
- The reserve collection is available to researchers, artists, students and academics by request. There is an extensive online database of all the collections.
<https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/collections-online#/search>

3.2 Cultural and Intellectual Access

- We will build on our existing local, national and international partnerships, where possible this will be in a co-productive way, incorporating lived experience, self-representation, scholarly and professional expertise to ensure that multiple voices are reflected in the displays.
- We listen to and learn from a diversity of stakeholders to ensure that we are welcoming to all; open and respectful; flexible and responsive.
- We will build on existing work with originating and diaspora communities and groups for whom physical, cultural or philosophical access to the collections may be difficult.
- We recognise that digital technologies around translation are continuing to change. From August 2024 we will start to use Bloomberg Connect as our digital gateway. This enables easy translation of all interpretive material into a range of languages.
- Care and management of collections on display and in storage will be balanced against access needs and cultural sensitivities and conforms to structures laid out by the Collections Trust in their Collections Management Framework PAS 197:2007.

3.3 Attitudinal and Financial Access

- We will work with formal learners in statutory education (early years to age 18), giving meaningful access to all children and prioritise work with schools from socio-economically deprived areas who may not otherwise have access to cultural provision.
- We will develop and expand our public programmes to give the widest possible access to existing and new audiences, inspiring them to connect with the collections in new and innovative ways.

3.4 Digital Access

- We will use digital methods to increase access to collections information currently not available, deepening understanding as well as improving accessibility through online and onsite digital projects

4. Strategic framework

4.1 Widening access is a key driver for the Pitt Rivers Museum's Strategic Plan, Access Policy and Audience Development Plan.

4.2 The Access Policy and Plan is informed by audience research and consultation and sits within the policy framework of the University of Oxford: OU Equality and Diversity Unit

<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/> ; GLAM (Gardens Libraries and Museums)

<https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/statement-on-inclusion>

5. Scope

5.1 The Access Policy and Plan covers: public access, research access, access to professional advice and training for staff.

5.2 The Policy and Plan considers: physical and sensory access, cultural and intellectual access, attitudinal and financial access, digital access. In doing so we have laid out current provision, priorities for the next 5 years and limitations.

5.3 The Access Policy and Plan links to the Museum's Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan and Audience Development Plan.

6. Monitoring progress

6.1 The differing needs of visitors and non-visitors are identified through a range of processes and consultations. An Access assessment was carried out in December 2022 by the University of Oxford's Accessibility Advisor and has fed directly into this policy. Visitor feedback is sought through self-completion questionnaires at a digital kiosk in the galleries, from social media analysis and from regular visitor surveys. All group visits are recorded and the data analysed on an annual basis. All events, workshops and taught sessions are evaluated.

6.2 The results of visitor research are analysed by the GLAM evaluation team and disseminated to relevant staff. When possible, new activities include formative evaluation and take into account responses to visitor focus groups, audience surveys and audience responses. School sessions are developed through consultation with teachers and students and evaluation of on-going sessions. Proposals and recommendations from committees are taken forward to the Museum's Executive Board and Director. Data from evaluation and monitoring are used to shape the Museum's forward planning.

7. Legal framework

7.1 The Museum works within the relevant legal framework. In particular this is the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988, the Child Protection Act 1989, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the DCMS Guidance for the Care of Human Remains 2005 and the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act 2010.

8. Policy publication and review procedure

8.1 This Policy is published on the Museum's website and will be made available for visitors to the Museum to view on request.

8.2 It will be reviewed biannually by the Museum's Executive Board. The policy will be reviewed by the Museum's Board of Visitors every five years.

8.3 Museum staff will be made aware of this policy during induction or specific meetings.